Employee experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in hospitality: an exploratory study

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Attestation of Authorship

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.'

Signed: _____

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the experiences of third-party sexual harassment in the hospitality industry, by interviewing female employees in frontline positions in a bar/restaurant setting. It also explores the participants' opinions as to what can be done to minimise or prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the workplace.

Semi-structured Interviews were conducted with participants to provide a better understanding of the relationship between the women's experience of sexual harassment and any influences on this phenomenon.

The findings of this thesis show the influences that may increase the occurrence of sexually harassing behaviours are power inequalities between the customer and the participant, and customers' intoxication, which many participants faced in their daily working environment.

The thesis concludes that by management supporting their staff and encouraging a zero-tolerance approach towards sexual harassment, sexual harassment could be prevented, which would provide a safer working environment for employees.

Confidentiality

Participants' identities were withheld; the names of all of participants have been replaced with pseudonyms. This is in accordance with AUT's ethics policy and principles. Approval was granted by the AUT Ethics Committee, approval number 10/73, on 23 June 2010 (see appendix one).

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Dedication

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1.0   Introduction

Most complaints about sexual harassment in the hospitality industry are made by staff employed in frontline positions, where the harasser is often the customer (Poulston, 2008; Williams, 2003).

Sexual Harassment is defined as ''the persistent unwelcome directing of sexual remarks and looks, and unnecessary physical contact, at a person, usually a woman, esp. in the workplace' (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2004, p. 1103). Third-party sexual harassment is aimed at an employee and is instigated by a customer. Third-party sexual harassment is exercised in many forms, including but not limited to, inappropriate sexual advances, sexist remarks, sexual violence and predatory behaviour (Yagil, 2008).

Many hospitality establishments have an informal working culture where some types of sexual behaviour have to be tolerated and place the burden on staff to distinguish between an acceptable level of sexual behaviour and behaviour that may be construed as sexual harassment.

Hospitality is defined as 'kindness in welcoming strangers or guests' (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2004, p. 574). Since customer service is so important in the hospitality industry, it is common for frontline employees to endure the demands of difficult customers (Korczynski, 2002). When intoxication is involved, the probability of sexual behaviour occurs more often (Kim, 2008). The absence of third-

party sexual harassment work policies and lack of support from management contribute to the denial of the sexual harassment phenomenon found in many hospitality operations, making it difficult for staff to differentiate where acceptable behaviour ends and sexual harassment begins.

Some employees may endure sexual harassment because they feel obliged to provide customer satisfaction (Guerrier & Adib, 2000; Karatepe, Yorganci, & Haktanir, 2009; Korczynski, 2002). Poulston's (2008) research on sexual harassment in hospitality businesses found that many employees perceived sexual harassment as merely joking, fun, and something that may relieve an otherwise stressful environment. However, Folgero and Fjeldstad's (1995) study on frontline female employees and sexual harassment in the workplace showed many participants considered sexual harassment to be a frustrating part of the industry. Unfortunately, with exposure to any sexual behaviour that may occur, the pressure of satisfying the customer is felt by employees working in frontline hospitality on a daily basis (Yagil, 2008; Warhurst & Nickson, 2007; Seymour, 2000). Because of the long hours, and the perceived requirement to keep customers satisfied, the frontline role itself may create stress in an employee and generate exhaustion. If sexual harassment occurs, it can further exacerbate the negative environment, creating job dissatisfaction for the employee (Karatepe et al., 2009).

In 1985, the first case of sexual harassment in New Zealand was brought to trial (Human Rights Commission, 2001), where the offender was found responsible,

resulting in sexual harassment becoming a form of sexual discrimination. The New Zealand Human Rights Act (1993), defined sexual harassment as unlawful discrimination, offering protection against 'such unlawful discrimination in employment, education, the provision of goods and services, the provision of access to accommodation and in access to public places'.

Although there have been few legal cases in New Zealand regarding third-party sexual harassment, the law recognises an employer's liability in such cases, especially, if the employer has not taken every step possible to ensure that their employee was protected from harassing behaviour. Implementing written policies on sexual harassment may cover such liability, because without policies in place, there are no avenues for an employee to access when they are feeling intimidated and/or uncomfortable (Agrusa, Coats, Tanner, & Leong, 2002).

Between 1995 and 2000, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2001) received and closed 284 complaints of sexual harassment. Of these complaints it was found that:

- 90% were of men sexually harassing women;

- nine out of ten women were sexually harassed in their place of work;

- the offender was considerably older than the victim in almost every case, a third of victims being under 18, most of them under 20; and

- sexual harassment occurred more frequently in smaller operations where there were no policies on sexual harassment in place.

The New Zealand Human Rights Commission (2001) stated that hospitality workers made up 10% of sexual harassment complaints they received from 2008-2010.

1.1   Aim of research

The aim of this research is to investigate experiences of third-party sexual harassment towards female frontline employees based in a bar/restaurant setting. It also explores the participants' views about what can be done to minimise or prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the workplace environment.

There is limited research in the field of third-party sexual harassment in the hospitality industry in New Zealand; therefore, this study will not only extend what is currently known but will also introduce a new model that can aid future research.

1.2   Thesis overview

This thesis begins by reviewing the literature surrounding third-party sexual harassment. It specifically examines the perceived influences of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry, such as the power differentials between the customer and the employee, the hospitality working environment, the characteristics of the employees, and finally, the uniforms that are used to convey the company's image.

Sexual harassment models are reviewed, as well as literature explored on the management and legislation governing sexual harassment in the workplace. Investigating this literature together with the outcome from the data of this study will culminate in a theoretical model that is a positive tool to help further research and

prevent sexual harassment. This study also provides a framework to formulate safe policies for staff.

The methodology chapter outlines the research design and the methods used in this study. The questions used investigate experiences of sexual harassment the participants may have encountered, and the preventative tools they believe should be implemented to eliminate sexual harassment from the New Zealand hospitality industry.

To elicit rich data from the research questions, and to provide a better understanding of the relationship between the participants' experiences and the phenomenon of sexual harassment in hospitality, a qualitative research design underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm was employed. Interviews provided for an in-depth interpretation of the participant's experience of sexual harassment.

The findings chapter presents the themes and components associated with sexual harassment that emerged from the interview transcripts. Findings also show the participants' perceptions about managing or preventing sexual harassment in the workplace.

The discussion chapter examines the contributors to sexual harassment in this industry. The themes relating to the participants' working environments and characteristics are discussed, as well as the influence of the customers' power and

levels of intoxication. This chapter concludes with recommendations for a zero-tolerance approach that could be adopted to minimise the risk of sexual harassment.

Using guidelines from the New Zealand legislation and the findings of this study, a theoretical model was designed to be a practical tool for further research. The concluding chapter addresses the limitations of this research and provides recommendations for eliminating sexual harassment.

2.0   Literature Review

2.1   Introduction

This chapter analyses literature relating to sexual harassment in the hospitality industry, in particular third-party sexual harassment, which is the sexual harassment of an employee in their place of work by a customer.

The chapter begins by defining sexual harassment and the legal ramifications of the phenomenon. It investigates the influences theorists believe contribute to third-party sexual harassment such as the power differentials between the customer and the employee, the hospitality working environment, the characteristics of the employees, and the uniforms that are part of the company's image. Finally, processes that have already been implemented at some hospitality operation are presented. These have been found to reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment in those workplaces.

2.2   Sexual harassment defined and possible causes in hospitality

Various studies have shown differences in people's perceptions and ethical values relating to sexual harassment. Woods and Kavanaugh (1994) and Gilbert, Guerrier, and Guy (1998) showed men and women agree that severe forms of sexual harassment such as inappropriate touching are unacceptable. However, when questioned about less aggressive sexual behaviour such as verbal advances or flirting, more women than men considered this to be sexual harassment (Woods et al., 1994). There appears to be a misperception about what is classified as sexual

harassment; therefore, there is a need to identify the legal definition of sexual harassment.

In New Zealand, the New Zealand Human Rights Act (1993) identifies sexual harassment as a 'violation of human rights' (Human Rights Commission, 2001). Sexual harassment is defined as 'the persistent unwelcome directing of sexual remarks and looks, and unnecessary physical contact, at a person, usually a woman, esp. in the workplace' (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2004, p. 1103). Differences in perception about what sexual harassment is render defining it a challenging task. Even two decades after the law against sexual harassment was passed in New Zealand, some people still question what is meant by sexual harassment (Williams, 2003).

In 2003, Professor Christine Williams came to New Zealand from the United States of America (USA), as part of an educational campaign against sexual harassment in the workplace and the protection of human rights in New Zealand. Williams (2003) proposed that for an incident to constitute sexual harassment, the behaviour must be unwanted by the person receiving it, and occur to someone in an employment role. In addition, the New Zealand Human Rights Act (1993), states that sexual harassment can also include sexual words, gestures and/or pictures (Williams, 2003).

There are two sections relating to sexual harassment in the Employment Relations Act (2000):

Section One: Sexual or racial harassment by person other than employer.

1. This applies to
   a. a request of the kind described in <u>section 108(1)(a)</u> is made to an employee by a person (not being a representative of the employer) who is in the employ of the employee's employer or who is a customer or client of the employer; or
   b. an employee is subjected to behaviour of the kind described in <u>section 108(1)(b)</u> by a person (not being a representative of the employer) who is in the employ of the employee's employer or who is a customer or client of the employer.
2. If this section applies, the employee may make a complaint about that request or behaviour to the employee's employer or to a representative of the employer.
3. The employer or representative, on receiving a complaint under subsection (2), must inquire into the facts.
4. If the employer or representative is satisfied that the request was made or that the behaviour took place, the employer or representative must take whatever steps are practicable to prevent any repetition of such a request or of such behaviour.

Section Two: Sexual or racial harassment after steps not taken to prevent repetition

1. This section applies if
   a. a person in relation to whom an employee has made a complaint under <u>section 117(2)</u> either—

      i.   makes to that employee after the complaint a request of the kind described in <u>section 108(1)(a)</u>; or
      ii.   subjects that employee after the complaint to behaviour of the kind described in <u>section 108(1)(b)</u> or <u>section 109</u>; and

   b. the employer of that employee, or a representative of that employer, has not taken whatever steps are practicable to prevent the repetition of such a request or such behaviour.

2.   If this section applies, the employee is deemed for the purposes of this Act and for the purposes of any employment agreement to have a personal grievance by virtue of having been sexually harassed or racially harassed, as the case may be, in the course of the employee's employment as if the request or behaviour were that of the employee's employer.

Four models have been developed describing the possible foundation of sexual harassment (Pina, Gannon, & Saunders, 2009):

1. The Organisational Model (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982) relates sexual harassment to an organisation's power differentials created by a company's hierarchy.

2. The Sex-Spillover Model suggests harassment is likely to occur where the sex ratio is skewed to the opposite sex. An example of this occurs in a working environment that is predominantly male and the male-initiated sexual harassment is the result of their being the larger group (Gilbert et al., 1998; Eller, 1990). In 2006, Stokes, Norman, and Nana, (2010) found that over 76% of hospitality frontline positions were filled with females making them the primary proportion in the workplace; however, although there were more females than males in this industry, most of the males were in a higher position of power in the organisational hierarchy.

3. The Social-Cultural Model, (O'Hare & O'Donovan, 1998) proposes sexual harassment is seen as an effect of male domination. This model suggests that harassment is a means of maintaining male dominance over females, not only

occupationally but also economically, because of how men and women are socialised. Although not as prevalent today, historically most cultures required men to be raised to be assertive, while women were educated to be passive, avoid conflict, and to be emotional and sexually attractive (Williams, 2002). It was in the 1960s and 1970s that women started to change the way they viewed themselves, with the second feminist movement legislation designed to give women more equal opportunities alongside men (Feminist Activism. (2011).

4. The Natural Model (Eller, 1990; Gilbert et al., 1998) considers sexual harassment in hospitality to be the result of a natural attraction that may occur between two workers, forced together by the high stress levels of the role and long unsociable hours associated with the hospitality industry. Lerum's (2004) research supports this model, with findings that suggest that sexual banter may create a more team-efficient atmosphere for both men and women, in the stressful working environment in which they are employed.

These models overview the different contributors to sexual harassment in the hospitality industry. The first three models theorise that sexual harassment is influenced by power differentials between the victim and the offender. The Organisational Model suggests the power is created through the hierarchy of the business; the Sex-Spillover Model suggests the power is through the offender/victim ratio; the Social-Cultural Model proposes the power differentials are a natural phenomenon between men and women who have been socialised in this historically

acceptable way. However, the fourth model, the Natural Model, proposes sexual behaviours are a result of the natural attraction of men and women influenced by the working environment of hospitality and does not acknowledge any power differentials between the individuals.

2.3   Third-party sexual harassment in the hospitality industry

There has been a disproportionate number of complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace from the hospitality industry in New Zealand (Williams, 2003). It has also been identified as 'over-represented' from the number of harassment complaints received by the Human Rights Commission (2002. p.15).

In 2001, the Human Rights Commission noted that hospitality organisations accounted for 10% of sexual harassment complaints (Human Rights Commission, 2002). Calvasina (2005) and Eaton (2004) both suggested that third-party sexual harassment, that of a customer sexually harassing an employee, is prevalent in the hospitality industry, and believed sexual harassment cases were likely to be presented for litigation in the future. The Human Rights Act (1993) recognises an employer's responsibility in some third-party sexual harassment cases. Furthermore, with the increasing number of sexual harassment cases reaching courts of law, more employers are becoming aware of the possible detrimental outcomes that arise from sexual harassment, such as legal fees, damaging publicity, high employee turnover and low employee morale at work (Calvasina, 2005). Because employers can be held accountable for claims of third-party sexual harassment, some are attempting to

make changes in their workplace toward becoming a sexual harassment free working environment (Calvasina, 2005; Poulston, 2008). In New Zealand, a primary defence for employers to legally avoid responsibility in a third-party sexual harassment case, is to provide evidence that they have taken every care to avoid and discontinue any harassment that may have arisen (Restaurant Association of New Zealand, 2010).

A number of complaints of sexual harassment within the hospitality industry exist in which the harasser is the customer (Erikson, 2004). To investigate further how to prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the workplace, there is a need to explore other influences that may onset sexual harassment.

2.4   Influences of sexual harassment in the workplace

It has been suggested that sexual harassment is prevalent in hospitality because of the social influences and characteristics that are associated with this industry. The influences specific to this industry are the customers' power, the employee characteristics, and customer intoxication.

2.4.1 Customer power

Cortina and Berdahl (2008) and Lucas and Deery (2004) suggest that sexual harassment often occurs because of the power inequalities between men and women established through the hierarchy of an organisation. Cortina et al. (2008) theorise that sexual harassers are motivated by sexual desire and/or the domination

over the victim through power differentials, stating that 'power inequality facilitates sexual harassment, and conversely sexual harassment reinforces power inequality' (2008, p. 475). Dank and Refeinetti (1998) support this theory, although they emphasise that what makes sexual harassment different from other forms of sexual behaviour, such as flirting, is that harassment is unquestionably increased when a power imbalance is evident.

Power can be defined as 'a person or group that exercises control, influence, or authority (Collins Dictionary and Thesaurus, 2004, p. 932). An employee can be particularly vulnerable in an industry where his or her role is to serve and satisfy the customer, and success is rewarded monetarily. Financial power impacts customer-employee relations in an industry where the customers are paying for service, and may therefore believe they have the right to treat employees as inferior, which further creates a power and status differential between the two (Yagil, 2008).

In situations where tipping is a form of income, a number of female participants in a study by Folgero et al. (1995), stated that receiving tips was considered compensation for having to cope with harassing behaviours. In 2000, Seymour interviewed 24 participants from two separate restaurant types – one a fast food restaurant, and the other a traditional formal restaurant. Seymour found that employee participants felt tips were compensation for looking and acting in a subservient manner. Yagil (2008) believes this monetary transaction gives power to the customer. However, although these studies offer insights into the financial power

the customer may hold, they are based on etiquette held in the USA (Gonzalez, 2006), and as such cannot be generalised to the research on sexual harassment in the New Zealand hospitality industry.

Financial power is believed by Cortina et al. (2008) to enable a man to have power to sexually harass a woman, advocated by the employee's role, status and worth. The employees' position in hospitality can be seen to enhance the customer's experience, due to their appearance, attitude, uniform and skill (Erikson, 2004).

Power and status differentials also may appear in the hospitality industry because of its organisational culture. Gutek and Nieva's (1981) Sex-Role Spillover theory proposes sexual harassment is the result of a sexualised working environment through utilising the inherent sexuality of women's sex role in their working environment. In this context, it is believed that people treat female employees as sex objects rather than workers; therefore, in predominantly female occupations such as food and beverage service, sexual harassment may be perceived to be part of the job role, and a consequence of being a woman. Furthermore, because female workers see other women in the same position being treated as sex objects, most of the time they will not complain, but instead blame themselves (Gutek et al., 1981). The traditional role of women in subordinate positions in society therefore creates a power and status distinction between female employees and their customers.

Folgero et al. (1995) conducted a study of hospitality frontline employees which showed many considered sexual harassment an unfortunate but unavoidable part of

industry work. Most participants believed their position required them to assume an alternative persona for the role they played in their employment, and that consequently, uninvited sexual behaviour could not be considered sexual harassment. This illustrates a need to further investigate the definition of sexual harassment because there is a difference of perception in what constitutes sexual harassment between Poulston (2008) and Folgero et al. (1995). Although both studies provide insights into perceptions of job roles and attitudes towards sexual harassment, they were conducted a decade apart. Furthermore, Poulston (2008) received a higher response rate of over 500 participants compared to Folgero et al. (1995) who interviewed ten individuals.

Evidence shows sexual harassment to be one of the most degrading experiences of service work but many believe it is unavoidable in an industry where staff may be encouraged to flirt or use their sexuality (Worsfold & McCann, 2000). Management's high expectations of customer satisfaction may explicitly condone verbal aggression from customers in a setting which offers both alcohol and anonymity (Poulston, 2009; Pritchard & Morgan, 2006; Worsfold et al., 2000; Karatepe et al., 2009).

Research by Handy (2006) on sexual harassment in three separate industries in a small town in New Zealand showed the customer's degree of anonymity was a factor in how women in two of the industries dealt with sexual harassment from customers. If they knew the customers, they were more likely to handle harassment more abruptly, whereas when dealing with customers they did not know, they were more

constrained. This suggests that customers may take a moral holiday (see Hayner, 1928) when away from their familiar environment.

2.4.2 Employees' characteristics and behaviour

Hospitality employees are usually sociable, energetic and outgoing, and as a result may suffer more sexual harassment (Agrusa et al., 2002). Gilbert et al., (1998) and Rosenthal, Lockwood, and Budjanovcanin (2008) further suggest harassment is related to what the establishment sells, the customer-employee relationship, and the high level of social contact in the hospitality industry (Agrusa et al., 2002). These theorists show the varying reasons of attraction for people into hospitality; however, there is also a need to examine other reasons for entering this industry.

Some managers endeavour to employ people with the right attitudes who are positive, friendly and playful; other hospitality establishments expect their evening staff to give a service that is personalised, requiring emotional investment from employees in tolerating any complaints, harassment and friendly banter that may arise (Warhurst et al., 2007). Although some employers may deny it, the hospitality industry can promote the use of sexuality to please their customers and sell their products (Prattern & Lovatt, 2005). Many hospitality businesses place the burden on staff to distinguish between their own level of acceptable behaviour and sexual harassment they may encounter, whereas others preserve an informal working culture where these behaviours are often tolerated. Schultz (2003) found that in situations where workers endure long hours, women as well as men enjoy sexual

banter that comes with the job and find it helps them with stressful situations. People like and are attracted to people who are much like themselves, preferring to be in the company of like-minded people. As such, employees are likely to be compatible with and be attracted to people in the same occupation (Riach & Wilson, 2007). It is therefore important for employees to realise that other staff members often see sexual behaviours differently, and they need to be aware of other people's perception of sexual innuendos (Goldsmith, 1997). To minimise the occurrence of sexual harassment in such cases, Goldsmith (1997) advises avoiding sexually associated behaviours such as banter or innuendos altogether. These studies suggest that staff are have become more lenient in their attitude towards sexual harassment over the years, as currently these studies appear to show tolerance with some forms of sexual behaviour as part of the job. There is limited research on people who do not tolerate the sexual banter as part of their role, or, research investigating ways of creating a safe environment for all workers.

Most women in frontline hospitality work are young, do not use English as their first language and have little formal education at tertiary level, making them vulnerable in the labour market (Rosenthal et al., 2008; Poulston, 2008). Studies show participants with these characteristics were unlikely to complain about any sexual harassment they were subjected to because of the lack of policies in place, making it difficult to complain for fear of losing their jobs, and because they were unfamiliar with or ignorant of employment law (Rosenthal et al., 2008; Poulston, 2008). These studies show that many of these young women tolerate verbal comments, touching, sexual

harassment and physical abuse by customers because they may perceive they have no choice; however, recent New Zealand legislation and governing bodies have been promoting sexual harassment awareness in the workplace, as well as the 2008 article from the Restaurant Association of New Zealand promoting the implementation of policies and procedures in businesses to provide a safer working environment for all employees. It would therefore be prudent to consider more recent statistics from any publications to determine the outcome over time.

It is common for frontline employees to meet demanding and sometimes difficult customers with a smile. They manage their feelings to create a positive and satisfying environment (Kim, 2008). The term for this is 'emotional labour'. Originated in 1979 by Hochschild (Korczynski, 2002), emotional labour is described as the requirement of employees to have the right appearance, to look good, sound right and possess the emotional abilities to react in a certain way to satisfy customers (Korczynski, 2002; Warhurst et al., 2007; Williams, 2002; Kim, 2008). Folgero et al. (1995) and Guerrier et al. (2000) noted that a woman's effectiveness in frontline positions can be assisted by sexualised behaviour so that the customer returns. This may influence the recruitment of frontline employees who have this soft skill over hard technical skills that others may possess (Karatepe et al., 2009; Warhurst et al., 2007).

It has been shown that more experienced employees are better at distinguishing between their roles of work and their personal lives (Yagil, 2008). Both Yagil, (2008)

and Watt (2007), found that employees believed that sexual harassment was directed towards the role they played at work, and as such disassociated it from the person they were, outside this role. One female reservations worker stated the following:

I like it [interacting with guests] because I've always been raised not to worry about people [laughs] [...], when people get angry and start saying stuff I don't take it personally. [...] It doesn't bother me. [...] I understand they need to vent and it's not personal against me because they don't know me (Watt, 2007, p. 54).

Seymour (2000) also found experienced employees were better able to adapt their service style to suit particular customers and treat them appropriately to suit the individual. Participants commented that they felt they were paid for their 'emotional labour' and that an employee's smile, contrary to how they were feeling, was part of the position. Kim's (2008) study of emotional labour and burn-out showed that the more frequently employees needed to change their emotion to suit a situation, the greater the expectation from management, which resulted in burn-out and exhaustion for the staff member. This illustrates that although the emotional labour skill is certainly advantageous to the employer and may be easy for some employees to adopt, consistently having to utilise this type of skill with complaining or abusive customers can lead to negative consequences. Therefore, it is suggested that forced

use of emotional labour is not always necessary and can be illegal in some circumstances (Watt, 2007).

Employers in the hospitality industry often dress their employees to fit with their corporate image, clothing their staff in uniforms or setting dress codes. Some managers believe customers' experiences are enhanced if they are served by frontline staff who are attractive with visible sex appeal, and as such, dress them in certain styles of uniform which accentuate this (Guerrier et al., 2000; Korczynski, 2002; Riach et al., 2007; Warhurst et al., 2007). Seymour's (2000) research showed the waitresses were required to wear low-cut blouses and miniskirts in one of the restaurants studied. Many participants in Seymour's (2000) study believed that the uniform distinguished them from the customer, degrading them to appear subservient to the customer. Some participants commented on feeling very self-conscious in their required uniform and feeling sexualised in front of customers.

Many employees agree with the importance of a uniform policy, believing that the wearing of a uniform represents and promotes the company image (Warhurst et al., 2007). Warhurst et al. (2007) found that 85% of employees and 93% of employers regarded frontline staff image as important, noting that style is a significant aspect of a frontline staff member. Robinson, Franklin, Epermanis and Stowell (2007) propose that many employers require their staff to meet standards of grooming when addressing members of the public. For example, in the USA, Harrah's Casino in Reno has an extreme appearance and grooming policy.

- *All Beverage Service Personnel, in addition to being friendly, polite, courteous, and responsive to our customers' needs, must possess the ability to physically perform the essential factors of the job as set forth in the standard job descriptions.*

- *They must be well-groomed, appealing to the eye, be firm and body-toned, and be comfortable with maintaining this look while wearing the specified uniform* (Robinson et al., 2007, pp. 289, 290).

2.4.3 Customer intoxication

Graham and Wells' (2003) study proposed 'alcohol myopia' as an explanation of the aggression and harassment that occurs when someone is intoxicated. 'Alcohol myopia' identifies an intoxicated person who becomes more focused on salient cues from sexually attractive women interpreting these cues as an invitation. Products of this 'social mood' may be misconstrued by a customer, and by the end of the encounter, especially where alcohol is involved may see an invitation of some form of social acquaintance (Worsfold et al., 2000). Lucas et al., (2004) and Yagil (2008) believe if the waitress resorts to a more formal approach to counteract the misunderstanding, this may cause embarrassment for the customer and could possibly resort to some form of violence or other harassing behaviours (Lucas et al., 2004; Yagil, 2008).

Graham et al. (2003) found that when alcohol is involved, abusers may not register the extent of their behaviours and may verbally or physically abuse staff without

realising the magnitude of their outburst. This is of concern for young employees who may feel confident enough to defend themselves, but do not have the physical capability, in some cases requiring security staff to support them in situations with overly aggressive customers. This is where a strong policy needs to be put in place, to show the employees the correct procedures to go through to eliminate this occurrence before it begins (Lucas et al., 2004).

Other misbehaving acts from intoxicated people include the use of unpleasant language; the disparagement of frontline employees in front of other people, and unwanted sexual comments towards the employee (Harris, 2004). Findings from these studies illustrate that there is certainly a need for becoming aware of intoxicated patrons. There have been promotions running throughout New Zealand creating awareness and change to the alcohol socialisation in recent years. This demands new research to provide recent exploration into whether these issues presented are representative of the New Zealand culture.

2.5   Problematic outcomes from harassment

Threatening and rude customers have been found to have negative effects on employees, generating anger and depression. These factors can cause employees to feel degraded, humiliated and worthless, which may lead to more severe problems such as anxiety and emotional exhaustion (Yagil, 2008). Pizam's (2008), article relating to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in the USA showed that the highest rate of major depressive episodes in the workplace by a full-time employed

female was in the hospitality industry. This research shows the importance of training and policies in the workplace to encourage women to discuss issues associated with sexual harassment. Karatepe et al. (2009) believe job insecurity related to stress and burn-out may be due to insufficient training that leads to elevated levels of stress in the workplace. Their model shows that staff, confronted with aggressive behaviours from customers, experience emotional exhaustion which negatively effects their service delivery and job satisfaction.

In New Zealand, the hotel industry has a minimum annual turnover rate of 29% resulting in a $22 million turnover cost to hospitality annually (Williamson, Harris & Parker, 2008). Choi et al. (2009) found to replace a non-management employee would cost as much as 30% of the employee's annual salary. This illustrates that there is a financial as well as ethical reason to keep employees satisfied and safe in the workplace.

2.6   Preventing sexual harassment in the workplace

The literature on influences of sexual harassment has shown there are many characteristics that onset the occurrence of sexual harassment in the hospitality workplace. However, other studies have shown that when policies are implemented in such establishments, issues of unwanted behaviour from customers towards employees are reduced.

2.6.1 Policies

It has been shown that staff who have codes of ethics in the workplace are less likely to be sexually harassed, suggesting that employers who positively acknowledge the problem of sexual harassment have fewer sexual harassment issues in their workplace (Poulston, 2008). In an attempt to prevent sexual harassment, many hospitality companies are developing human resource policies to protect their employees. Such policies may include:

- *communicating that sexual harassment will not be tolerated in the workplace, creating 'harassment-free zones';*

- *information for victims on their rights and what procedures should be taken should they have any concerns; and*

- *being responsible for taking immediate corrective actions in any cases that may arise* (Dittmer, 2001; Go, Monachello, & Baum, 1996).

Although these policies are beneficial for an employee, there is still a substantial amount of work to be done in this area, more so in areas where employees may be encouraged to use their sexuality as an integral component of customer service. It would be effective to implement policies where a zero-tolerance approach is taken from senior management. Strong policies must be put in place with specific tools for staff to use when confronted with such unwanted behaviours. These measures and procedures could have only a positive effect on the hospitality industry.

Developing training programmes is becoming important for reputable hospitality companies (Lucas et al., 2004). A recent article showed that a hotel using a non-traditional training programme promoting fairness, ethics and consistency, decreased their annual turnover of staff from 66.5% in 1999 to 57% in 2000 (Choi et al., 2009). Choi et al., (2009) found that training programmes addressing issues such as sexual harassment have been shown to improve employee satisfaction, reducing the employee turnover rate from 89% in 2002 to 56.7% in 2003, while retaining 40% of employees who may have been lost, based on the 2002 trend. Because of the high interaction of the guest-employee relationship, it is imperative to hire and retain the employees with the right tools for the position (Poulston, 2008; Adruser & Brown, 2005).

Many hospitality staff work without adequate training (Poulston, 2008). Perhaps due to the high turnover of staff or the recruitment and selection process used, management seldom puts enough effort into training staff (Poulston, 2008). Establishments who have managers trained in human resources management have been found to function more effectively, in turn creating an environment of highly satisfied employees and reducing turnover (Choi et al., 2009). These studies show that training is an essential tool to utilise in hospitality establishments; however, due to the minimal research carried out in New Zealand, there has been no successful strategy for sexual harassment prevention in the hospitality workplace to date.

Seymour (2000) believes other strategies besides training need to be implemented in the workplace to give an employee a way to address sexual harassment while maintaining a sense of control and confidence. When harassment complaints are received by employers, it is important that they are acted on immediately, confidentially, and through qualified personnel (Calvasina, 2005). Indeed, the use of confidential helplines has been shown to be beneficial for staff (Rosenthal et al., 2008).

There have been recommendations of using trained personnel to support staff who experience sexual harassment. This has been found to be difficult in smaller businesses which do not have the funds to employ help or may suffer from poor management practices (Prattern et al., 2005). However, as the complexities of the legal system with sexual harassment and third parties increase, more companies are being held responsible for their employees' safety.

After a case is heard in court, employers are often required to provide evidence that policies have been read and signed by the employees to show that they have done everything in their power to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment in their workplace (Sherwyn, 2007; Yagil, 2008; Human Rights Act, 1993). This supports the theory that it would be more productive and cost effective for a company to train and retrain employees on a regular basis, with a zero-tolerance attitude in the workplace, than face charges in a court of law for third-party sexual harassment (Calvasina, 2005; Rosenthal et al., 2008; Adruser et al., 2005).

In attempting to address high levels of harassment associated in the industry, employees develop strategies to help themselves cope such as:

- *bribing customers to attempt to get them to leave the building;*

- *getting another staff member to cover the customer;*

- *faking emotional outbursts;*

- *using sexual attraction to defuse situations;*

- *talking to other staff members; and*

- *recognising that harassment is the problem of the customer not the employee.*
  (Yagil, 2008).

The responsibility for third-party sexual harassment should be at management level. Organisations need to empower their frontline staff with intellectual resources which become autonomous, demonstrating a zero-tolerance approach. Companies should offer employees the opportunity to take regular breaks, allowing time out away from the stresses of the front of house (Browning, 2008). Employees need to know their roles and the procedures to get support when required.

2.7   Summary

The hospitality industry suffers from exceptionally high turnover of staff, decreased productivity, and high absenteeism (Choi et al., 2009; Williamson et al., 2008). Sexual harassment has been linked to this occurrence with employees feeling degraded, humiliated and worthless, generating anger and depression (Pizam, 2008). The current legislation can hold the employers legally responsible. This may

result in legal fees and damaged publicity for the organisation (Williams, 2003; Williamson et al., 2008).

This review shows men and women have different perceptions about sexual harassment. It is difficult to define what sexual harassment is, given that many employees believe it is part of their role in frontline work and therefore tolerate it or even enjoy it (Folgero et al., 1995). Others see it as an unfortunate part of the industry and welcome change in organisations to protect the employees from this unwanted behaviour (Poulston, 2008). Some experienced employees have been shown to have the ability to adapt their service style to suit certain customers. However, young and uneducated staff members are less able to do this and are therefore susceptible to harassment (Korczynski, 2002).

This review also shows that employers should take action with their employees to avoid sexual harassment; however, any action taken generally appears to be for avoiding legal liability and economic loss more than for the employee's health and wellness. There needs to be an investigation into influences that onset sexual harassment such as the customer power, the employees' characteristics and customer intoxication.

There is currently a need for management to show strong support for their employees through written policies clearly advising employees of their legal rights and a zero tolerance of sexual harassment in the establishment (Restaurant Association, 2008). Not only is there a need to implement policies based on a zero

tolerance of sexual harassment, there is a need to train and continually re-train all staff, including management, in the knowledge of sexual harassment and strategies when addressing it.

There is limited research on sexual harassment in the hospitality industry in New Zealand. There are some issues that may relate to New Zealand; however with the New Zealand legislation relating to customer sexual harassment and alcohol in bars and restaurants that have been introduced in recent years, new research may produce different results. By investigating experiences of third-party sexual harassment in New Zealand bars and restaurants, this research will associate the factors found in the literature review known to increase the occurrence of sexual harassment and investigate what participants may endure to keep the customer satisfied. Because the literature review shows a need for policies to be implemented in New Zealand hospitality establishments, this study allows the opinions of the participants who work in the industry to be extracted, allowing recommendations to be made to help create a sexual harassment free hospitality industry in New Zealand.

3.0   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

The aim of this research is to investigate experiences of third-party sexual harassment towards female frontline employees to minimise or prevent sexual harassment from occurring in the workplace environment in the future. This chapter explains the methodology used, beginning with an explanation of what a qualitative research approach method is and why this type of design was selected for this study.

The interpretivist paradigm was used to explore multiple voices producing rich data. Specific questions in the interviews allowed further investigation into the participant's experiences of sexual harassment.

The derivation of the sample in the study is explained, along with the interview style, together with the techniques employed to avoid deception. Finally, the data analysis method is presented and the ethical issues arising from researching such a sensitive topic are addressed.

3.2   Research paradigm

An interpretivist methodology is conducted from an experience perspective. The concepts identified in the data arise through themes that emerge from interviews rather than developed beforehand.

An interpretivist paradigm was selected to produce rich data and provide a better understanding of the relationship between the participants' experience of sexual harassment and the influences that may surround the sexual harassment phenomena. Interpretivism is a way to gain insights through discovering experiences of participants and improving the knowledge of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry (O'Donoghue, 2007). Using this approach explores the rich complexities of sexual harassment towards frontline employees. The interpretivist approach determines the multiple realities of participants rather than single realities of harassment, exploring how these experiences differ through time and place (Neill, 2006) which is suited to this research because the individual experiences of the women can bring together a cluster of views allowing a more thorough investigation (Mertens, 2005; O'Donoghue, 2007; Schwandt, 2001).

Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006) describe an interpretive style as a subjective yet personal approach where the researcher feels part of the experience alongside the participants. This is extremely important when addressing such a sensitive issue as sexual harassment because the participant needs to be reassured and the interaction needs to be a personable and comfortable experience for both interviewer and interviewee.

An alternative paradigm, the Critical Incident Approach, isolates facts and characteristics of a critical incident that may have happened in the participants' experience (Schwester, 2011), investigating the incident that occurred, the way it

was managed by the participant and the outcome and impact that arose (Schwester, 2011; Karataş-Özkan & Chell, 2010). The Critical Incident Technique could have been useful in this study, though the interpretivist approach was found more compatible as the critical incident technique relies upon categorising and templating instances and experiences to find resolutions to solve the root cause. These resolutions may hold true now, but may not apply to future situations of sexual harassment where differing variables could influence another outcome. An interpretivist approach looks at the varying situation and does not apply to all people in all situations or even to different people in the same situation. With the limited sample size in this study, it would also prove difficult to provide an unambiguous conclusion for further research.

Interpretivism was chosen because it allows the researcher to probe the interviewees' experience of sexual harassment and become part of the study rather than being objective. Adopting an interpretivist approach allows for an enriched understanding of the situations involved, making sure there is no error or confusion when interviewing. Furthermore, during the interview, the participants may reveal other experiences of sexual behaviour they themselves may not have thought was relevant. This provides valuable data to the interviewer and allows optimal theoretical abstraction in the analysis phase.

McNeil and Chapman (2005) believe that semi-structured and unstructured interviews are the method of choice for the interpretivist approach because the

interviewer has an idea of the points to be covered in the discussion and can follow the participant's perception of their role in the industry and how they address their experiences with third-party sexual harassment. This results in a more in-depth analysis.

It appears that it has only been in the last six years that the interpretivist approach has become popular within hospitality research. Positivism has traditionally formed hospitality research with criticism being made of the interpretivist paradigm as providing only broad accounts of these particular disciplines (Lynch, 2005). However, in 2008, Tzschentke, Kirk and Lynch found positivism contributed little to their research, which was based on attitudes and behaviours within small hospitality organisations, and found that an interpretivist approach enabled them to gain richer knowledge about their participants' point of view (Tzschentke, Kirk & Lynch, 2008). Robinson (2008) found that this approach allowed other themes to emerge in his interviews, created through the participants' comments about their experiences allowing him to probe on other points.

Although at one time it appears the interpretivism approach in hospitality research may have not received much attention (Matilla, 2004; Lynch, 2005); in 2011, Ladkin (2011), found in her research on tourism and labour, that the introduction of gender studies was a prominent departure from the positivist paradigm, with interpretative approaches taking a more dominant role. Morrison and O'Gorman, (2008) also preferred the interpretivist paradigm in their hospitality research about hospitality

management theory because they found this methodology allowed a greater understanding of the theoretical social world of hospitality.

3.3   Research design

Qualitative research is used for case studies, focus groups, action research, and unstructured, semi-structured or structured interviews. A qualitative research design was applied to this study using semi-structured interviews for data collection.

Because of the sensitivity of the subject of this research, finding a sample was a challenge, so snowball sampling was used.

3.3.1   Snowball sampling

Snowball sampling is a common technique used in qualitative research (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). A snowball sample is a non-probabilistic sampling method used to recruit informants when finding participants becomes a challenge (Monette, Sullivan, & DeJong, 2010). Using the snowball sample method allows for speed of gathering information in an inexpensive way, without requiring formal access to a population (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011).

Snowball sampling requires the identification of a participant who meets the criteria specific to the study being undertaken. This study required female adults who had worked in a restaurant or bar for over six months. Following initial contact with acquaintances, these participants then approached other prospects and referred them back to the researcher (see Bernard & Ryan, 2009; Trochim & Donnelly, 2006).

Because sexual harassment is a sensitive area to study, the snowball sampling technique was useful for this research, especially with the challenge of recruiting participants who would be comfortable with revealing details of personal experiences encountered in their professional environments.

The initial three participants were personal acquaintances of the researcher and had been in the hospitality industry for over five years. These participants were able to recruit another five participants, one of whom recruited another two participants. As suggested, the original sample number was considered too small; another eight participants who met the research criteria were subsequently recruited through associates of the researcher. Participants were given an information sheet (see appendix two) and to ensure ease of participation, the interviews were carried out at their choice of location.

3.3.2 Interviews

Interviews were selected for this research because they allow a greater interpretation of the social phenomenon that is sexual harassment (Kwortnik, 2003; Mertens, 2005).

With sexual harassment being such a sensitive subject, the interview approach has advantages:

- *the interviewer can monitor responses;*

- *in-depth data which may arise from questioning may develop further responses thus resulting in new themes;*

- *interviews may have a higher response rate where participants are more inclined to answer questions where empathy can be shown by the interviewer with a subject of a sensitive nature rather than fill in a survey; and*

- *any questions that may be misinterpreted by the respondent can be explained by the interviewer* (Monette et al., 2010).

Interviews were regarded as valuable for this study because they would allow multiple themes to emerge from the responses, producing rich data, compared to the limited data from a quantitative approach (Monette et al., 2010). This was particularly useful because conversing allowed further trends to emerge that were previously not considered important to the study.

A structured interview employs a pre-determined series of questions and limited answers for a respondent to choose from, the advantage being that responses are uniform (Monette et al., 2010). This did not suit this research because it would not have allowed enough data to emerge.

Unstructured interviews are more conversational than structured questions and answers, utilising a checklist of areas to be covered rather than an order and script. The questions are open ended so the participant can reveal more about themselves and their experience. This style was not selected for the study because it would have evoked too much information that may have diverted from the desired

aim of the research (see Clarke, 2006). The compromise of semi-structured interviews was used for this study because it allowed rich data to be collected using the interpretivist approach.

To elicit rich data, interview questions included small prompts to encourage participants to expand on their responses. Because of the sensitivity of sexual harassment, it was essential to build trust and allow participants the freedom to express their own opinions and their experiences of sexual harassment in their own terms, yet this approach still allowed the interviewer to manage the direction of the interview (see O'Leary, 2005).

When carrying out an interview on a sensitive topic such as sexual harassment, the interviewer should ensure a relaxed atmosphere for the discussion, rather than make the participant feel interrogated (Easterby-Smith & Lowe, 2001; O'Donoghue, 2007). Mertens (2005) states that interviewing subjects in their own setting such as a bar or restaurant can add value to the interview and help the interviewer to understand the phenomenon. Taking these recommendations into account, the interviews were carried out at the participant's preference of location such as their work or home. For reasons of travel, time and accessibility, some interviews were carried out over the telephone.

The interviews included three sections of questions. Firstly, the participants were asked for basic demographic information related to age, ethnicity, highest level of education, length of time they had been in the industry, the department they were

employed in, and the position they held. This was followed by a more open discussion about customer-related sexual harassment experiences they had encountered in the industry. Finally, the third set of questions explored the companies they were employed by, and their knowledge of any policies and procedures in their workplace relating to sexual harassment and if such policies were effective.

3.3.3 Research questions

How the female participants define sexual harassment was important when carrying out this research. Finding themes in their experiences and comparing them with others was also very helpful.

Participants were asked 15 questions (see appendix three) designed to explore if they had experienced sexual harassment and if so, to find themes that may give further information about ways of reducing sexual harassment to a zero-tolerance approach. These questions concentrated on the effect and contributors of harassment, including the demographic characteristics of the participants and the customers, the employees' uniforms, monetary transactions from the customer, the setting of their workplace, the interviewees own personal experience of harassment, how they felt and how they responded to the experience, and, finally, any procedures based around the prevention of sexual harassment.

The research questions were developed to gain a better understanding of the reactions of the participants when confronted with sexually harassing behaviours. The goal was to understand the influences of harassment and the further development of previous strategies and tools that would clarify surrounding issues and whether sexual harassment can be managed in the industry.

The questions in this study were developed from previous research to compare the findings of authors cited in the literature review. For example, educated women appear more likely to have zero tolerance for harassment and other sexual behaviours. Questions about their age group and the length of time participants had been in the industry were based on literature suggesting younger women tolerated harassment more because they were not sufficiently experienced to effectively address the situation (Yagil, 2008; Seymour, 2000). The question pertaining to the participants' department and position at work was based on the level of authority they had in their department to investigate whether their position in the workplace determined a different perception of sexual harassment from the customer. The question relating to their ethnicity was to see if there were any trends relating to sexual harassment in frontline work because literature suggests that women whose first language is not English seem to endure more harassment (Rosenthal et al., 2008; Poulston, 2008).

In the semi-structured section of the interview, the attraction-based questions originated from the literature that stated that most employees in the hospitality

industry were attracted to the industry because of the social aspects and the hospitality environment (Agrusa et al., 2002; Gilbert et al., 1998). The question about the participant's uniform was to explore any themes related to the level of harassment they may receive associated with what they were required to wear.

Finally, questions on managing sexual harassment were based on what the participants believed could be done to manage harassment and included questions on managing sexual harassment from a company, individual and legal perspective.

3.3.4 Participants

The sample for this research was comprised of women employed in frontline food and beverage positions in the hospitality industry. Women were chosen because the literature states that most employees who are sexually harassed in the hospitality industry are women (Rosenthal et al., 2008). The women who took part in the interviews were aged twenty years or over and had worked in the hospitality industry for more than six months. They were of different ethnic backgrounds and had various levels of education. Ten women agreed to participate in the initial research, and another ten were subsequently recruited through associates.

The participants' demographic characteristics are presented in table 1:

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	Highest Qualification	Industry experience	Department	Position Held
Amy	20 - 25	European Samoan	Bachelor	4 years	Bar	Bartender
Beverley	20 - 25	NZ European	Postgraduate	6 years	Restaurant Bar	Waiter
Caroline	20 - 25	NZ European	High School	4 years	Bar	Bartender
Catherine	20 - 25	NZ European	High School	7 years	Bar	Manager
Hannah	46 - 50	NZ European	High School	8 years	Bar / Front Desk	Manager
Joanne	26 - 30	NZ European	High School	8 years	Bar	Manager
Kelly	20 - 25	NZ Maori	High School	6 years	Bar	Bartender
Rebecca	31 - 35	NZ Maori	Bachelor	12 years	Bar	Manager
Shelley	20 - 25	NZ European	High School	5 years	Bar	Manager
Stella	46 - 50	NZ European	Bachelor	10 years	Restaurant Bar	Manager
Sarah	20 - 25	NZ European	High School	6 months	Bar	Bartender
Hayley	20 - 25	NZ European	Bachelor	4 years	Bar	Bartender
Alison	36 - 40	NZ European	Bachelor	5 years	Bar	Bartender
Rachel	31 -35	NZ European	Bachelor	18 years	Bar / Banquets	Waitress
Kat	20 - 25	European	High School	7 years	Bar	Bartender
Charlotte	20 - 25	NZ European	Certificate	2 years	Bar	Bartender
Jacinda	46 - 50	NZ Maori	High School	15 years	Restaurant Bar	Supervisor
Lauren	26 - 30	NZ European	Bachelor	16 years	Bar	Manager

Table 1: Participants' demographic characteristics

The sample for qualitative studies can be considerably smaller than a quantitative study. In this study, it was important that the sample size was adequate to ensure rich data was discovered, but not too excessive so the responses become repetitive and eventually redundant; Mason (2010) refers to this as 'saturation'. Saturation was met after eighteen interviews; the interviews were discontinued at that point.

3.3.5 Ethical issues

Because of the sensitive nature of the research and the questioning, it was stressed to the participants that they could terminate the interview at any time they wished. Provision was made for participants to see an AUT counsellor if they wished, as required by the AUT ethics process. To gain ethics approval an ethics application was completed, and approval sought to ensure the research was conducted following AUT's principles of:

- Informed and voluntary consent.

- Respect for rights of privacy and confidentiality.

- Minimisation of risk.

- Truthfulness, including limitation of deception.

- Social and cultural sensitivity, including commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

- Research adequacy.

- Avoidance of conflict of interest.

After the ethics approval 10/73 was granted on 23rd of June 2010, the participants were contacted by telephone and appointments were made to conduct the interviews. They were each given a participation sheet (see appendix two), which gave them information on the research and what was required of them.

3.3.6 Data collection

Careful data collection procedures are imperative to advance the knowledge in social sciences. Data are collected from many sources; the most common being surveys and interviews (Axinn & Pearce, 2006).

The interviews for this study took between 10 and 40 minutes per person, depending on the comfort of the participants. Some participants spoke freely and enjoyed the process, while others appeared to find it uncomfortable and generally moved on hastily to the next question. These participants were given prompts but were not pressed. The interviews were taped with prior permission, using an audio recording device, and later transcribed into a written document. It took two months to interview and collect the data.

3.3.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis exposes themes that emerge through the researcher's work of exploring, categorising, explaining and defining the data collected (Huberman & Miles, 2002). Much like a complex puzzle, there are pieces 'that are so unique they can be seen straight away' (Dey, 2003, p. 41), whereas other pieces need to be grouped into categories to later sort further into themes allowing comparisons to be more effective for discussion later.

Adopting an interpretivist methodology made it impossible for the researcher to be objective because of her strong background in hospitality and the partnerships

developed with the participants of the study. Using an interpretivist approach allowed multiple themes to emerge through the interviewer's ability to investigate alternative paths that were highlighted during the interviews. For example, if a participant talked about an experience that created an interesting perspective for the research, she would be prompted for further information. This created the opportunity for multiple experiences to be discussed in the interviews and a thorough analysis of what the participant defined as sexual harassment and any influences that may have onset their particular experience. The study was interpreted through the lens of the researcher's personal experiences.

The initial demographic data in the first section of the interview were analysed using an Excel spreadsheet. These were the closed ended questions that were put into a spreadsheet as a list designed to make common themes obvious. This input and analysis was undertaken directly after each interview.

There are many different ways of coding and categorising information retrieved from interviews, such as transcribing the notes into a written document with wide margins for taking notes (Kwortnik, 2003). The cutting and sorting technique was found to be the most beneficial method for this study because it was easier to see the common answers. This technique easily highlighted themes present and allowed for the anonymity of the participant as the researcher did not know the contributor (see Gough & Scott, 2000).

The qualitative data analysis investigated themes and patterns that emerged. By segmenting, coding and organising the data, trends were easily identified. During the analysis stage the transcripts were read repeatedly to identify trends, and for word repetition to be easily identifiable. Words such as 'power' and 'intoxication' were highlighted because they had been identified in the review of influences on sexual harassment. Finally, each of the answers was categorised by the questions in the interview and comparisons were made to see which texts were similar.

3.4   Limitations

There are likely to be limitations to any research method. The participants may be more reserved in their opinion in interviews, whereas with another instrument, for example a questionnaire, they may feel more secure about their statements (Monette et al., 2010).

One criticism of the use of the qualitative design with the interpretivist approach is the possible disadvantage that a researcher may be too close to the subject being studied and less inclined to distance themselves to become objective, which may result in bias (Blaikie, 2009; Mackay, Maples, & Reynolds, 2002). To overcome this, during the interviews it was important for the interviewer to be objective and not lead the participants, to encourage and prompt answers, but not in a way that reflected the researcher's thoughts. Fortunately, this was not an issue in this research because the participants were open and forthcoming with their responses. One

difficulty that arose from the use of interviews was the length of time required to question the participants and transcribe the data.

The snowball sampling technique may result in low representative samples and cause bias and therefore greater error. Furthermore, as many participants were known personally to the researcher they may have had a desire to be helpful by offering information they thought the researcher might find useful to get the desired outcome. For example, the research question may be perceived by a participant as implying that sexual harassment is frowned upon and the participant may follow that cue (Clarke, 2006). Because of this, it was clearly explained at the beginning of each interview that there were no correct answers and the aim of the research was to find ways of understanding and managing harassment in the hospitality industry.

3.5 Summary

A qualitative research approach using interviews was the most appropriate method for this study because it gave rich data through a greater interpretation of the social phenomenon which is sexual harassment. It provided an understanding of the relationship between social experiences and phenomena in the hospitality industry.

Using interviews allowed a variety of themes to emerge compared to the data that a quantitative approach would have produced.

The qualitative design of the research allowed insight into the participants' experiences and allowed the researcher to become part of the study. The qualitative method allowed a general understanding of the situations involved, and enabled probing to gather further data allowing optimal theoretical abstraction. In the following chapter, the findings are discussed.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the findings from the interview transcripts, presenting the participants' profiles, their experience of sexual harassment and their opinions on managing sexual harassment in a restaurant / bar environment. Finally, the chapter shows whether sexual harassment can be reduced in hospitality, and if so, what tools can be implemented to encourage the elimination of sexual harassment.

4.2 Respondent profiles and opinions

This section introduces the participants' profiles. Following this, the findings from the interview questions are presented, opening with the participants' initial attraction to working in the hospitality industry, their personal definition of sexual harassment and their views on the influences which may initiate sexual harassment from customers.

4.2.1 Respondent profiles

As presented in table one, all participants were employed in the hospitality industry for six months or more. Most participants were New Zealand European, under 30 years old, and many held a position of authority. Of the eighteen participants, ten were aged 20 and 25, four were aged between 26 and 35 and four were aged between 36 and 50 years old. Fourteen were identified as European, one as Maori, and three of mixed race. Just under half had tertiary qualifications but all had completed some form of qualification. All participants had the required work

experience for the study, with most having over five years work experience in the industry (all totalled 137.5 years of combined experience in hospitality establishments). All eighteen participants worked in a bar; nine were in management, and nine were bartenders. An almost equal number of participants worked part time to full time.

4.2.2 Attraction to the hospitality industry

The participants offered four different reasons for deciding to work in the hospitality industry:

1. The hours in hospitality were flexible; therefore participants could fit their work around other commitments:

   Jacinda: *That was the only job that was going at the time … I had kids so hospitality was closer for me. It fitted in with my family.*

2. The social environment, being able to interact with people, both employees and customers, were all noted as positive attributes:

   Rachel: *I started off being a chef and really wanted to do that, but I missed the people interaction; I missed that whole frontline side of stuff, I really liked that part.*

   Catherine: *I like the social scene, I like the alcohol, and it's kind of accessible. When you're young it's easy to get a job in a bar … but I really liked it because I love interacting with people.*

3. Working with people was the sole attraction for the two participants over 45 years old:

> *Stella:*   *I like the customer contact, interacting with people and being in the frontline.*

4. Four stated that hospitality work provided a means to earn money with flexible hours while studying:

> *Rebecca:*   *It was accessible because I was studying at the time so it was the kind of a job I could do that was flexible for me.*

4.2.3 Defining sexual harassment

When asked how they defined sexual harassment, participants talked about 'unwanted attention', or anything that was 'uncomfortable' to the individual. This made it difficult to identify what sexual harassment is because each participant's opinions differed about what constituted 'unwanted' or 'uncomfortable'.

Most of the younger participants defined all sexual behaviour as sexual harassment; however, two participants stated that 'some customers could get away with more than others'. When asked what Charlotte perceived to be sexual harassment, she responded:

> *Charlotte:*   *Sexual comments, touching all of that.*

> *Interviewer:*   *Is that applicable to all customers or do you have a different tolerance between regular customers and strangers?*

Charlotte: There's the odd one or two [customers] that it's fine with, but when they go on, you know from the same person, and it gets a bit much, then I don't tolerate that.

Kat believed the term sexual harassment depended on individuals and their comfort levels:

Kat: Personally, I mean it's a flirtatious industry anyway, so you do get banter, you do get sexual innuendos in the workplace. I suppose it's just where you feel comfortable, and being strong enough to say 'oh no, too far'.

Some participants said touching, or inappropriately touching should not be tolerated. However, Stella had a slightly different perception, believing what she called the 'odd grab' to be acceptable, a view partly shared by Hannah. Both were over 46 years and had been working in the hospitality industry since their twenties:

Stella: I don't really care about sexual remarks or jokes, ... you know if it's said between two friends … or a regular that's okay, but with a stranger or a patron that's not okay…I mean the issue is that back in the day you know, comments were the norm and you kind of got a pinch or whatever but now everything is PC; what is actually harassment? Surely it's just the unwanted attention to that particular staff member.

Hannah: [It is sexual harassment when] the customer touched in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, because I don't really care about sexual connotations or banter or anything like that but I don't like people getting in my bubble. Once they cross that, it's all over [laughs].

When talking of their experiences of harassment (see section 4.3 and 4.4), some participants appeared to be relaxed, laughing about their experiences and making light-hearted comments. For example, Hannah's observations about a flirtation were typical of the many comments offered. Joanne further commented:

> Joanne: To be honest it's quite a fine line in this industry because we are all to an extent expected to flirt to sell beer and beer is generally sold to men. I personally would say any unwanted touching [is harassment] because [with] comments, you can't really take any comments to heart you know. In the hospitality industry I think sexual banter is okay but probably not in another industry.

Some participants tolerated certain forms of sexual behaviour as being part of their work environment, although more from customers they knew, and regular customers, than they would from strangers:

> Kat: If it's someone I know, yeah you're more kind of accepting towards it. If it's someone you see every day you develop a close relationship with them … you're not going to be so fazed by someone even touching your arm or anything like that… if it's people I don't know there's no need for them to touch me. It's just kind of being aware of that line really, that they don't cross it.

Catherine said she was more likely to tolerate some comments from regular customers but would be 'absolutely appalled' if it were from a stranger. Believing 'anything uncomfortable' to be sexual harassment, Catherine commented that any sexual comments about her she construed as sexual harassment:

> Catherine: Harassment for me would be anything that made me uncomfortable; it can be comments as well; even if it was someone I liked, respected and got along with, even just words.

This view was supported by other younger participants who viewed any sexual behaviour as sexual harassment.

When participants were asked what percentage of women they thought had been harassed in the hospitality industry, the responses were varied:

- Ten thought over 75% of women had been harassed in this industry.

> Rebecca: Gosh, I'd say out of ten, probably eight. It [harassment] happens especially if the women are young and attractive. You know especially with the drinking age being 18 years old, a lot of the younger guys, or older guys in a group, they can be quite in your face.

> Catherine: Huge totally 100%, depending on their personality I guess, but in the hospitality industry you're not going to get many staunchly women because they're in the hospitality industry to be liked you know, well not to be liked, but they like being around people.

- Three thought 50% or 65% of women employees had been harassed.

- Two thought 30 to 40% of women had been harassed.

- Two respondents did not think it was 'that high' with one commenting:

> Lauren: Sexual harassment is just not accepted anymore, people know it, I will tell my bar staff they're more than welcome, if they feel that someone has crossed the line, that they should tell them

and come and tell me and I'll make them leave. It's just not accepted anymore.

- One was not sure:

Kelly: I don't know, I'd say it wasn't that high.

Rachel believed that harassment could be increased in hospitality based on the female employee's role:

Rachel: The majority [of employees have been sexually harassed] if they're good at their jobs, the majority would have been sexually harassed.

Interviewer: If good at their jobs, what do you mean?

Rachel: Because when you are in this industry it is about making people feel comfortable it's about being nice to them, it's about wanting to give them attention and if you do that, especially when people are drinking and stuff, they sometimes think of it as more and that they can get somewhere with you.

Although many believed over 50% of female frontline employees had been sexually harassed, Catherine, who was vehemently against any sort of harassment, said 100%. Kelly, Kat, and Hannah, who thought the occurrence of harassment against women was less than 50%, also stated their perception of harassment as being touched inappropriately but thought verbal banter with sexual undertones was 'fine' depending on the relationship they had with the customer.

4.2.4 Views on causes of increased harassment in hospitality

Participants believed there is more harassment in hospitality than any other industry because of customer intoxication, for example:

> *Sarah:*   *For the fact that there's alcohol and that people don't actually know when to stop drinking.*

> *Catherine:*   *Alcohol loosens people up. It happens more because of the social side, because when they're around their mates they do things just to be cool, to be liked, to be funny… I would notice the change in someone when they start drinking at the bar at night to the end when they would get loud and forward. You learn fake from reality.*

> *Kat:*   *I suppose there's alcohol involved, therefore people's inhibitions are lowered a little bit. That I can wear my own clothes, it's not as professional as walking into a reception desk, and you get the welcoming 'Hello, how can I help?' With hospitality it's more 'Alright boys you wanna drink'? And it's more the kind of colloquial conversation their [customers] having with their mates.*

Other participants believed sexual harassment occurred because of the appearance of staff members suggesting that female staff members who wore revealing clothes were 'asking for attention' (Amy). Many participants believed that uniforms would decrease the incidence of sexual harassment in hospitality.

Participants perceived the social environment within the industry, such as food, alcohol, late hours, and interaction with strangers, was also a contribution toward the high rates of sexual harassment. Comments from participants were made about

intoxicated men socialising with their friends and treating the female employees as though they were subservient. Other participants commented that the degree of intoxication alters a customer's persona:

> Rachel: I think because, there is alcohol involved, people lose their inhibition... A lot of people think we are there for them and they can do what they like and you know you want people to feel good, you want them to come back, so you're lovely to people and all of it combined, you get a little recipe for harassment.

Finally, many participants acknowledged the issue of women being young, attractive and not experienced enough to handle the aggressor, instead serving at another part of the bar avoiding the customer. For example:

> Beverley: Well, if you look at waitresses, generally they tend to be young pretty girls, the types I imagine to be harassed the most as they are more vulnerable and perhaps unsure of how to handle the situation. I don't think it would really happen to the older ladies as much as they have more experience and are probably more wise and confident as to how to handle it. Being 16 at the time and working in this industry I had no idea how to handle such situations, often relying on older, more experienced staff to help me out.

4.3   The customer

The following section illustrates characteristics of a customer that may influence their sexual behaviour towards an employee in the hospitality industry. Participants highlighted two contributors:

1. the power a customer may hold, with sub-components relating to age, social group, sense of anonymity and ability to reward, and;

2. the degree of intoxication of the customer.

4.3.1 The power of the customer

A strong theme of power as a contributing factor to sexual harassment emerged, categorised into subsections associated with a customer's age, social group, professional status, sense of anonymity (i.e. being away from home), and his capacity to provide or withhold rewards and tips.

4.3.1.1 The age of the customer

The age difference between the employee and the customer gave the participants a sense of power imbalance. Over half of those interviewed related to the power a customer may have over employees who are young and inexperienced.

Many participants expressed compassion for the younger women working in their establishment who were new and did not have any experience of addressing older men and their sexual comments, participants saying they would protect these women when necessary:

> Jacinda: *Waiters get too scared to say anything; they're scared because they'll lose their job. I used to tell them you won't lose your job you've got witnesses around you that can back you up and then the person that has been harassing you will be banned from our restaurant. I had to help quite a lot of young girls out.*

Caroline commented that she was training two young female bartenders who were inexperienced. She stated that if they were approached in a harassing way (from a male customer), they would become nervous and work at the other end of the bar to avoid unwanted attention.

Most of the participants aged between 20-25 years had been in the industry for over four years and gave the impression they were confident and would protect themselves if necessary. For example:

> Beverley: *I don't think it would happen to the older ladies as much; they have more experience and are probably more wise and confident to handle it.*

> Caroline: *The younger staff are in the firing line a lot more. I've been in my job a long time and people have tried it on [in the past] but not much anymore. With the new staff they do; I've got two new girls that I'm training at the moment and they're pretty scared of some customers, they won't go near them. They're 18 and 19.*

When asked what the average age of the harassing customer was, two participants over 46 years of age both said between 50 and 60 years old; however, most of the participants between 20 and 25 years old said that customers who were in their late 20s were the harassers.

4.3.1.2 Social groups and personal status

Customers' social groupings appeared to provide a strong power base when supported by each other and encourage inappropriate behaviour, especially when

they are intoxicated. General comments from participants were about men in social groups who were intoxicated and behave inappropriately in front of their peers.

One felt that when men get together and become intoxicated, they encourage each other to degrade and embarrass the women working in the bar. Rebecca said she saw one man trying to get across the bar with much encouragement and hilarity from the men in their audience.

Joanne in particular said that sexual harassment increased in her establishment, when men were supported by three or more other men. Other examples of this are:

> Kat: *If you get large groups of men, nine times out of ten they're really nice guys if you get them on their own ... When you get men in a group mixed with a lot of alcohol they do get cheekier and they do forget their inhibition … if you embarrass them sometimes they stop or sometimes they'll get worse because they get all defensive. But you could imagine that that same guy if you're talking to him one on one in a bar he'd be good as gold and he wouldn't be rude. It's just men and that kind of social attitude they've got. The alpha male.*

> Beverley: *I generally just got the younger men like 20s to 30s in a group. I think they just liked to show off by saying gross things or chatting me up.*

> Kelly: *I was the only girl on that day but he was with a group of guys and he was pretty drunk as well.*

One respondent suggested some executives or businessmen believe they have power over women in the workplace. Amy stated that she was harassed, often by

men who were older than 45 and would often intimidate the bartenders, stating she believed that because they manage their own employees every day, they can manage the bartenders in the same way.

4.3.1.4 Ability to reward (e.g. tips)

Several participants believed the provision of monetary rewards was a contributor to a customer's belief in their power. Comments were also made about how the employees can adapt their demeanour for potential tips from the customer and for the customer's return business.

It was apparent from the interview transcripts that there is a perception that managers hire women who are young and attractive and expect them to be accommodating to the customer in return for business and tips:

> *Stella:*   *He [the customer that sexually harassed] was a regular that used to spend big money.*

> *Shelley:*   *You're building a rapport with them to get more tips or more money.*

> *Rebecca:*   *They hired one guy but they wanted women to draw the guys in, get the bar pumping, get the money going over the bar, and they told us that is how we got our rewards – our tips – friendly banter with the guys and that's how they make their money, you know serving the under 21s you get the hot girls on the bar for like special functions like the 21st.*

Catherine made a similar observation to Rebecca's, stating that she thought the customer believed he had power over her because he brought business into the bar and regularly bought alcohol for other customers:

> Catherine: He would get pretty mouthy when he was drinking like that and he demanded to be a sexist pig. He spoke to other women like that because he had money and brought customers into the bar.

Some participants described harassing customers as 'regular customers' who knew the managers and felt they could treat them (the participants) as they pleased with no repercussions, because of the business loyalty and financial rewards they were providing to the business.

When asked if she had ever been sexually harassed by a customer, Charlotte told of her experience of sexual harassment, but did not complain to her management because the offender was a regular customer in his late forties. When asked if she had been sexually harassed, Charlotte commented that she had, but she did not take it to management because she did not believe they would support her. Instead, she avoided him as much as she could because he was a regular customer.

> Charlotte: Personally I'd say yes, but it's nothing I'd really go and say anything about [to management] because they [the customers] were regulars and my manager would rather lose me than the regular because he's the one who spends money [laughs]. I'd get comments or the odd slap on the arse but mostly comments.

Some companies have policies that put their staff members first, although more for economic reasons such as the cost of replacing a staff member:

> Lauren: *We don't have any problems here with sexual harassment, and that's because my staff know that I will back them up. They're not afraid to come to me and tell me because I will defend my staff; that's only twenty dollars walking out the door compared to a staff member that I would have to replace if they think they can't come back, you just don't accept it.*

Participants between the ages of 20 and 26 years responded that they did not want to defend themselves for three reasons:

1. The concern of a complaint from the customer to the manager.

2. The harassment would not be taken seriously.

3. The fear of dismissal.

One respondent had an altercation with a regular customer in which he threatened to have her dismissed. After the dispute, Catherine saw the customer outside the bar she worked at, where he continued with his abuse:

> Catherine: *A man once called me over 'Hey sexy, hey sexy', I turned around one day and said 'My name's Catherine. If you want something from me you can call me by my name' …he threatened me with his position because he was a regular at the bar and the owners knew him … one night we were out clubbing and I saw him and he said some sexist comment to me. I felt really uncomfortable. He was a real creep and he was around his mates and he said 'Oy big tits come over here' I got in a massive confrontation … he was with another man and the other man threatened my friend.*

4.3.2 Degree of intoxication

Intoxication was believed to be the foremost contributing factor relating to the occurrence of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry, and many thought alcohol gave the customers 'Dutch courage' and 'relaxed them'.

Recounting their experiences with sexual harassment by an intoxicated customer, many participants stated they were inappropriately touched.

- Three were cornered and intimidated
- One was threatened with her job after defending herself against insulting remarks
- Three were spoken to in a manner that they construed to be vulgar
- Two were confronted physically and insulted by sexual remarks

All participants stated the men were intoxicated. One commented:

> Hayley: *The only time I have really experienced anything borderline harassment is when they're completely intoxicated. And because the bar is open so late we have to deal with a lot of drunken people until the morning.*

When confronted with this behaviour, all participants said that most of the time, they ignored it or refused the customers' service. However, two participants requested support from their management in separate incidents:

- One respondent felt her job was at risk because the customer knew her manager, she did not go to management with the problem until the customer began sitting outside the establishment stalking her.

- Another respondent spoke to her management who talked with the customer but did not ban him from the bar because he was a regular with financial advantage:

Amy: *People become more sort of flirtatious when alcohol affects them. Most of the time it's kind of free-flowing alcohol. It makes them change.*

Shelley: *That makes a big difference; intoxication makes a big difference, it makes them more confident. When they first come in they're sober and fine and four drinks later they're trying to grab you.*

4.4   The employee

The following section introduces factors associated with female employees who the participants believed motivated unwanted sexual behaviour. Five common contributors were highlighted in the interviews.

1. Age

2. Appearance

3. Deportment

4. Ability to manage harassment

5. Perceptions about job responsibilities

4.4.1 Employees' age

During the interviews, participants seemed confident in their role and some were not prepared to endure any sexual behaviour. Stella and Hannah (both over 46 years old) began working in the industry when harassment was perceived to be the norm and tolerated. Jacinda, who is in the same age group, however, would not tolerate any sexual behaviour. When asked what she perceived sexual harassment to be Jacinda responded:

> Jacinda: *I'd say all of it [sexual behaviour] is harassment, if something like that happened we would go straight to the higher up boss and tell them that someone is harassing us or trying to touch us and if something like that was going on, the younger girls would come and tell me, and I had to go and report it to the big manager.*

Although Stella and Hannah both believed the odd sexual behaviour and sometimes inappropriate comments were part of their role as a hospitality employee, the younger participants found it to be an uncomfortable and intrusive experience:

> Hayley: *I really haven't had to deal with anything too bad [sexual behaviour] because I just tend to ignore it [nervous laugh]. I find it harder to deal with it.*

> Sarah: *I was going downstairs to get more bottles of alcohol and I got stopped at the stairs by a young guy…he would not let me go … it ended up the bouncers were watching anyway, so I just tried to push him out of the way and walked back down the stairs . That's what you get when you're a young person.*

Several said that at first they were nervous or found it 'creepy', but they believed that as they gained more experience and confidence they found it easier to resist such behaviour:

> Joanne: *It's things like grabbing you as you go past, that has happened in the place I work and to be honest I don't hesitate in slapping hands away and certainly tell them it's not appropriate, cut them off and get them out. If it is going to happen to me then it could happen to anybody.*

> Catherine: *I can't remember what he said but it was really rude, something dirty and disgusting, and he told me he was going to get me dismissed. I ended up grabbing him and slamming him against the wall [laughs]. After that when I was at work he came and sat across the road and stared at me all day but I told my bosses and they banned him.*

> Rebecca: *I was downstairs locking up and as I was coming upstairs he was at the top [of the stairs]. He said to me 'Oh you're quite new aren't you? You're quite young?', then he started to make his way down the stairs. Being the bullish person I am I just walked straight up to him and pushed him out of the way. Then he goes 'Oh you like it rough do you?'*

4.4.2 Employees' appearance

When asked whether they were required to wear a uniform, several stated they were. Only one was a fitted upper garment, but other compulsory uniforms consisted of a white shirt or a black upper garment with black skirt or trousers. Some were not required to wear a standard uniform. However, they were expected to follow

guidelines when wearing their own clothes such as the colour of the clothes; however, the style was optional.

One participant's attraction to working in a bar was that she was allowed to wear what she wanted and had the chance to 'dress up' and liked to wear 'glamour clothes' (Alison).

Overall, the general perception was that uniforms may have an impact on the level of harassment that occurs:

> Kat: I think uniforms are a great idea. I've worked in bars where girls haven't had to wear a uniform and they do chose to wear skimpier clothing and it shows a bit more … I've worked in bars until 4am in the morning and I'll wear a short top, because everyone else around me is all dressed up; it's a Saturday night and it's going to be hot so you'd wear a singlet or something to keep you cool. I think that's what would stop it [sexual harassment] though; if you're wearing a shirt with high collars you're less likely to receive harassment.

Management's preferences for employees who were young and attractive were also apparent in the participants' views. Half of the women believed the company they worked for hired employees for their appearance, but their compulsory uniforms were not revealing, and these women were not as aggressively harassed as the women who did not have a standard uniform. For example:

> Joanne: My bar tries to employ for good looks. You know they employ the girls with the looks and the boobs [uniform consists of fitted upper garment and trousers].

Another participant's opinion on appearance in hospitality establishments:

> Beverley: If you look at waitresses, generally they tend to be young pretty girls, the types I imagine to be harassed the most, as they are more vulnerable.

One went into detail about personal comments she has received while on shift:

> Catherine: Something that could be quite minor – older men commenting on my breasts – that happens quite a lot, especially if they drink more and they feel like it's their right to do whatever they want to your body and quite often it happens all the time. They'll be like 'You got such a good figure' or 'Hey sexy come over here'.

Many participants believed that an employee's appearance is associated with the occurrence of harassment:

> Jacinda: It just happens when they [customers] come in for dinner and that… or sometimes we'd get a group of people and they'd be intoxicated anyway so we'd have to deal with that and make sure it wouldn't go any further…. Especially if the girls are pretty you know guys look at them like you're easy meat, some of them are drunk when they come in and end up going for the girls.

Participants believed that if a uniform was more formal, the level of harassment would be reduced. Most even liked the idea of uniforms, noting:

> Caroline: Most uniforms are pretty ugly, but some are quite revealing and some are quite tight around the bum or low cut. I mean you're pretty much just putting yourself out there to get harassed.

Beverley: *I think that the dress standards and make-up and especially length of uniform needs to be addressed to stop them [female staff] being targets.*

Catherine: *I like the idea of uniforms. I think what you wear can control the amount of attention you attract. I worked with a girl that wore really low-cut tops and push-up bras and she would get comments all night but that is something they're asking for whether they think about it or not. I think if you had really nice shirts you're not going to get as many comments as you are if you've got breasts sticking out in their faces.*

4.4.3 Employee perception about job responsibilities

Some participants appeared to connect their own sexualised labour such as flirting, to an increase in financial benefits to the establishment. They spoke of having to build a rapport with customers as part of their job and management's implied expectation that they should develop relationships, flirt and even at times tolerate sexual undertones as part of their job. For example:

Interviewer: *Did you ever come across much sexual harassment?*

Alison: *No, because I just think it's human nature, you know people try to pick up people all the time. It's really hard to not have someone flirt with you, you know but is it harassment or is it flirting?*

Interviewer: *Did you get flirted with a lot?*

Alison: *Yes [laughs] of course.*

Shelley: *It's more one on one [when waitressing] you're the only person addressing with that particular person so you're building a*

> rapport with them to get more tips or more money. They think they know you on a more personal level so they think they can take things further.

Kelly: Because we deal with people more ... it's just we're more for the customers, I mean the reason you're there is to talk to customers, to make friends and make them feel comfortable and so they keep coming back. You kind of have to put yourself out there more I think.

Beverley: Constantly needing to be friendly and approachable, this can also make customers think the staff are keen on them or are able to put up with their behaviour. I don't know, maybe staff also think it will affect tips or think they may get bad feedback to the manager at the end of the night on paying the bill.

Such comments reflect the participants' beliefs that it's part of their role to flirt and build rapport. Interestingly, one participant observed:

Rebecca: Actually the boss at my previous job that I had used to say to me we only hire women and we only had young women, I said we can't do that, we need some guys on, especially for security purposes. So they hired one guy.

Rachel commented about when she was younger in the role:

Rachel: But you know when I was younger, people make remarks like that and you would kind of just laugh it off or just walk away and not do anything about it because you didn't know what to do or say because as a hospitality worker you can't tell them to go away.

Many participants considered flirting to be a part of the job. One participant aged between 20 and 25 stated that some sexual behaviour was 'okay' if the customers were young in their early twenties, because that was her 'comfort zone' but getting comments from older men was just 'creepy' (Shelley). Alison commented on sexual behaviour as a 50/50 hit commenting 'some of them are really cute' [laughs].

Of those who did not tolerate flirting, one participant stated she knew that it happened and that it was sometimes enjoyed by other staff, but she just wanted to 'do her job' (Beverley):

> Beverley: Really just the other young girls, I mean I worked with one girl who actually enjoyed it and gave as good as she got but I guess that makes it harder for you to stop them in their track when they start out on you.

From their comments it is evident that several participants had learnt to adapt their demeanour to let customers know sexual harassment would not be tolerated, but without embarrassing a customer in public:

> Charlotte: If I was being harassed, I would talk to them myself. I said to one guy the other day I didn't like his behaviour and he said sorry, he didn't even realise he was doing it, that it was actually offensive.

> Joanne: It's a fine line in this industry because we are all to an extent expected to flirt because we have to sell beer and beer is generally sold to men, You can't really take any comments to heart you know, not sexual jokes. I think in the hospitality industry I think sexual banter is okay but probably not in another

> *industry. Regarding sexual advances; I would say that just leads to things and anything that involves beer is too much of a risk.*

> Hannah: *But guys seem to think that just because you're happy with having a laugh like that they may go a little too far. In the end I just get irritated and tell them to go away.*

4.5   Management's role

Comments from the participants render defining sexual harassment difficult; participants stated that they viewed anything 'unwanted' as sexual harassment. However, their individual perceptions of what constituted 'unwanted' were different. Some were comfortable with flirting but would not tolerate inappropriate touching; others would not condone any sexual behaviour whatsoever. With such differing opinions, defining what actually constitutes sexual harassment is challenging.

4.5.1 Training

When asked what their organisation could do to help reduce the occurrence of harassment, all responses included one key tool: training. Participants thought that training was extremely important, especially for younger and inexperienced staff. Many understood that confidence needs to develop through experience and not solely through a training session, but all believed training was essential to control sexual harassment.

Most participants had never been trained in ways of handling sexual harassment in the hospitality industry, except one who had been trained on a bar manager's

course. All believed that training should be implemented in hospitality establishments. For example:

> Jacinda: Oh it should be you know you've got a lot of young girls out there today. It should be in every company.

> Hayley: I think there would definitely be room for training. We get told how to deal with drunken people we should be able to be told how to deal with sexual harassment too.

Rebecca attended harassment training through her bar manager's course and believes it was beneficial:

> Rebecca: I think it confirmed a couple of things that I already knew about when addressing with customers and stuff, giving it a name; a lot of common sense stuff but putting into a book that you can take away with you and refer to.

4.5.2 Policies

When they were questioned on sexual harassment policies in their establishment, for many, the response was they were not aware of any. Only four of the eighteen participants knew about policies in their place at work, one being introduced only after a participant's frightening experience of being cornered on the stairs by an intoxicated man who made sexual advances and offensive comments. If it had not been for this, Rebecca pointed out, her bar would not have any policies in place.

Lauren's establishment had strict rules on sexual harassment in the workplace, not only for staff but also for the customers:

> Lauren: *Yes we have policies in place and there are house rules in place as well so if they feel uncomfortable they can come to me or if they feel comfortable they can kick them out or go to the Duty Manager if they're not.*

Other participants commented on not having policies in place, but noted that managers talked to them during staff induction about sexual harassment and what to do if it arises. Even without policies in place, many participants believed that their managers would take sexual harassment seriously. Some participants felt confident they had support from security hired to secure the premises:

> Hayley: *I don't tolerate any sexual behaviour, one time I was waiting down the other end of the bar and a guy was walking past to go to the bathroom when he touched my bottom as he walked past and I was like 'Excuse me'. I went and grabbed a bouncer and he kicked him out.*

Of those who stated complaints from staff members would not be taken seriously, two stated it was because women thought it was 'part of the job' (Stella), while another said they just 'let you get on with it' (Amy).

Of the several participants who believed it would be taken seriously, five were in management positions and stated they would protect their staff themselves. Another stated her manager might give the customer a warning, but would 'probably not throw them out because they are spending money' (Caroline).

> Sarah: *The only thing I'm aware of is, if something did happen to you, you need to tell the bouncers and you also have to tell the bar manager.*

Interviewer: How do you know this is what you are supposed to do?

Sarah: The bar manager had spoken to us about it.

Kelly: My company is pretty strict on it [sexual harassment]; they will take the staff member's side. There have been a few instances where the managers have come out, and we have bouncers there on weekends and really busy nights so we can just talk to them and they can take the guy out...our management have a lot of support for staff and they back us up.

Caroline: There are no policies in place to my knowledge. A complaint would be taken seriously I reckon, depending on what type of girl it was; it wouldn't be an even split for any female, it would depend on what their history was or if they've cried wolf before.

When asked what can be done to eliminate sexual harassment, one responded that nobody can 'bring awareness to a problem where no one actually knows how big it is' (Stella). The same respondent believed that harassment must be addressed at the company level, and meetings should be compulsory to discuss as a team what tools can be used to reduce sexual harassment in their workplace.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

Three themes emerged from the interview transcripts: power, uniforms and training:

1. The customer's power over the female employees and the level of intoxication of the customer were the two foremost reasons for sexual harassment in the participant's workplace.

2. The requirement to wear revealing uniforms, the participant's work experience, and the age of employees in the establishment were other factors that may increase the occurrence of sexual harassment.

3. Company policies and staff training are necessary to effectively reduce sexual harassment in this industry.

This chapter discusses the findings of the thesis, covering the themes associated with the employee and the customer, plus the influences that may increase the occurrence of sexual harassment. The chapter also introduces the Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model, a model based on the findings and in the opinion of the participants, identifies the key influences that may affect the onset of sexual harassment. The chapter concludes that sexual harassment should be managed in the hospitality industry through implementing training programmes, company policies and, consistently acknowledging management support for any

situations that may arise. Applying and reiterating these tools must be led by management with a zero-tolerance approach to sexual behaviours in the workplace.

5.2 Factors affecting sexual harassment

5.2.1 Age of the customer

In New Zealand, 42% of female employees in frontline hospitality roles are under 25 years old (Whiteford & Nolan, 2007). They are attracted to the hospitality industry because of the social contact (Guerrier et al., 2000). This is of concern for female employees who are young, and may be less inclined to complain to management about any harassment they are subjected to for fear of consequences that may arise from the customer and / or from management (Rosenthal et al., 2008).

Most participants in this study were under 30 years old and had been in the hospitality industry since their teenage years. The common attraction for working in hospitality was unquestionably the socialisation of the industry and the people involved; however, the age difference between the participants and the customers sometimes leads to a power imbalance. Participants who were much younger than the customers who sexually harassed them were more likely to be intimidated by their customers' actions (see section 2.1.1 and 3.1). Some participants commented that they would not be so concerned if the sexual comments came from men closer to their own age, but they would be very uncomfortable if it were from men much older than themselves.

Although some of the younger participants felt comfortable approaching management for support when facing sexual harassment, others felt intimidated because the customer in question knew the manager. This was a concern for the younger respondents because they were not trained to deal with harassment situations. They avoided their harassing customers to escape the situation. This approach has been proven to lead to short- and long-term problems for both employees and management (Choi et al., 2009; Gilbert et al., 1998).

5.2.2 Financial benefits

Financial transactions between the customer and the employee or establishment can be perceived by the customer as a form of control over frontline staff, and employees who receive tips are viewed as being compensated for the treatment they have to endure. The role of the waitress, in the customer's view, is to serve and satisfy (Poulston, 2008; Seymour, 2000). The perception that customers can treat employees as they want because of their financial power meant many participants in this study did not complain to management for fear of dismissal. Therefore, they overlooked much of the harassment directed at them. This confirms findings in previous literature (Folgero et al., 1995; Poulston, 2008) in which it was suggested that where there are greater age differentials between customers and staff in hospitality, staff are less likely to complain about sexual harassment. One manager was cited as hiring young and attractive girls, expecting them to be 'nice' to the customer so the customer would return in future and be more generous with their

tips (see section 4.2.4). Pursuit of tips is not regarded as a major contributor to the power differentials between the customer and employee, because tips are not obligatory in New Zealand. Fear of regular customer complaints to management, with the added concern of potential financial benefits to the business, were influences which affected the outcomes of sexual harassment by the employee. This conflicts with Handy's (2006) view, whose research found that employees would not condone sexual harassment from regulars but would be more tolerable of it from strangers. The participants in this study were more restrained towards regular customers through fear of not being supported by management or fear of dismissal due to the continual financial benefits the customers bring to the business.

Overall, a financial advantage to a business was evident when participants commented on tolerating sexual harassment. It also appears harassment was endured because of the perceived outcome that would occur from management had the participant complained.

5.2.3 Degree of intoxication and its effects on social groups

Intoxication, a fundamental contributor of sexual harassment in hospitality (Harris, 2004; Prattern et al., 2005; Graham et al., 2003) is a likely explanation, for why there is more alcohol-induced sexual harassment in hospitality than any other industry. This research presented alcohol as the foremost perceived influence behind sexual harassment. Participants believed alcohol, gives customers an altered perception of reality, resulting in two outcomes:

- The customer misinterprets hospitable behaviour as invitations for sexual advances; and / or

- The customer becomes intimidating towards the staff, conveying a sense that the staff are subservient to them.

These findings were consistent with those of Graham et al. (2003) and Harris (2004) in terms of alcohol-induced behaviours.

Participants described their experiences of sexual harassment as occurring only when customers were intoxicated. Specifically, when intoxicated, sexual harassment by men in social groupings appeared to be for the amusement of their peers and to gain their group's approval. Many participants believed customers did not register the difference between their behaviour and reality when they were intoxicated and often acted in a way they believed would promote their status in their group. Several participants noted incidents of men behaving inappropriately in front of their peers in a vulgar manner (see section 4.3.1.2). This illustrates the need for management to encourage and support their staff with intoxicated patrons, and for management to stop the customers from drinking further.

Most participants had endured sexually harassing experiences from intoxicated customers (see section 4.3.2) and this illustrates the necessity to implement supportive management policies and training so inappropriate behaviour is reduced, and staff do not need to endure harassment as part of their role. The aim of this research was to investigate experiences of sexual harassment and explore ways of

eliminating it from the industry. These findings demonstrate how crucial it is to implement policies and provide training to create safer and enjoyable working environments.

5.2.4 The employees' appearance

Taking care of the guests was the prime theme that emerged from Watt's (2007) research on customer service and emotional labour, with managers of frontline departments stating that the customers' needs come first and that the recruitment of staff with the 'right look' and the 'right personality' was considered a priority over experience and skills. It is suggested that some managers may dress their staff in certain styles of uniform which accentuate the employee's attractiveness and visible sex appeal because they believe this enhances the customer's experience (Guerrier et al., 2000; Korczynski, 2002; Riach et al., 2007; Warhurst et al., 2007).

This study found that uniforms have an impact on the level of sexual harassment that occurs in the workplace. Participants suggested that implementing a uniform that is modest would decrease the occurrence of sexual harassment. Many participants stated that the more revealing the uniform, the more attention the employee receives. One participant (see section 4.4.4) stated that some women 'asked' to be sexually harassed as a result of the way they dressed, placing the responsibility for sexual harassment on the female employee and not the offender. However, women have the right to work in a safe environment, and are often reliant on supportive management to implement this (Human Rights Commission, 2002).

The last issue addressed in this section concerns the consequences of requiring hospitality frontline staff members to wear revealing uniforms. There is a direct relationship between the provocative clothing and sexualisation of a frontline role (Folgero et al., 1995) and the severity and frequency of sexual harassment incidents. Participants in this research who wore trousers and shirts were not harassed as frequently as participants who wore more revealing uniforms.

5.3 The Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model

A Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model has been developed to illustrate the contributions to the theory and impact of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry as identified in the literature review and in the data of this study (section 4.2 and 4.3 respectively).
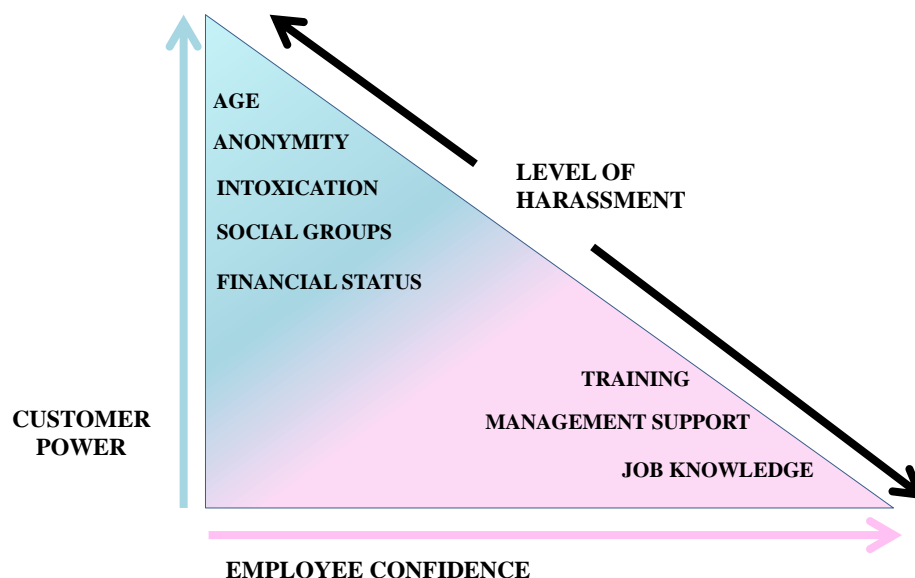
Figure 1: The Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model

The model presents the vertical line representing the customer and characteristics that may increase the occurrence of sexual harassment in a bar / restaurant setting. Presented in section 4.2 these influences are the customer's power over the employee, the customer's age, social grouping, the level of the customer's anonymity, their capacity to provide or withhold financial rewards and tips and the degree of intoxication.

The horizontal line of the Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model shows the participants' characteristics and employment environment. Presented in section 4.3 the participants' opinions on factors that influenced the customer's perception of entitlement to sexually harass an employee were the employee's age, appearance, deportment, their ability to manage sexual harassment and, the employee's perceptions about their frontline role and what it constitutes.

The Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model proposes that the opportunity for, and occurrence of sexual harassment also increases when the customer's age, level of anonymity, intoxication level, financial status and social grouping increases.

The Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model also illustrates that when the employee's working environment is intolerant of sexual harassment, and management support, company policies and employee training are at an optimal level, the customer's power is minimised, thus decreasing the power imbalance between the customer and the employee in turn preventing the unwanted sexually harassing behaviours.

Although the characteristics of age and appearance of an employee were perceived to encourage sexual behaviour, to use these factors against an employee would be discrimination, as an employee cannot adjust her age and also, should be able to dress as she wishes and still feel safe in her working environment. These findings showed to the contrary, that participants believed that women who wore revealing clothes experienced more aggressive sexual harassment than those who were more modestly dressed. This supports the recommendation that an increase in training for young employees is fundamental because as literature has shown, many do not have the confidence to defend themselves or may not know the correct procedures to get support (Yagil, 2008; Lucas et al., 2004).

Although this model does not show the outcomes of sexual harassment within the hospitality industry, it does clearly demonstrate the causes of sexual harassment.

5.4   Management of sexual harassment

There are different perceptions of what frontline hospitality role is in this research. The participants aged over 30 years old appeared to support the Socialisation Model (see section 2), believing sexualised labour to be part of their role and incorporating it as part of their job. However, participants under 30 years old disagreed with the Socialisation Model, and would not tolerate inappropriate behaviour, believing that sexualised labour creates a misconception from the customer who would perceive the sexual attraction being reciprocated by the employee.

Some participants believed that some sexualised behaviour is part of the traditional role of hospitality frontline employees. Therefore, they may allow their staff to address sexual harassment issues themselves. This illustrates the importance of training and retraining members of staff including managers.

The emotional and sexualised labour content in the participants' work in this research was apparent with many participants commenting that their role required them to flirt and at times tolerate sexual undertones to increase alcohol consumption and return business (see Gilbert et al., 1998; Korczynski, 2002; Warhurst et al., 2007). Flirting was without doubt seen as part of their job, with some employees enjoying it. However, other participants did not find it appropriate, making it a difficult task to define the boundary between certain sexual behaviours and sexual harassment, as noted by Goldsmith (1997).

Although one of the participants in a management role implemented a sexual harassment policy in her workplace, after enduring an intimidating sexual harassment experience; some of the other managers believed that some sexual behaviour they received were a result of working in the hospitality industry. This is of concern considering the law surrounding sexual harassment in New Zealand, especially when the consequences of these situations can now find employers facing legal action if they had not provided a safe environment for their staff members.

5.4.1 Employees addressing sexual harassment

The denial of the sexual harassment phenomenon in many hospitality operations is evident by the lack of company policies, making it difficult for staff to distinguish where some sexual behaviour ends and sexual harassment begins (Yagil, 2008).

Findings of this study confirmed those in previous literature (See section 2) (e.g. Boyd, 2002; Folgero et al., 1995), that there are often no sexual harassment policies implemented in an organisation. Although employees were left to distinguish right from wrong, some participants believed they were 'life smart' (Beverley) and would not inconvenience their management with problems they encountered. More experienced participants in this study were able to adapt their service style to suit particular customers and felt able to deal with any situation appropriately.

In attempting to address the high level of sexual harassment they had experienced, the participants used strategies such as asking another staff member to relieve them from the customer so they could take time away from the situation. Other participants believed it was their particular approach and professionalism that stopped harassment from occurring. If they acted professionally, they would not attract the unwanted attention and customers would know sexual harassment would not be tolerated. While still being hospitable, they had the confidence to say 'no'.

5.5 Implications for practice

5.5.1 Training

The hospitality industry experiences an exceptionally high turnover of staff (Choi et al., 2009; Williamson et al., 2008), some of which is a consequence of ethical issues such as sexual harassment. Poulston's (2009) study (See section 2) of ethical issues and workplace problems in hospitality suggested that the use of codes of ethics and management programmes demonstrating non-tolerance of sexual harassment, and engaging in staff training to address such issues would effectively reduce sexual harassment in the workplace.

Participants in this study agreed that employees need to have a better way to deal with sexual harassment without feeling belittled (See section 4.1.1), and that there is a need for strategies to be implemented which will give them a sense of control and confidence. Because of the high interaction between guests and employees, it is imperative to provide employees with the right tools for their position, as most in this study were currently working in hospitality without training.

Some theorists believe the high employee turnover in the hospitality industry is also due to insufficient training (Karatepe et al., 2009; Schultz, 2003). Training was the general solution that emerged from participants in this research to reduce sexual harassment in the future, especially for staff members who are not experienced enough to cope with possible harassing situations. Training programmes are the

responsibility of the company, and management must work with employees to address issues of sexual harassment.

Almost all participants in this study had never been trained about sexual harassment in the hospitality industry. Although many seemed confident in their position, they all reported numerous unwanted advances and sexual comments supporting previous literature that strategies must be put in place to help employees with difficult customers.

5.5.2 Company policies

In an attempt to prevent sexual harassment, some hospitality companies are developing human resource policies to protect their employees (Robinson et al., 2007). However, although this is a positive incentive, only one of the participants in this study reported having a company policy in place. Policies may be in place in reputable hospitality companies such as international hotels and franchises; however, in smaller bars and restaurants it may be less of a priority. Even without policies in place, many participants believed their managers would take a sexual harassment case seriously. As shown in the previous literature, third-party harassment is becoming the responsibility of businesses; therefore, it would be beneficial for all parties involved to have an official company document discussing sexual harassment and how to handle relevant situations. These measures and procedures could only have a positive effect on the hospitality industry.

One participant who has a management role stated that their organisation had policies for the prevention of sexual harassment, believing it is more economical for the business to request that the customer leave the premises in these situations than replace a staff member who may not want to return to work. This supports the findings of Choi et al. (2009) who state that to replace a non-management employee could cost as much as 30% of the employee's annual salary. There should be provisions for all establishments to have measures in place to eliminate sexual harassment, not only for economic reasons, as some management believe, but also to create a safe and enjoyable working environment for their staff members. Many participants in this study believed having the confidence to address sexual harassment comes with experience and cannot be taught in a training session. However they still believed training is imperative for moving forward in creating a zero tolerance when controlling sexual harassment in the industry.

5.5.3 Alcohol policies

It is important to have company policies and training programmes in place which relate to alcohol and alcohol consumption. Although there are signs displayed in bars and restaurants in New Zealand stating the legal requirements associated with the Sale of Liquor Act 1989, management must support their employees when addressing with intoxicated patrons.

Many participants in this research felt uncomfortable, finding it intimidating when encountering intoxicated patrons. Graham et al. (2003) note that when alcohol is

involved, the abuser may not register the extent of his or her behaviour, and may verbally or physically abuse staff without realising they are doing it. This is supported by the findings of this study.

With fines up to $10,000 for not following the Sale of liquor Act 1989, it is of concern for staff who are legally responsible for the amount of alcohol the customer consumes while on their premises. In this case the employee needs to be supported by management, and sometimes security staff, when faced with intimidating situations.

5.6   Summary

The denial of the sexual harassment phenomenon in many hospitality operations is evident from the lack of company policies in some hospitality establishments, making it difficult for staff to distinguish where some sexual behaviour ends and sexual harassment begins. In an attempt to prevent sexual harassment, some hospitality companies are developing human resource policies to protect employees (Robinson et al., 2007). In this study, few participants had company policies associated with the occurrence of third-party sexual harassment in place.

The Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model proposes that when the customer's age, level of anonymity, intoxication levels, financial status and support from a social group increases, so does the occurrence of sexual harassment. The model also shows that when the employee's working environment has management support, company policies and training programmes in place, the customer's power

is at a minimum. This decreases the power imbalance between the customer and the employee and prevents any unwanted sexually harassing behaviours in a positive and proactive way.

The hospitality industry experiences an exceptionally high turnover of staff (Williamson, et al. 2008; Choi et al., 2009), some of which is a direct consequence of issues of a sexual nature. Poulston (2009) demonstrated that the use of codes of ethics and management programmes utilising a non-tolerance approach to sexual harassment would effectively reduce its occurrence in the workplace.

This study found almost all of the participants had never been trained about sexual harassment in the hospitality industry. Training programmes are the responsibility of the company who must work with individuals to deal with issues of sexual harassment. Participants believed that specialised training programmes for sexual harassment should be a priority for reducing harassment in the future, especially for staff who are not experienced in handling certain situations.

6.0   Conclusion

6.1   Introduction

The research limitations, recommendations, and future directions for further research related to sexual harassment in New Zealand hospitality businesses are addressed in this chapter.

6.2   Perception of sexual harassment and the female frontline role in the industry

When defining sexual harassment, what is 'unwanted' or 'uncomfortable' differs between individuals and is defined by a person's personal values.

Participants appeared to connect sexualised labour to increased alcohol consumption and return of business. Having to build a rapport with customers as part of their job role and the management's expectation to develop relationships, flirt and even at times tolerate sexual undertones was apparent in the participants' responses.

6.3   The Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model

This study introduced the Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model, developing factors associated with third-party sexual harassment in hospitality, founded on the interview transcripts. All components of the Customer-Employee Sexual Harassment Model are important when investigating the contributing factors to sexual harassment in the hospitality Industry.

It is evident that some managers want employees to be young and attractive. The concern for young female staff in hospitality is that insecure or inexperienced employees may tolerate difficult customers because they do not know another way. There is still evidence that shows that young employees are the individuals who are most susceptible to behaviours like sexual harassment. Therefore, the need to support these employees is essential so that they can enjoy job satisfaction, empowerment and an increase in productivity.

Social grouping is another contributor to the cause of sexual harassment. The customer's encouragement from their peers was commented on by all participants. This confirms the theory that men in social groups and intoxicating environments may increase the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Monetary reward is an expression of power, with participants admitting to adapting their demeanour for tips and return of business. However, tipping was not considered as much a contributing factor for tolerating sexual harassment as was the fear of the customer complaining to the management, or feeling unsupported because of the customer's financial benefits to the business.

When the customer is intoxicated, this research has shown that there was an increase in unpredicted outcomes, especially for younger female staff, which illustrates the much needed support from management or security staff.

6.4   Research limitations

This study explored female participants' experiences with sexual harassment from customers in their workplaces. It further investigated the participants' opinions about whether sexual harassment can be managed or eliminated completely from the hospitality industry.

Limitations included having a small sample (18) making it difficult to generalise the issues associated with sexual harassment in hospitality across New Zealand. Participants' views may not represent the opinions and experiences of other women in this industry, and therefore may not be a representative sample.

There are also limitations to the use of interviews as a research instrument, especially the length of time required to question the participants and transcribe the responses. However, the key advantage of using interviews in this study was creating relationships with the participants and being able to probe further into their experiences and thoughts without them feeling uncomfortable.

The use of the snowball sampling method involved some participants who were not personally known to the interviewer, which may have resulted in their withholding information, particularly due to the sensitive nature of sexual harassment. This was evident in participants who were personal acquaintances of the interviewer, and were more comfortable with the discussion, not requiring as much encouragement as those who were unfamiliar with the interviewer.

A concern leading up to the interviews, was any distress or embarrassment a participant may feel triggering a memory that had been successfully forgotten. Fortunately, all of the participants were appreciative of the effort being made to make a difference in New Zealand about the issue of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry.

A final limitation could have been the author's bias which may have affected the analysis and understanding of how the information was interpreted.

7.0   Recommendations

It is a common perception that hospitality management depend on staff to distinguish between sexual harassment and other sexual behaviour. Some employees maintain an informal working culture where some sexual behaviour is often tolerated.

These recommendations have been put in place by identifying factors in the literature review and the current data in this study.

7.1   Training

Implementing training programmes with a zero-tolerance for sexual harassment are the responsibility of the management team. Almost all participants in this study reported that they had never been trained in preventing sexual harassment, but believed it would be beneficial for all staff. It is essential to incorporate sexual harassment policies to ensure that staff know they are supported by management and are not left to distinguish or even tolerate unwanted sexual behaviours.

Based on the interview transcripts, it is recommended that all hospitality establishments train their staff with policies based on:

- Allowing the staff member time away from the frontline environment and a situation which may cause them mental distress.

- Management to be approachable and to show support whenever they are needed.

- Security to be available on busy nights.

- Monthly staff meetings with discussions on health welfare and safety including sexual harassment.

Based on previous literature, it is recommended that all hospitality establishments have the following policies in place:

- A certificate of compliance can be awarded to establishments who have had their staff professionally trained by an industry consultant in ethical issues, and sexual harassment. This will be given by a qualified New Zealand certification body following a health and safety audit that has been carried out on the organisation by a third party.

- Government subsidy available for staff training on ethical issues in the industry, specifically sexual harassment (Prattern et al., 2005).

Strategies must be implemented for a zero-tolerance policy which will give them a sense of control and confidence. Because of the high interaction of the guest-employee relationship, it is imperative to provide employees with the correct job description and management support before they start in their employment.

7.2   Individual company policies

It would be desirable to implement company policies that incorporate a zero-tolerance approach lead by management. These policies will identify procedures for staff to go through to stop sexual harassment from occurring, which will entail that

employees' initially approach their management for support. Knowing that there is management support for employees when it is needed increases job satisfaction and safety.

7.3   Uniforms

Taking the concerns of the participants from this study into consideration, standardising a uniform is essential to minimise unwanted attention. Uniforms are perceived by the participants to have an impact on the level of harassment that occurs. Modest uniforms may decrease the occurrence of harassment. A standard uniform of a modest upper garment with trousers may help to minimise harassment yet can still be flattering for the person wearing it. If the uniform is the choice of the staff member, guidelines should be put in place for staff on what they can wear to ensure the reduction of sexual harassment from occurring.

8.0   Future Research Directions

This research has shown the different perspectives of women employed in the hospitality environment in frontline positions. Although there has been considerable research on sexual harassment, most literature has either investigated internal sexual harassment in organisations with hierarchy influences or has been based around a victim's perspective.

This study has provided evidence of individual's different perceptions of the term 'sexual harassment' and has also identified a variety of causes that may affect the occurrence of sexual harassment in the workplace. To further increase awareness of sexual harassment in the hospitality industry, there is a need to study the customer also.

Interviewing customers and observing them in hospitality establishments, especially where intoxication is involved, could help identify situations in which sexual behaviours or unwanted sexual harassment might occur.

A more extensive study of women from a variety of hospitality establishments around New Zealand, would add to third-party sexual harassment literature, and provide the industry with tools that would help develop a consistent zero-tolerance attitude to sexual harassment.

These two studies could provide New Zealand hospitality vital tools to becoming a zero-tolerant country towards sexual harassment in the workplace.

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10.0 Appendices

Appendix One

MEMORANDUM

Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

To:	Jill Poulston
From:	**Madeline Banda** Executive Secretary, AUTEC
Date:	23 June 2010
Subject:	Ethics Application Number 10/73 **Playing with fire: can sexual harassment in the hospitality industry be managed?**

Dear Jill

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC) at their meeting on 10 May 2010 and that I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of AUTEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at AUTEC's meeting on 12 July 2010.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 23 June 2013.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to AUTEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 23 June 2013;

- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 23 June 2013 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that AUTEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. AUTEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring that research undertaken under this approval occurs in the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact Charles Grinter, Ethics Coordinator, by email at ethics@aut.ac.nz or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 8860.

On behalf of the AUTEC and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Madeline Banda
Executive Secretary
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee
Cc: Beth Waudby beth.waudby@hotmail.com

Appendix Two

Participant Information Sheet

AUT
UNIVERSITY
TE WĀNANGA ARONUI O TAMAKI MAKAU RAU

Date Information Sheet Produced:

1 May 2010

Project Title

Employee experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in hospitality: an exploratory study.

An Invitation

My name is Beth Waudby and I am currently enrolled in my final year in the Masters of International Hospitality Management degree. I have chosen to conduct a study on sexual harassment in the hospitality industry for my thesis, to complete my degree. I am looking for ten participants to answer in-depth interview questions regarding sexual harassment, give comments on sexual harassment and provide general demographic information such as age etc. I invite you to take part in my study. Your participation is voluntary, your identity remains confidential to me, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. You have the opportunity to correct any quotes made by checking the notes and transcript from your interview so you can give feedback if you wish, and withdraw anything you are not happy with.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to take an in-depth look at social trends in sexual harassment in the hospitality industry. I aim to find out if sexual harassment can be completely prevented in hospitality workplaces, and if so, what methods organisations can use to coach staff in techniques to control customer harassment.

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

The recruitment is through personal contacts. From working in the industry, I know many women who have encountered sexual harassment at work, and in informal conversations with me in the past, you have shown an interest in participating in my research.

What will happen in this research?

We will agree on a time and place for the interview. Then I will conduct an in-depth interview with you, asking you a number of questions. Your name and workplace will be kept confidential and you will have the opportunity to stop the interview at any time if you wish.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Because this research is about sexual harassment in the workplace, you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

If you wish you may bring a support person with you to your interview. Furthermore, I will stop the interview and tape if you request it, and if you wish to withdraw from the study, your recording and notes relating to your interview will be destroyed. If you wish, you can receive counselling from an AUT counsellor; this can be arranged by calling 921 9999 extension 9992, and citing the name of the study.

What are the benefits?

You will be contributing to a study that may provide direction for staff training in the hospitality industry, and I will be able to complete my thesis.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your name and place of work will not be used in my thesis, and the data stored securely on AUT premises.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

As I will be travelling to you, the only costs you incur would be your time.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Please take one week to consider this invitation; I will be contact you around 10th May 2010. Your participation is voluntary, so if you agree to participate but change your mind later, you can still withdraw yourself and your data from the study up until the time I have completed the interviews.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Please complete the consent form enclosed and confirm your participation when I contact you on 10th May.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

Yes. The thesis will be available online through AUT and a summary of the report will be available after my research has finished. If you want to be notified when these are available, please note this on your consent form.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr Jill Poulston, jill.poulston@aut.ac.nz *09 921 9999 ext 8488*.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEC, Madeline Banda, *madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz* , 921 9999 ext 8044.

Who do I contact for further information about this research?

Beth Waudby, *bethwaudby@hotmail.com*, AUT University.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23rd of June 2010. AUTEC Reference number 10/73.

Appendix Three

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Section A – The Participant

If I could just ask you a couple of questions about yourself. This is completely confidential and I would appreciate it if you could be as honest as possible:

1.   **What is your highest level of education completed?**

□   No Qualification

□   High School / College

□   University – Diploma / Bachelor

□   University – Postgraduate

2.   **What is your age group**

□   20-25

□   26-30

□   31-35

□   36-40

□   41-45

□   46-50

□   51-56

□   56-60

□   60 +

3.   How long have you worked in the hospitality industry?

_____

4.   Do you receive tips?

Yes   ☐   No   ☐

If yes: on average how much per night?

_____

5.   Are you

☐   Full time

☐   Part time

6.   What ethnicity do you belong to?

_____

7.   What attracted you to the hospitality industry?

_____

8.   Which department do you work in?

☐ Front desk   ☐ Bar   ☐ Room service

☐ House keeping   ☐ Kitchen   ☐ Banquets

☐ Administration   ☐ Restaurant   ☐ Other

9.   What is your position in the industry?

☐ Waiter (restaurant)   ☐ Waiter (bar)   ☐ Waiter (banquets)

☐ Bartender   ☐ Front desk clerk   ☐ Housekeeper

☐ Kitchen aide   ☐ Bell boy   ☐ Assistant Manager

☐ Manager   ☐ Executive   ☐ Other

Thank you for this information. Now I would like to go into the interview and ask you some more open ended questions. Please do not forget that you can terminate this interview at anytime and you do not have to answer any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. Again this is completely confidential and I appreciate your honesty.

Section 2   Interview

1.   **What attracted you to working in the hospitality industry?**

_____

2.   **Do you have to wear a uniform and if so can you describe this to me:**

_____

3.   **What do you perceive as sexual harassment in the hospitality industry?**

(Researcher to keep the following in mind if this is not brought up by the participant)

A.   *Sexual jokes*

B.   *Attempted to draw you into sexual banter*

C.   *Made offensive sexual remarks in public or private*

D.   *Attempted to make a romantic relationship with you*

E.   *Treated you differently because of your sex*

F.   *Made you feel like you were being bribed with rewards or consequences*

G.   *Touched in a way that is uncomfortable*

4.   **What percentage of women in the hospitality industry do *you* think have been harassed?**

_____

5.   Have you ever been sexual harassed by a customer while employed in this industry?

_____

6.   Would you feel comfortable telling me about it

A.   Where it happened:

B.   When it happened:

C.   How did this make you feel?

D.   Did you do anything about it?

_____

7.   Do you remember how old this customer was:

_____

8.   Was there anything about the customer that you can recall?

(Researcher to keep the following in mind if this is not brought up by the participant)

Frequent guest, VIP, male, female, part of a group?

Did the customer treat other staff the same?

9.   Why do you think there is more harassment going on in the hospitality industry than in any other?

_____

10. What do you feel could be done to minimise harassment occurring?

      A. On a company level

      B. On a legal level

      C. On a social level

      D. On an individual level

Section 3 – The company

1.   With regards to your company, do they have any policies in place on sexual harassment?

2.   Has an employee made a formal complaint to your knowledge, if so how seriously do *you* believe it was taken by management?

3.   Have you been trained in addressing with sexual harassment?

4.   If yes, did you believe it was constructive?

5.   What do you believe was beneficial about it?

6.   What do you think could have been improved?

7.   If no, do you believe it should be implemented?

Appendix Four

CONSENT FORM

Project title: *Employee experiences and perceptions of sexual harassment in hospitality: an exploratory study.*

Project Supervisor: *Dr Jill Poulston*

Researcher: **Beth Waudby**

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 1st May 2010.

- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.

- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.

- I agree to take part in this research.

- I understand my name and that of my workplace will not be published, and my identity will remain confidential to the interviewer.

- I understand that I will have an opportunity to check the transcript or notes from my interview, and alter anything I am not happy with.

- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):

Yes   ·   No   ·

Participant's signature: ....……………………………………………………

Participant's name: ....……………………………………………………

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

……………………………………………………………………………..

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 23rd of June 2010 AUTEC Reference number 10/73

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.