Sexual harassment at the workplace from an ethical perspective

A document analysis on how the occurrence of workplace sexual harassment is influenced by the organizational and leadership antecedent that are part of the ethical climate

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Preface

Dear reader,

In September 2019, I started the pre-master Business Administration at Radboud University in Nijmegen. After finishing the pre-master, I chose to specialize in the master 'Organizational Design and Development', which I started in September 2020. Now, almost one year later, I have finished my master thesis, which results in me graduating; something I am proud of.
I look back on a very meaningful couple of years. In particular, I have learned a lot during this trajectory of writing a Master Thesis, which is way out of my comfort zone. Nevertheless, I have enjoyed the last few months of working on this research.

This research focuses on workplace sexual harassment from an ethical perspective. Unfortunately, sexual harassment is still a relevant topic which is still something that is experienced by employees in organizations. Finding out about how relevant this topic remains, has inspired me to choose workplace sexual harassment as a topic for my Master Thesis.

Over the last few months, I have worked in close collaboration with my supervisor Claudia Groβ. I would like to sincerely thank her for her guidance and support during this trajectory. Besides, I would also like to thank my second reader, Nora Lohmeyer for providing meaningful feedback on my research proposal halfway through this process. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for supporting me during this process; it means a lot and is greatly appreciated.

Hereby, I proudly present you my master thesis.

I hope you enjoy your reading.

Anoeska van de Kraats

Abstract

Sexual harassment is still something that is experienced by employees in organizations, with cases in for-profit and non-profit organizations. It is known that the ethical climate influences the ethical behavior of employees, which thereby affects the occurrence of sexual harassment. This study aims to enhance the understanding of the causes of sexual harassment from an ethical perspective. Specifically, it investigates how the organizational and leadership antecedent influences sexual harassment. This has led to the following research question: *How do organizational and leadership antecedents of ethical climate influence the occurrence of sexual harassment?*

To answer this question, a qualitative document analysis has been conducted with the help of Uber. By means of this research method, the researcher was able to draw conclusions on how the antecedents of the ethical climate influences the occurrence of sexual harassment.

The findings of this research indicate that the ethical climate has a significant impact on the occurrence of sexual harassment. This occurrence is influenced by two antecedents: organizational and leadership antecedent. Due to the absence of several aspects of these two antecedents the occurrence of sexual harassment is argued to increase.

Keywords: sexual harassment, ethical climate, for-profit organization, ethics

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Narratives regarding sexual harassment in organizations are appearing in the media, with cases in non-profit and profit organizations. The phenomenon of sexual harassment in organizations is a worldwide problem (Sigal, 2006). This phenomenon entails: *"unwanted sex-related behaviour at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding her resources, or threatening her well-being''* (Fitzgerald et al., 1997, p.15). Recent surveys reveal the persistence of this type of deviant behavior at the workplace. For example, in the United States, 5.6% of women reported some type of sexual violence by a perpetrator at work, which in absolute numbers would mean a total of 7 million women (CDC, 2015). Moreover, according to Pew Research Center (2018), 69% of women have been sexually harassed in a professional setting. These statistics show the importance of paying attention to this phenomenon of sexual harassment at the workplace. Addressing this issue of sexual harassment is becoming more and more important these days. Recently, it received a lot of attention from the #Metoo movement, which aims to raise awareness for women who experienced some form of sexual violence (Me too: Sexual Harassment Awareness & Prevention, 2020). Despite such a movement, workplace sexual harassment is something still experienced by many women and sometimes men in organizations.

The phenomenon of workplace sexual harassment is conceptualized as an ethical issue by different authors (Keyton & Rhodes, 1997; O'Leary-Kelly & Bowes-Sperry, 2001; Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). An ethical issue is defined as follows: *"when an individual's unrestrained behavior can help or harm another or others"* (O'Leary-Kelly & Bowes-Sperry, 2001, p.74). How employees behave, is influenced by the ethical climate of the organization they are working in (Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay, 2005). The ethical climate refers to*:*

> *"The shared perceptions of ethically correct behaviour and the way ethical issues should be handled in the organization. It refers to the degree to which ethical content is embodied in the organization's policies and regulations, and in employees' behaviors and perceptions." (Nafei, 2015, p. 84).*

The ethical climate might create both favorable and unfavorable conditions for sexual harassment behaviors and is part of the organizational climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

The moral norms and values of the organization learn the employees how to behave within the organization (Appelbaum, Deguire & Lay, 2005). This means the organization has the responsibility for the ethical or unethical behavior of their employees because the organizational values determine what is ethically correct, which forms the ethical climate (Victor & Cullen, 1988). A weak ethical climate increases unethical behavior in organizations, and consequently, increases the likelihood of sexual harassment (Mayer, 2014).

As discussed above, the ethical climate has an important influence on the behavior of the employees and is associated with the occurrence of sexual harassment (Mayer, 2014). However, only one research exists that examines the causes of sexual harassment from an ethical perspective. This study by Tenbrunsel et al. (2019), states how four antecedents of the ethical climate influence sexual harassment in a non-profit organization. This is the only study that has tried to emphasize the relationship between the ethical climate in the context of sexual harassment; this is also recognized by Tenbrunsel et al. (2019) since they call for research on the ethical climate within the context of sexual harassment to be expanded. Therefore, it is interesting to gain more understanding in the concept of sexual harassment from an ethical perspective. This would allow for a more comprehensive and informed examination of the antecedents surrounding sexual harassment that contribute to the occurrence.

Furthermore, this study took place in the context of universities – a non-profit organization -, therefore, it is unknow what the relationship between the concepts "ethical climate" and "sexual harassment" look like in for-profit organizations. Yet, according to Brower & Shrader (2000), the ethical climate differs for non-profit and for-profit organizations, which confirms the need for researching this phenomenon within the for-profit organizations as well. It is expected that the causes of sexual harassment in both types of organization will differ. This is what this research provides; examining the causes of sexual harassment by means of gaining insight in the ethical climate. To contribute to this research gap, this study will use the framework of Mayer (2014) to analyse the case of Uber; the four antecedents of the ethical climate – individual, leader, organizational and environment – and how they affect sexual harassment will be examined (Mayer, 2014).

This research will focus on the organizational and leadership antecedents of this framework. Organizational characteristics are known to greatly influence the behavior of the employees (Peterson, 2002). Furthermore, Knapp et al. (1997, p. 709), state that, *"sexual harassment does not occur in a vacuum but, rather, in an organizational environment that*

affects the way people behave.". This means the organization has a major impact on the behavior of its employees and is identified as one of the most important predictors of sexual harassment (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019; Fitzgerald et al. 1997; Willness et al. 2007). In addition, leaders in an organization have a fundamental impact on the organization and the employees in the organization, in a positive and negative way (Hogan et al., 1994). Therefore, it is of importance to gather insight in these two antecedents, due to their impact.

In all, the organizational and leadership antecedent are used to examine their influence on sexual harassment to enhance the understanding of the causes of sexual harassment.

To contribute to the literature, the case of Uber is an interesting case to learn more about the occurrence of sexual harassment considering the ethical climate. Uber has become known for several scandals concerning sexual harassment.

. For example, in a promotion Uber promised to match Uber passengers with 'hot chick' Uber drivers for 20 minutes (BBC, 2017). Furthermore, a female Uber employee spoke about going out an escort-karaoke bar in Korea with four male Uber managers (Insider, 2017). In this escort-karaoke bar, women sat at the bar, wearing numbers on them. Moreover, Susan Fowler, a former employee of Uber published a blog in February 2017 about her experiences with sexual harassment at Uber, which was the start of an ongoing issue regarding sexual harassment within Uber. Susan Fowler is not the only person who experienced sexual harassment at Uber. The company received 5.981 claims of sexual harassment in the U.S. in two years (Uber, 2019). This case of Uber shows a serious amount of remarkable narratives concerning sexual harassment. Apparently, Uber is not the only organization that has been struggling and has been ineffective in stopping sexual harassment as there are still narratives of workplace sexual harassment. Therefore, it is of importance to examine the causes of this phenomenon and how it is influenced by the ethical climate.

1.2 Research aim and question

Uber as a company failed regarding sexual harassment and is thus an appropriate case to learn more about how and when sexual harassment takes place considering the ethical climate. As mentioned before sexual harassment can be addressed using the framework of Mayer regarding the antecedents of an ethical climate. This research aims to investigate the contextual influences of the ethical climate that contribute to the occurrence of sexual harassment in workplaces. In this way, exploring the usefulness of the construct ethical

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climate would allow for a more comprehensive and informed examination of the antecedents that promote or mitigate sexual harassment.

This research will not focus on all the contextual influences as aforementioned but will only include the organizational and leadership antecedents. This research will therefore contribute to the academic literature on sexual harassment from the perspective of ethical climate. In addition, this research will expand the research on the organizational and leadership antecedents of Mayer's Framework since it will be applied to another context – workplace sexual harassment in for-profit organizations. The application of this framework may lead to new insights or may confirm the theory in this context. Furthermore, this research can raise awareness about the causes of sexual harassment at the workplace and contribute to the stimulation of organizations to foster a positive organizational ethical climate.

This results in the following research question:
How do organizational and leadership antecedents of ethical climate influence the occurrence of sexual harassment?

1.3 Relevance

Sexual harassment in workplaces is still a major and continuing problem, which causes it to be of high relevance. The antecedents of sexual harassment have been widely researched. However, as aforementioned, the study of Tenbrunsel et al. (2019) is the only empirical study that addressed the antecedents and consequences of sexual harassment in relation to the ethical climate in universities. According to Tenbrunsel et al. (2019), research on ethical climate in combination with sexual harassment should be expanded to enhance the understanding of the causes of sexual harassment. With this in mind, there is still a significant gap in knowledge about the antecedents of ethical climate in relation to the context of sexual harassment in for-profit organizations. The case of Uber will be used to examine how the organizational and leadership antecedents of ethical climate influence the scandal of workplace sexual harassment.

Previous research about the antecedents affecting the ethical climate has been conducted by Mayer (2014). Within this study, a recent review of the literature on this topic of ethical climate has been conducted. According to this review, the individual antecedent is the most prominent one in research regarding ethical climate. The other antecedents – leadership, organizational and environmental antecedents of this framework have been

researched to a lesser extent compared to the individual antecedent. Therefore, this research seeks to contribute to this framework by expanding the research on the organizational and leadership antecedents using the case of Uber.

Furthermore, this research will also contribute to the academic literature by combining the literature on ethical climate and sexual harassment. This will contribute to a better understanding of the organizational and leadership antecedents of ethical climate affecting sexual harassment at the workplace. Therefore, organizations can more appropriately design and implement programs and policies regarding their ethical climate, which may increase ethical behavior and thus, may decrease sexual harassment at the workplace.

1.4 Outline thesis

To be able to answer the research question, this research is divided in several chapters. We structure this research beginning with an outline of the theory about the central concepts of this research in chapter 2. Therefore, the concepts sexual harassment and ethical climate will be discussed. Next, in chapter 3 the methodological choices will be explained and justified. Followed by the results in chapter 4. Then the conclusion and discussion related to the results will be drawn and presented in chapter 5. Furthermore, chapter 5 will elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses of this research and consists of future suggestions. Finally, a personal reflection will be presented at the end of chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

This research aims to investigate the contextual influences of the ethical climate that contribute to the causes of sexual harassment in workplaces. Before examining sexual harassment from the ethical climate perspective, it is important to explain several concepts. This chapter will discuss the concepts relevant to this thesis, in particular, the research on the ethical climate as this forms the main part of the theory applied here. The first concept, that will be explained in paragraph 2.1, is the phenomenon of sexual harassment at the workplace. This paragraph aims to elucidate how we define sexual harassment and what consequences it has. After providing clarification on this phenomenon, the phenomenon ethical climate will be defined in paragraph 2.2. Next, the contextual influences of the ethical climate that may influence the likelihood of sexual harassment are described in paragraph 2.3. Lastly, in paragraph 2.4, a summary will be given about what we know and what we don't know. Additionally, in this paragraph, the conceptual model is provided.

2.1 Sexual harassment at the workplace

2.1.1 Sexual harassment

In the field of sexual harassment several definitions can be found to delineate this topic. A definition of sexual harassment is given by Fitzgerald et al. (1997, p.15). They define sexual harassment as: *"unwanted sex-related behaviour at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding resources, or threatening well-being"*. Unwanted sex-related behaviour refers to sexual advances perceived as uninvited, unwanted, and unreciprocated by the individual. This sex-related behaviour consists of verbal and non-verbal behavior, for example unwanted touching, sex-related comments, and compliments, and attempts to start sexual or romantic relationships (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018). It is evident that this definition assumes sexual harassment as unwanted and unwelcome. Therefore, we define sexual harassment as sex-related behaviour that has negative consequences and is perceived as unwanted and unwelcome by the individual.

2.1.2 Consequences of sexual harassment

In the literature sexual harassment is recognized as a serious problem, which has negative outcomes for the victim. Sexual harassment can harm the individual and has consequences, which can be divided into emotional and professional consequences (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018).

Emotional consequences

Previous studies demonstrate that sexual harassment has emotional consequences, and even if the experiences of sexual harassment are less serious and intense the consequences are still significant (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018). According to Fitzgerald and Cortina (2018), emotional consequences are related to mental health, depression, anxiety disorders, and an increase in alcohol abuse. The diagnosable disorders that are related to the consequences of sexual harassment are Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Major Depressive Disorder. Women as victims of sexual harassment are more likely to suffer from these types of disorders.

Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald (1997) examined the impact of sexual harassment on the psychological well-being of women. Their results demonstrate that sexual harassment has a significant impact on psychological well-being; women who experienced sexual harassment had lower levels of psychological well-being. In addition, sexual harassment is one form of workplace aggression and has the highest impact on well-being compared to other forms of workplace aggression (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018). In sum, experiencing sexual harassment has emotional consequences, which leads to a decrease in well-being and the possibility of psychological disorders.

Professional consequences

Professional consequences refer to job-related consequences. Organizational withdrawal as a professional consequence has been found as a significant outcome of the experience of sexual harassment (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018). Victims of sexual harassment may remain in their job but may disengage from their job because of sexual harassment. According to Willness et al. (2007), organizational withdrawal consists of two sub-dimensions – work withdrawal and job withdrawal. Work withdrawal entails avoiding work-related tasks and the work situation. The second subdimension job withdrawal refers to an individual's desire or intention to leave the job and the organization, and is related to behaviors such as absenteeism, drinking, lateness, and neglectfulness.

Sexual harassment also negatively affects the work productivity and performance, as demonstrated in different studies (Woodzicka & Lafrance, 2005). Furthermore, the increase of sexual harassment in an organization, leads to a decrease of organizational commitment, and an increase in job stress (Fitzgerald & Cortina, 2018).

This paragraph provided an explanation of the concept of sexual harassment at the workplace and its consequences. To turn to the concept of ethical climate is relevant, since sexual harassment is defined as an ethical issue (O'Learly-Kelly & Bowes-Sperry, 2001; Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). An ethical issue exists when the individual has the choice to help or harm others. Sexual harassment is thus an ethical issue because the individual has the choice whether or not to engage in sexual harassment. This decision-making process involves an ethical dilemma (O'Learly-Kelly & Bowes-Sperry, 2001). This ethical dilemma whether to harass or not is influenced by external factors, the ethical climate.

Hence, we draw on the framework of ethical climates to investigate the contextual influences which may cause sexual harassment. Thus, it is important to describe ethical climate and those antecedents.

2.2 Ethical climate

Cullen et al. (2003, p. 128), define ethical climate as follows, it: *"represents the organizational values, practices, and procedures that pertain to moral behaviors and attitudes"* This ethical climate plays a major role in developing an ethical context. In a study of Nafei (2015, p.84) another definition is used:

> *"Ethical climate is the shared perceptions of ethically correct behaviour and the way ethical issues should be handled in the organization. It refers to the degree to which ethical content is embodied in the organization's policies and regulations, and in employees' behaviors and perceptions."*

Both definitions assume the organizational aspect as part of the ethical climate. The definition used in the study by Nafei (2015) also includes the perceptions of the members of the organization. These perceptions as part of the ethical climate also become evident in a study by Elçi & Alpkan (2009). They assume the ethical climate relates to the shared perceptions of ethical behavior, and the perception of how ethical issues should be solved. By taking a combination of these definitions, we assume that the ethical climate consists of the ethical organizational procedures and policies and the perceptions and behavior of the members in the organization. Moreover, the organizational ethical climate is a significant factor in shaping the ethical behavior of their employees (Wimbush et al., 1997).

To better understand the ethical climate, Mayer's framework is chosen because this framework identifies the four antecedents of the ethical climate – individual, environmental,

organizational, and leadership. The paragraph below will discuss each antecedent of this framework.

2.3 Mayer's framework of four antecedents of Ethical Climate and Engagement in Sexually Harassing Behavior

In this paragraph, we draw on the framework of Mayer (2014) as aforementioned, which identifies four antecedents of ethical climate. These antecedents are useful in examining each of these factors and their impact on sexual harassment. These antecedents are substantiated by a variety of authors. This paragraph will discuss all four antecedents. The individual and environmental antecedents will be discussed briefly since these antecedents do not play a role in the document analysis. The organizational and leadership antecedents are the main antecedents in the document analysis and will be discussed more elaborately.

2.3.1 Individual antecedents

Several studies examined the four antecedents of ethical climate, in these studies the individual antecedent is the most prominent antecedent. These studies examine the demographic characteristics and moral related personal characteristics that are related to the individual antecedent (Mayer, 2014).

First, the demographic characteristics that play a significant role with regards to ethical attitudes and perceptions in relation to the ethical climate are gender, age, and education (Dawson, 1992; Luthar, Dibattista & Gautschi, 1997; Wimbush, Shepard & Markham, 1997).

According to Weeks et al. (2006), morally related personal characteristics influence the behavior of an individual. An individual with high moral values and a high level of cognitive moral reasoning seems to exhibit less unethical behavior. This process of moral reasoning consists of considering the effects of the personal behavior of an individual on others.

Furthermore, Tenbrunsel et al. (2019), identify several personal characteristics that have a significant influence on sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is more likely to occur by individuals with narcissism, machiavellianism, and psychopathy (Zeigler-Hill, Besser, Morag & Campbell, 2016).

2.3.2 Environmental antecedents

Earlier research of the environmental antecedents was focused on the environment outside an organization: type of industry and the cultural aspect (Mayer, 2014). Additionally, research by

Bourne and Snead (1999) extended these environmental antecedents by means of the professional standards and the local community of the organization.

First of all, research regarding the type of industry consist of one single study of Forte (2004b), who examined the effect of the type of industry on the ethical climate in an organization. No significant relationship has been found between these two variables, which means the type of industry has no significant influence on the ethical climate.

Parboteeah et al. (2005) argue that the national culture influences the ethical norms in organizations since each nation has different beliefs, values, and ethical standards. Therefore, these cultural differences are expected to impact the ethical environment of an organization (Bourne & Snead, 1999)

The concept of professional standards dictates and establishes the standards of appropriate behavior, which will influence the actions of individuals (Bourne & Snead, 1999). These standards are also adhered to by courts where they partially determine what actions are appropriate regarding the behavior of an individual.

Furthermore, the local community outside the organization also contributes to the ethical framework in which the organizations operate (Bourne & Snead, 1999). The community is considered to be the locality in which the organization operates and they establish the norms and values of what is perceived as acceptable behavior.

The individual and environmental antecedents are described to give background information only, for this reason these two aspects are not playing a prominent role in this research. Individual antecedents focus on the characteristics of the individual and are therefore difficult to measure by means of documents. Furthermore, the literature that discusses the environmental antecedent is scarce; this makes it difficult to measure this antecedent. The organizational antecedent is identified to be the most influential since organizations are responsible for the ethical and unethical behavior of their employees (Peterson, 2002; Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). The leadership antecedent also has a fundamental impact on the organization and its employees (Hogan et al., 1994) Therefore, the organizational and leadership antecedents are the core aspects of this research. The following sections describe the organizational and leadership antecedents in more detail. These sections will contribute to linking the concept of ethical climate to the context of sexual harassment in the work context.

2.3.3 Organizational antecedents

<u>Type of organization</u>

There are two types of organizations, namely for-profit and non-profit. This segmentation is based on the goals organizations set for themselves. The goal of a director in a non-profit organization differs from the goal a director of for-profit organization has (Brower & Shrader, 2000). The goal of the directors of a non-profit organization is to give back to the community, while the goal of the directors of a for-profit organization is most often to offer a service to the community in exchange for payment. The non-profit organization is not focused on money-making, while the for-profit is focused on money-making. These differences between these types of organizations affect the organizational ethical climate. It is generally assumed that directors of non-profit organizations are behaving more ethically than for-profit organizations.

This assumption is based on several factors that influence the ethical behavior of the directors. Firstly, the motivation of directors in a non-profit organization is to give back to the community and to help and serve the organization with their skills and talents. The motive of the non-profit organization is not associated with money-making, and therefore, these organizations are able to act in the best interest of the relevant stakeholders. Since, non-profit organizations raise money through funds from donations and the community, they have a high sense of responsibility to the community to act honestly and in their interest.

For-profit organizations, on the contrary, have climates higher in egoism than non-profit organizations, and have lower benevolence than non-profit organizations. With benevolence we mean taking others into consideration inside and outside the organization (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Furthermore, money-making is a variable that affect the decision-making process of the individual. An individual may act in an unethical way for gaining greater profit (Hunt & Vitell, 1986).

<u>Organizational characteristics</u>

Ethical control is an organizational characteristic that plays a prominent role in establishing normative values and behavioral patterns (Schewpker & Hartline, 2005). This means enforcement and internalization of ethical codes is necessary in the formation of an ethical climate. There where ethical values and behaviors are fostered, supported, and shared, more ethical behavior will occur. Organizations that enforce and internalize these ethical codes are thus more likely to bring about a positive ethical climate.

To have a written code of ethics, also known as ethical codes, is of great importance in shaping the ethical climate of an organization (Schewpker & Hartline, 2005). These written codes of ethics are a formal set of standards or expectations regarding the preferred and not preferred behaviors in the organization. Ethical codes have a significant positive influence on the organizational ethical climate and influence the ethical decision making of individuals in the organization.

Organizations can enforce these ethical codes in several ways: by monitoring for compliance, through the implementation of an ethical training program, ethical appraisals, and a reward system of ethical behavior (Schwepker & Hartline, 2005). Monitoring for compliance entails closely monitoring the employee behaviors to foster compliance, thereby increasing the awareness of employees to act in an ethical way. The second way, the implementation of an ethical training program, refers to including such a program for employees who exhibit unethical behavior as a way to ensure understanding of the ethical codes. Ethical appraisals can be included in an organization as part of the employees' performance review. This procedure may help the enforcement of the ethical codes, due to the raise in awareness of ethical appraisal among employees. Finally, organizations should develop a system to reward ethical behavior, as a reward through a bonus or incentive program can stimulate adherence to ethical standards. Schewpker and Hartline (2015), argue it is important to integrate punishment for unethical behavior in the organization. If an organization shows that it takes correctional measures against problematic behavior of employees, an increase in the organizational performance and satisfaction and an improvement of the ethical climate will become tangible. However, if the organization fails to punish unethical behavior it will increase the opportunity for such behavior.

In addition to enforcement, internalization of ethical codes is of importance, as this entails a learning process where the employee learns to perceive the ethical norms and rules of the organization as their own (Schewpker & Hartline, 2005). This internalization process is associated with the enforcement of ethical codes and the discussion of ethics, as well as the socialization process in the organization. The internalization of the ethical codes can be increased by actively promoting the discussion of ethics within the organization, which takes the form of an informal process of open discussions about ethical issues. This process is mainly driven by employees, although the manager can take several steps to promote these discussions by including ethical training and acting as a role model. Ethical training should be part of the socialization process of the employee and may occur through formal sessions,

workshops, and informal meetings that occur in the workplace around lunchtime. Schewpker and Hartline (2005) state that the manager plays a major role in the promotion of the ethical codes by acting as a role model. The manager should exhibit and support the ethical codes and should communicate these codes to their employees.

Organizational structure is another dimension of organization that comes into play. This structure directly influences the ethical decisions of employees (Verbeke et al., 1996). Three dimensions of the organizational structure are of influence on the ethical decisions within an organization, namely the control system, the competition of the market in which the organization operates, and internal communication. The control system can be divided into two systems, the outcome-based and the behavior-based system. With an outcome system the organization evaluates the outcomes, while the behavior-based system serves the management in evaluating how employees achieve their goals and results. Managers can detect unethical behavior and bring the ethical codes to attention by making use of a behavior-based system. According to Verbeke et al. (1996) the presence of such a system is positively related to a more favorable perception of the ethical climate of the individual. Regarding the competition, the more intense the competition the less ethical the decisions will be. Lastly, internal communication includes communication with a variety of individuals in and outside the organization. The presence of internal communication in an organization will increase the likelihood that individuals are concerned with the perspectives of others, and are sensitive to other's needs and goals, which increases ethical decisions.

The size of the organization is another organizational characteristic that influences the ethical climate. A study of Neubaum et al. (2004) demonstrates the fact that firm-specific factors influence the organizational ethical climate. According to this study, there is a significant relation between the size of an organization and the ethical climate. Larger organizations tend to have a less favorable ethical climate and these organizations reported weaker rules, law, and ethic code climates. This means larger organizations tend to have a less ethical climate compared to smaller organizations.

Organizational characteristics in relation to sexual harassment
In addition to the organizational characteristics mentioned above, a few characteristics are identified as the most powerful predictors of sexual harassment (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). One aspect that influences the ethical climate in regard to sexual harassment is the organizational context. Organizations that consist mainly of men and where

the jobs are historically masculine are more likely to have problems related to sexual harassment. A higher rate and likelihood of sexual harassment in organization is also linked to large power differences.

The formal and informal systems of an organization are also an important aspect of an organization's ethical climate. Formal systems are documented and defined and are intended to educate the employees about behaviors that constitute sexual harassment and to respond to unethical behavior regarding sexual harassment (Tenbrunsel et al., 2003). The presence of such a system decreases the unethical behavior within the organization. On the other hand, informal systems are the informal signals received by organizational members about (un)ethical principles. The informal systems are more influential than the formal systems regarding unethical behavior.

Furthermore, group norms in an organization also encourages the engagement of sexual harassment (Tenbrunsel et al., 2003). Group norms which promote sexual harassment increases the chance that sexual harassment will occur.

Lastly, the organization job structure also has a significant impact, employees with fragile contracts and contingent workers are more likely to be affected by sexual harassment.

These organizational conditions are stronger predictors of sexual harassment than individual characteristics (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). This does not intend that individual characteristics are not important within sexual harassment, but the organization aspect is more influential.

2.3.4 Leadership antecedent

The behavior of leaders is an important determinant of ethical climate in organizations (Dickson et al., 2001) Recent research on leadership antecedents of ethical climate has examined the leader demographics, leader personal characteristics and leadership styles, aspects that will be discussed in this paragraph (Mayer, 2014).

<u>Leader demographics</u>

The leader demographics which are of great influence on the ethical climate are age, tenure, gender, and management level (Mayer, 2014). There is a significant relation between the demographic age and perceived ethical climate. According to Forte (2004a), older managers tend to have an ethical climate of lower standard. Elms and Nichols (1993) suggest that older managers and those with longer tenure are using a lower level of moral reasoning. Forte

(2004b) argues that mature managers have a more positive attitude regarding moral issues in businesses because they have a more developed moral awareness. Another leader demographic is tenure. Tenure causes differences in the ethical values of managers in an organization. This becomes, among other, apparent in the fact that ethical values are get more respected by managers the longer they are active for the company (Elms & Nichols, 1993). The study of Forte (2004a) demonstrates a significant relationship between demographic gender and moral reasoning, this means that gender appears to affect the moral reasoning of leaders. Lastly, the management level has a significant effect on the organizational ethical climate since top management is important in setting the ethical tone in an organization.

Leader personal characteristics

The moral reasoning of a leader refers to the leader's set of cognitive skills used to reason about a moral problem (Elm & Nichols, 1993). The development in moral reasoning of leaders has an impact on the ethical climate of an organization (Schminke, Ambrose, Neubaum, 2005). The process of moral reasoning is a decision-making process used to address these moral problems and is related to actual behavior. This moral reasoning process is affected by different antecedents – age, work tenure, and educational levels (Forte, 2004b). The higher the work tenure of the leader, the higher the ethical orientation in his or her decision-making process. A higher level of education positively influences the level of moral reasoning. Furthermore, the personal characteristic of integrity also affects the moral-reasoning process. Other characteristics are power and recourses. These characteristics make individuals influential, which enables them to take the responsibility to develop and implement processes in organizations according to their own expectations.

Ethical leadership

Research on ethical leadership contributes to the understanding of the role of leadership in relation to unethical behavior in organizations (Mayer et al., 2010). Mayer et al (2010, p.7) presents the following definition for ethical leadership: *the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making*. Ethical leadership can be divided into two components: the moral person and the moral manager (Brown et al., 2005). Combining these two components will result in ethical leadership. Ethical leaders have positive personal characteristics and try to manage and

influence the ethical behavior of their employees by using a variety of strategies. The first component is related to integrity, concern for others, justice, and trustworthiness. The second component is related to communicating, rewarding, punishing, emphasizing ethical standards, and role modelling ethical behavior.

Ethical leaders are role models in developing an ethical climate and ethical behavior within an organization (Mayer et al., 2010). Ethical leaders set the ethical tone in an organization, by doing the right thing to their employees. Employees are influenced by observing the role models in the organization and thereby learn about ethical behavior (Neubert et al., 2009). Through the observation of role models' employees learn what behavior is expected, rewarded, and punished (Brown et al., 2005).

Leadership in relation to sexual harassment

Leaders in an organization serve as role models as aforementioned. It may be damaging if a leader misbehaves, because their behavior is observed by a broader audience. Moreover, the leader's reaction in regard to sexual harassment influences the chance of future sexual harassment in the organization. This reaction also includes the correct punishment of the harasser (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). The failure of a leader to take appropriate action against sexual harassment, will lead to the continuation of harassing behavior. Leaders are therefore important actors regarding sexual harassment, as they set the tone through their behaviors and reactions.

The concepts of sexual harassment and the ethical climate are described in the paragraphs above. Therefore, it is interesting to summarize by what we know and do not know, which will be described below.

2.4 Summary theoretical framework: what do we know and not know

In this chapter, we discussed the concept of sexual harassment and the concept of ethical climate. Up till here, it has become clear what sexual harassment entails and what the consequences are of sexual harassment. It has been set forth that the ethical climate consists of four antecedents and what these antecedents entail. This means there is knowledge about the two concepts, but how the ethical climate influences sexual harassment is unclear and unknown. This significant gap between these two concepts results in the research question mentioned in the introduction: "*How do organizational and leadership antecedents of ethical climate influence the occurrence of sexual harassment?*". To answer this question the

following conceptual model is visualized below in figure 1. This conceptual model includes the organizational and leadership antecedents and the theoretical concept of sexual harassment. The main objective of this research is to better understand the organizational and leadership antecedents of the ethical climate in the context of sexual harassment with the help of the case of Uber.
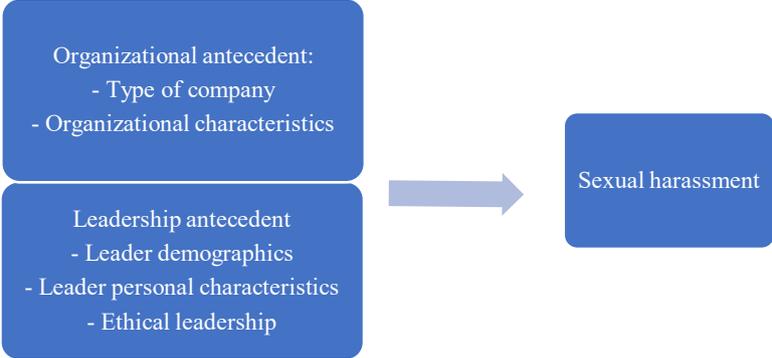
Figure 1: Conceptual model

  The choice of the organizational antecedent is made because organizational factors play a significant and important role in the ethical behavior of the employees (Peterson, 2002). Sexual harassment takes place in the organizational environment and this environment seems to be an important predictor of sexual harassment. Additionally, as aforementioned, the leadership antecedent will also play a role in this research because this antecedent has an important influence on the organization and their employees (Hogan et al., 1994).

  To summarize, we do not yet know how the organizational and leadership antecedents influence the occurrence of sexual harassment, but the assumption is made that there is a link between these two concepts (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). The research aims to examine the causes of sexual harassment from an ethical perspective in a for-profit organization, with the help of the organizational and leadership antecedents using the case of Uber.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter provides an overview of the choices made regarding the method of this research. The first paragraph, 3.1, elaborates on the type of research. The second paragraph 3.2 discusses the data collection and the case selection. Paragraph 3.3, discusses the data analysis procedure. Hereafter, paragraph 3.4 elaborates on the quality of this research. Next, paragraph 3.6 describes the limitations of this research. Finally, paragraph 3.7 describes the research ethics.

3.1 Type of research

The aim of this research was to provide insight into the organizational and leadership antecedents of the ethical climate associated with sexual harassment with the help of the case of Uber. Therefore, qualitative research has been used to contribute to the understanding of these antecedents of the ethical climate regarding sexual harassment. In qualitative research, the aim was to collect and interpret linguistic material to make statements about a phenomenon (Bleijenberg, 2015). This research has focused on the phenomenon of organizational and leadership antecedents regarding ethical climate, in which the objective was to interpret and to make statements about these antecedents and their influence on sexual harassment, therefore, qualitative research has contributed to this objective.

Within qualitative research, there are two approaches: (1) a deductive approach, in which existing theory is used as the starting point; and (2) an inductive approach, in which data is used as a starting point (Bleijenberg, 2015). In this research, a primarily inductive approach has been used, because the theory on sexual harassment in combination with ethical climate is limited since little research has been undertaken on the relationship between these two concepts. The purpose of this research has been to make a valuable contribution to the theory, by adding to the theory about the organizational and leadership antecedents and their influence on sexual harassment in the context of for-profit organizations based on collected data. Therefore, to achieve the objective and purpose of this research a primarily inductive approach has been used.

3.2 Data collection

The research method used in this qualitative research is a document analysis. Documents play a prominent role in organizational life, provide details of policies, procedures, and plans (Symon & Cassell, 2012). Furthermore, there are many other documentary sources about

organizations, for example, newspapers. Document analysis has allowed the researcher to address a broad range of relevant documents to investigate the phenomenon of this research.

The use of existing documents has been a valuable source for the researcher, which has provided the probability to make statements about the organization. A document is defined as: "*a durable repository for textual, visual and audio representations that may be retained and used in different times and spaces.*" (Symon & Cassell, 2012, p. 391). A document analysis has several advantages; (1) documents play an important role in organizations, (2) documents provide valuable details to address a broad range of research questions, (3) documents are always available and easily accessible (Symon & Cassel, 2012).

Through the collection of documents, a representation has been formed about a specific topic in an organization (Bleijenbergh, 2015). Since access to the organization was not possible, document analysis has been an appropriate way to achieve insight into the causes of sexual harassment through the available documents. In the end, this has resulted in a representation of the causes of sexual harassment at Uber from an ethical perspective. The steps taken during the data collection are described below, first, the search terms used during this process are described. Hereafter, the process of the collection of the documents is explained.

3.2.1 Case selection

This research has been limited to the issue of sexual harassment at work organizations, therefore the case of Uber has been examined. Uber is a ride-sharing company that is active in more than 10.000 cities in the world (Uber, 2021). Uber consists of a platform that entails a large network of active riders. The company has different offerings, namely ride options, Uber Eats, Earning with Uber, Moving cities forward, Uber Freight, and Uber for Business. The first offering, ride options, refers to requesting a ride in the city. Uber eats entails ordering food from your favorite restaurant in the Uber app, a delivery person of Uber will deliver it to your house. The third offering, drive with Uber, is about earning money as a driver of uber, using the largest network of active riders. Furthermore, Uber as a company wants to improve public transportation, by making it more accessible, equitable, and efficient. Besides, Uber partnered with different healthcare organizations to offer them ride-scheduling options. Uber Freight refers to an app that matches carriers with shippers. Lastly, Uber for Business entails employee travel and customer rides, especially offered for work. This research will focus on the drivers, passengers, and other employees since the claims of sexual

harassment are related to these groups. This research has focused on sexual harassment at work organizations, therefore these groups have been part of this research.

3.2.2 Selection of search terms

To provide guidance during the document analysis search terms has been identified as a first step in this data collection process. According to Symon & Cassell (2012), it is necessary to narrow the analysis by focusing on the original search term combined with other search terms. In this research, the original search term that has been used is 'Uber Sexual Harassment', since this is the case that has been investigated in this research. To increase the width of documents in this study, other search terms related to the original search term has been defined. Examples of the search terms used during the data gathering process can be found in table 1 below.

Search terms
Uber Sexual Harassment
Uber Sexual Assault
Uber Sexual Misconduct
Uber scandals
Victims Uber Sexual Harassment
Report Uber Sexual Harassment
Investigation Uber Sexual Harassment
Statistics Uber Sexual Harassment
Cases Sexual Harassment Uber
Interview Victim Sexual Harassment Uber
Uber Sexual Harassment Timeline
Allegations Sexual Harassment Uber
Uber Sexual Harassment leadership
Uber Sexual Harassment leaders
Uber Sexual Harassment managers
Uber Sexual Harassment approach
Uber Sexual Harassment policies

Table 1: Search terms

3.2.3 Selection of documents

The search terms above were entered at Google one by one. For each search, the findings were checked according to the document analysis form (Appendix 1). The researcher checked the type of document, source of the document, the purpose of the document, and quickly scanned through the document. Furthermore, each finding was checked if it would contribute to answering the research question. This resulted in different documents that were analysed from different sources, namely documents about the organization Uber, documents about sexual harassment at Uber, newspapers about sexual harassment at Uber, blogs, interviews with victims, and investigations in regard to sexual harassment at Uber. The documents about the organization Uber contributed to the understanding of the available policies and the way of handling in the organization and their view regarding sexual harassment. These documents were easily accessible because these documents were available to the public through their corporate website. The newspapers about sexual harassment at Uber revealed several details from the public view. The blogs and interviews with victims highlighted the other side of the phenomenon of sexual harassment at Uber. The documents were collected from the website of Uber, Google, and YouTube. The documents found range from 2017 till 2021, those are the years that Uber became known for scandals concerning sexual harassment. In addition, those are also the years that Uber tried to address sexual harassment. Therefore, the documents found are limited to this range.

In all, the process of collecting documents with the help of the search terms resulted in the following sources of the documents, illustrated in the table 2. The table made a distinction between documents related to information about sexual harassment at Uber, and information of the victims about sexual harassment at Uber.

	Data victims' sexual harassment	**Data sexual harassment at Uber**
Type of data	- Publications in newspapers - Complaints law firms - Victim interviews	- Publication in newspapers - Investigations - Report Uber - News video on YouTube

Sources of data	- ABC News - Buzzfeed News - CBS DFW - Counsel Wigdor LLP - Krave Diane (YouTube) - Newspaper Vox - SBS - Susan Fowler website - SXSW (YouTube) - The Guardian - The Tribute News - The Verge	- Bloomberg Technology - Business Journals - Buzzfeednews - C Net - CNN Business - CNN Investigation - Law Firm Covington - Medium - Mercury News - Newspaper Vox - San Francisco Chronicle - The Guardian - The Verge - Today (Youtube) - US Safety Report Uber 2017-2018 - USA Today
Number of articles	13	26
Number of pages of data	123 pages	186 pages
Time frame	February 19, 2017 – Sep 4, 2020	February 19, 2017 – Jan 13, 2021

Table 2: Overview sources documents

3.3 Sensitizing concepts

To explore the concept of ethical climate in combination with sexual harassment using the case of Uber some sensitizing concepts were used, that were extracted from the theory described above. The sensitizing concepts function as guiding concepts to give direction through the data analysis process (Bowen, 2006). The defined sensitizing concepts in this paragraph are the important topics related to this research. The sensitizing concepts for this research were *sexual harassment, ethical climate, organizational antecedent, and leadership antecedent*. Sexual harassment is defined as follows: *sex-related behaviour perceived as unwanted and unwelcome by the individual causing negative consequences.* Furthermore, the sensitizing concept of ethical climate refers to ethical organizational procedures and policies and the perceptions and behavior of the members of the organization. Finally, the organizational antecedent, which is one aspect of the ethical climate was used as a sensitizing concept.

The organizational antecedent entailed of type of organization, organization characteristics, organizational conditions. The type of organization is about the separation

between for-profit and non-profit organizations. For-profit organizations refer to the organization with a focus on money-making, and the non-profit organization refers to the organizations with a focus on giving back to the community and not on money-making (Brower & Shrader, 2000). The organizational characteristics are about ethical codes, ethical control, enforcement, internalization, structure, and size of the organization. The ethical codes are defined as a formal set of standards or expectations with regard to preferred and not preferred behaviors in the organization (Schewpker & Hartline, 2005). The ethical control consists of the enforcement and the internalization of these codes. The enforcement of these codes takes place in several ways; monitoring, ethical training program, ethical appraisals, and a reward system of ethical behavior. The internalization of ethical codes entails the learning process where the employee learns to take the ethical norms and rules as their own, driven by promoting the discussion of ethics in the organization, ethical training, and role models in the organization. Finally, the organizational characteristics regarding sexual harassment were separated into the organizational context, formal and informal systems, power, and job structure (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019).

The leadership antecedent is associated with leader demographics, leader personal characteristics, and ethical leadership. The leader demographics are associated with age, tenure, gender, and management level (Mayer, 2014). Furthermore, the leader personal characteristics consists of age, work tenure, educational level, integrity, power, and resources (Forte, 2004b). Ethical leadership is related to the moral person consisting of integrity, concern for others, justice, and trustworthiness, and the moral manager consisting of communicating, rewarding, punishing, emphasizing ethical standards, and role modelling (Brower & Shrader, 2000). Table 3 gives an overview of the sensitizing concepts used in this study.

Concepts	Sexual harassment	Unwelcome, sex-related behavior
	Ethical climate	Ethical organizational procedures & policies, and perception employees
Organizational antecedents	Type of company	- For-profit - Non-profit

	Organization characteristics	• Ethical codes • Ethical control: enforcement & internalization • Enforcement: monitoring, ethical training program, ethical appraisals reward system of ethical behavior • Internalization: promoting the discussion, ethical training, role models
	Organizational characteristics regarding sexual harassment	• Organizational context • Formal system • Informal system • Power • Job structure
Leadership antecedent	Leader demographics	Age, tenure, gender, and management level
	Leader personal characteristics	Age, work tenure, educational level, integrity, power, and resources
	Ethical leadership	Moral person Moral manager

Table 3: overview sensitizing concepts

3.4 Data analysis procedure

The obtained data was analysed through a coding process, within this coding process the procedure of inductive coding was applied. According to Symon & Cassel (2012), inductive coding can be used by researchers that are concerned with explaining what is going on, not describing what is happening. The purpose of this research was to discover and explain the organizational and leadership antecedents in the context of sexual harassment at Uber. In addition, the aim was to discover theory regarding the influence of ethical climate on sexual

harassment implicit in the data. Furthermore, the emerging theory can be compared with existing theory gathered in the theoretical framework (Symon & Cassel, 2012).

The inductive coding process consisted of three steps – open, axial, and selective coding. The first step was open coding, in this step the researcher placed conceptual labels, that entailed a brief description (Vennix, 2016). For example, *"Norms and values with regard to sexual harassment behavior"* is an open code, which shortly describes the quote. The second step was axial coding, in this step the codes were clustered into categories that were assigned to a specific theme. The open code above was made more specific in this axial code: "*Informal systems"*, this code was assigned to a specific theme related to a sensitizing concept. The third and final step was selective coding, in this step possible connections between the themes were created in the previous step. This was done in two ways. First, with the help of the literature, for example, the axial code "*Informal systems"* is combined with other axial codes and resulted in the code *"organizational antecedent"*. The final codes were compared with the literature used in this thesis. During this coding process, a codebook was developed to create a clear overview of this process and the codes (Appendix 2).

Second, the researcher tried to find possible relationships between the different themes and decided whether themes were combined or separated to explain the findings.

During this process two new selective codes emerged: role of the CEO, and role of the HR department. These are two new selective codes and have a separate part in the results because both played a central and important role in the occurrence of sexual harassment at Uber. The role of the CEO is associated with the leadership antecedent, and therefore, contributes to this antecedent. The role of the HR department was considered as a new part and associated with the organizational antecedent, and therefore, contributes to the literature about sexual harassment from an ethical perspective.

The data analysis of selected documents resulted in several findings. During the coding process, the organizational antecedent has been found in the documents. Several aspects have been found that are associated with this organizational antecedent. Therefore, we can conclude something about the influence of the organizational antecedent on the causes of sexual harassment. Furthermore, during the coding process, one prominent aspect of the leadership antecedent has been found. The aspect of the leadership antecedent that has been found is ethical leadership, this aspect is prominent in the findings and is associated with the occurrence of sexual harassment. These findings thus indicate that the organizational and leadership antecedents play a role in the occurrence of sexual harassment.

3.5 Quality of this research

Guba & Lincoln (1989) describe four qualitative standards that have been used during this research. The qualitative standards consist of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

'Credibility' entails a good fit between reality and interpretation (Symon & Cassell, 2012). By means of peer debriefing, this research has tried to achieve this standard. This has been achieved through peer debriefing consisting of the master thesis circle and meetings with the supervisor. Those meetings have provided the researcher with feedback, which provided the researcher with the opportunity to check the fit between reality and interpretation of the researcher.

Second, 'transferability', refers to providing enough detail about the specific research case, this will be done in this research (Symon & Cassell, 2012). This enables the reader to judge whether the findings of this research are relevant for other contexts. A case description has been included in this chapter. This description aims to contribute to a clear understanding of what other contexts to the findings can be applied to.

'Dependability' entails the demonstration of methodological changes and shifts of this research (Symon & Cassell, 2012). This has been captured by clearly outlining the methodological choices and steps made. This was discussed in this chapter.

Lastly, 'confirmability', refers to making clear where the data came from and how this data is transformed into the research findings. This has been ensured by providing a codebook, which is included in Appendix 2. This codebook gives insight into how the data is analysed. Furthermore, this chapter also gave insight into how the data is collected and has described which method was used for the data analysis.

3.6 Research ethics

During the process of this research, the five principles of the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity were considered to conduct ethical research. The principles are honesty, scrupulousness, transparency, independence, and responsibility (Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2018). Honesty entails accurately reporting the research process, being open, taking alternative options into account, not making unfounded claims, and not presenting the research findings more favorable than they really are. Scrupulousness means the use of methods that are scientific or scholarly and exercising the best possible care in designing and reporting this research. Transparency refers to making clear to others where the

research is based on, and how the data in this research is obtained, and how this data is transformed. Independence entails not allowing to be guided by different aspects of the research, for example, the choice of the method and the assessment of data. Independence is required at all times in this research. Lastly, responsibility is about taking responsibility for conducting research that is scientifically and/or societally relevant. Furthermore, the researcher should consider the legitimate interests of the associated groups in this research. All these principles were considered during the whole research, this helped the researcher to overcome the ethical dilemmas.

Reflexivity is about the awareness of the researcher's role in the research and how the researcher affects the researcher's processes and the outcome (Symon & Cassel, 2012). The past experiences of the researcher may influence the research process. The findings of this research are dependent on the interpretations of the researcher. The interpretations of the researcher are influenced by the past experiences and the preferences of the researcher. This means that there is a chance of biased interpretations. Sexual harassment is a very sensitive topic, which may also affect the feelings of a researcher. The feelings of a researcher regarding the topic of sexual harassment may also influence the interpretations and findings of this research, which affects the objectivity. In this research, the researcher tried to prevent biasedness by incorporating different perspectives. The researcher analysed documents associated from a victim perspective, the perspective of the organization., and the perspective of independent groups. Hereby, the researcher tried to draw correct conclusions. However, the feelings of the researcher regarding this topic were not possible to prevent. These feelings were influenced by the abhorrent stories of the victims of sexual harassment. This may have affected the objectivity of the findings.

3.7 Limitations of research project

The main limitation of this research is the use of only documents, which means that this research has no triangulation. A disadvantage of documents concerns the validity and reliability of the documents used in this research, it is unclear whether the validity and origins of some sites or documents are reliable. In this research, the researcher paid attention to the documents obtained and considered whether the documents are reliable. This was done by checking the source of the documents and by scanning through the documents. Although the researcher tried to pay attention to the reliability this is still to be considered as a disadvantage of documents.

Another disadvantage of the use of documents is that the researcher had no access to the organization. This made it difficult for the researcher to having easy access to all the relevant documents for this research. Furthermore, this gave the researcher no chance to gather feedback from those that are researched. Besides, the interpretation of the documents is also a disadvantage because the researcher may interpret the documents differently than the intended goal of the producer of the document. This could affect the credibility of the research because the fit between the reality and the interpretation may differ.

Chapter 4: Results

In this chapter, the results of this study are presented. An illustrative overview is given to show the overall findings from the data. Thereafter, the results regarding sexual harassment in Uber will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion on the aspects of the organizational antecedent and an elaboration of the aspects of the leadership antecedent. Lastly, results concerning the role of the CEO will be described and results in regard to the role of the HR department will be presented.

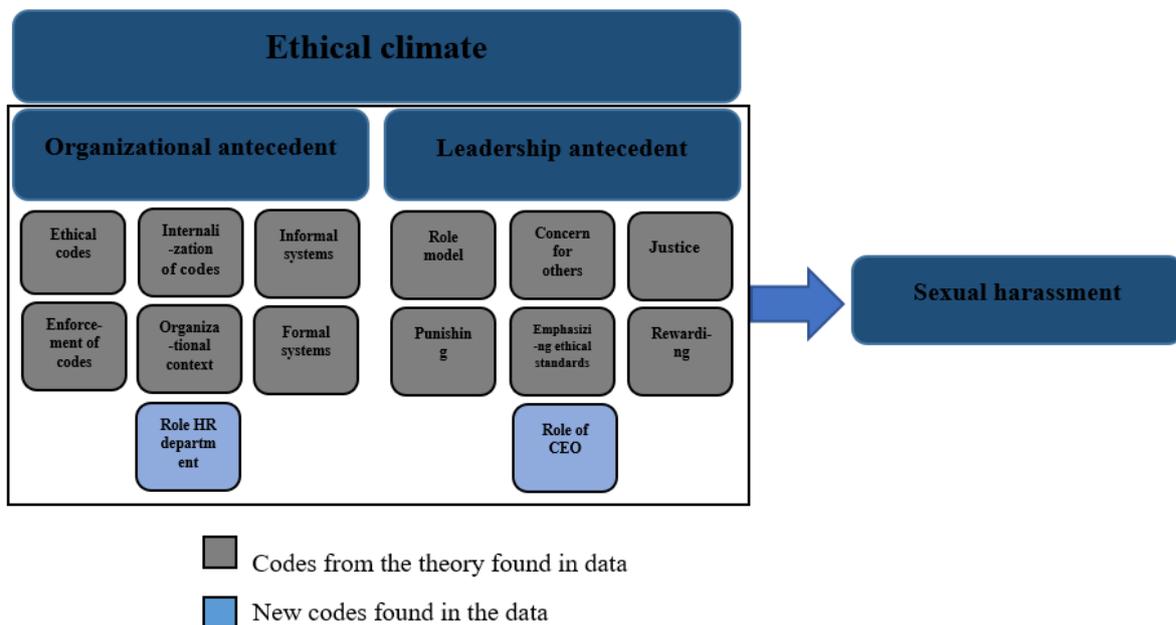## 4.1 Illustrative overview results

Figure 2: overview results

As presented in figure 2, the data analysis has found the two antecedents – organizational and leadership, which are negatively influenced by different aspects. According to Mayer (2014) antecedents are part of and influence the ethical climate defined as follows:

> *"Ethical climate is the shared perceptions of ethically correct behaviour and the way ethical issues should be handled in the organization. It refers to the degree to which ethical content is embodied in the organization's policies and regulations, and in employees' behaviors and perceptions". (Nafei, 2015, p.84).*

This definition consists of various elements; shared perceptions of ethically correct behavior, and the way ethical issues should be handled. Both elements are negatively influenced by

several aspects of the two antecedents. The overview on the organizational antecedent shows that aspects as ethical codes, enforcement of codes, internalization of codes, formal system, and informal systems are central in influencing the shared perceptions of ethically correct behavior and the way ethical issues should be handled (Mayer, 2014). Moreover, a new code has been added by the organizational antecedent, namely the role of the HR department. This code arose during the data analysis and has been found to play a very central and important role, namely influencing the way ethical issues should be handled. The leadership antecedent shows results concerning ethical leadership. The following aspects also influence the behavior and the way ethical issues are handled: role model, concern for others, justice, rewarding, punishing, and emphasizing ethical standards (Brown et al., 2005). In addition, this antecedent has a new code that is very important concerning leadership, namely the role of the CEO.

The findings demonstrate that all these aspects together are part of the ethical climate of the organization, influencing the occurrence and likelihood of sexual harassment. These findings will be discussed in the paragraphs below.

4.2 Sexual harassment at Uber

In this research sexual harassment is defined as follows: *"sex-related behaviour perceived as unwanted and unwelcome by the individual causing negative consequences"*. The results of the data analysis show that there are incidents of sexual harassment at Uber and show a distinction in the incidents of sexual harassment. The first type of sexual harassment within Uber happens at headquarters, as clarified by a victim in the following quote:

> *"On my first official day rotating on the team, my new manager sent me a string of messages over company chat. He was in an open relationship, he said, and his girlfriend was having an easy time finding new partners but he wasn't. He was trying to stay out of trouble at work, he said, but he couldn't help getting in trouble, because he was looking for women to have sex with and it was so clearly out of line that I immediately took screenshots of these chat messages and reported him to HR." (Blog Susan, 2017).*

This quote is one example of sex-related behavior being perceived as unwanted and unwelcome by the victim. This female employee is not the only one who experienced sexual harassment, as shown in the following quote: *"some of these co-workers told me as I got to know them that they'd experienced similar treatment from their managers in some cases from*

the very same manager." (SXSW, 2019). These results indicate the occurrence of sexual harassment at headquarters.

Moreover, the second type of sexual harassment is happening within the cab of Uber, which becomes evident from the following quote: *"Karen says the man then threw himself on top of her and sexually assaulted her with one hand while licking her face before exiting the car."* (SBS news, 2020) This quote reveals sex-related behavior from the passenger in the cab, which is perceived as unwanted and unwelcome by the Uber driver. In addition, sexual harassment is also experienced by passengers in the cab, as the quote below shows:
"He then tried to kiss me ... I turned my head away and he looked at me confused and was like, 'come on' and then tried a second time. I said 'no' and I got out of the car." (SBS News, 2020). This quote also shows the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab.

In conclusion, the data reveal the presence of two types of sexual harassment, on the one hand it is experienced by employees at headquarters, on the other hand it is experienced by passengers and drivers in the cab. In the following subheadings the results will be described for both types of sexual harassment.

4.3 Organizational antecedent

The organizational antecedent has a significant influence on the ethical climate as discussed by Mayer (2014). The overview that presents the organizational antecedent shows that aspects as ethical codes, formal systems, enforcement of codes, internalization of codes, informal systems, and the organizational context are central to influencing the shared perceptions of ethically correct behavior. It also shows in which way ethical issues should be handled (Mayer, 2014). These aspects have been found in the analysis that will be discussed in the following subheadings.

4.3.1 Ethical codes & formal system

According to Schewpker and Hartline (2005), ethical codes are one of the most important influences on the organizational ethical climate. The ethical codes consist of a formal set of standards or expectations in regard to preferred and not preferred behaviors in the organization. These ethical codes have a positive significant influence on the ethical decision-making of the individuals in the organization. Furthermore, the formal system is in line with the ethical codes. Formal systems are documented and defined and are also intended to educate employees about the desired behaviour (Tenbrunsel et al., 2003). The ethical codes

and formal system thus consist of a formal set of documents to educate employees about how to behave. Therefore, the findings of these two aspects are combined in this paragraph, referred to as policies.

<u>Sexual harassment type 1</u>

It is striking that there is an absence of sexual harassment policies within Uber at headquarters. An investigation into the allegations of sexual harassment reveals the absence of an official policy, as clarified in the following quote: *"The report seems to suggest that Uber still doesn't have an official policy laying that out. It said Uber should provide "specific and clear guidance" to employees about intimate relationships, prohibiting them between people who report to each other in any capacity"* (CNN Business, 2017). Ann Burdges, president of the board of directors at End Violence Against Women International, confirms the absence of ethical codes by means of the following quote: *"Based on the nature of the offense that is being reported, it is concerning that there is perhaps not a tighter, clearer policy that would limit and guide communications in a... private, confidential fashion that would protect the victim," she said.* (USA Today, 2017). Furthermore, Law Firm Covington was hired by Uber to investigate several workplace issues, including sexual harassment. This firm evaluates the sufficiency of the available documents in the organization in terms of: *"whether the company's policies and practices were sufficient to prevent and properly address discrimination, harassment, and retaliation in the workplace" (Report Law Firm Covington, p.1, 2017).* This firm provides several recommendations concerning the policies of the organization, which indicates the insufficiency of the policies (Law Firm Covington, 2017).

Policies are extremely important to prevent or reduce the occurrence of sexual harassment (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). The absence of an official policy and the presence of insufficient documents at Uber may enforce the likelihood of sexual harassment at headquarters because no expectations exist in regard to preferred and not preferred behavior. In addition, the available documents are argued to be not sufficient enough to prevent and address sexual harassment, as stated in the following quote*: "Reduce the overall number of values, and eliminate those values which have been identified as redundant or as having been used to justify poor behavior, including Let Builders Build, Always Be Hustlin', Meritocracy and Toe-Stepping, and Principled Confrontation."* (Report Law Firm Covington, p.4). These inappropriate values in the organization are not intended to educate the employees about correct behaviour but are used to justify unethical behavior.

In conclusion, the absence of policies at Uber implies that addressing and solving sexual harassment may happen in unethical ways since there is no guidance in solving sexual harassment at headquarters. In addition, the absence may have a negative significant influence on the continuation and likelihood of sexual harassment at headquarters.

Sexual harassment type 2

The results in the current study indicate the insufficient character of policies concerning sexual harassment in the cab, as shown by the following quote: *"Critics have argued that the company's defiance of traditional employment regulations, such as rigorous background checks, has led to sexual assaults by drivers on passengers."* (The Guardian, 2017). The available employment regulations of Uber seem to be inappropriate, and this has an influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment with passengers of Uber. Furthermore, an analysis of CNN with an in-depth review of police reports, federal court records and databases indicates the absence of several policies which may influence the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab, as shown by the following quote: "*The company previously didn't have a uniform policy on rerunning criminal background checks.*" (CNN Business, 2017). The criminal background checks are important to prevent sexual harassment on passengers, and to ensure the safety of passengers. However, some shortcomings concerning policies have been presented by counsels that researched the allegations of Uber. This may influence the expectations with regard to preferred and not preferred behavior of the drivers. In addition, according to law firm Counsel Wigdor LLP, Uber did not set up visible policies to ensure the safety of the passengers: "*If Uber is sincere about providing safe rides, then it must take the steps needed to assure female riders that accepting use of the Uber app is not tacit approval to be the victim of an unwanted sexual assault or rape.*" (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2018). This law firm represents two victims of sexual harassment in the cab and investigates those complaints. Their report reveals several shortcomings related to the policies of Uber concerning sexual harassment.

In sum, the current data indicate Uber did not do enough to set standards and expectations of preferred and not preferred behavior in the cab.

4.3.2 Enforcement and internalization of ethical codes

As introduced by Schwepker and Hartline (2005), organizations have the responsibility to enforce ethical codes in several ways: monitoring for compliance, ethical training programs, ethical appraisals, and a reward system of ethical behavior. Internalization of ethical codes is

also of importance, which entails promoting the discussion of ethics in the organization, ethical training, and managers acting as role models.

Sexual harassment type 1

Due to the absence of ethical codes, there is no possibility to enforce and internalize these codes at headquarters. Therefore, we may conclude there is an absence of enforcement and internalization of ethical codes. For example, the HR department was not trained in handling complaints of sexual harassment, which influences the way behavior is monitored and rewarded. This becomes evident from an investigation of a law firm that was hired by Uber to conduct a thorough and objective review of the issues regarding the workplace environment of Uber. This review inspected the complaints of sexual harassment at Uber and consisted of recommendations to address the workplace issues. This law firm recommends the following: *"Uber should train Human Resources personnel on the effective handling of complaints"* (Report Law Firm Covington, p.4). The absence of these types of training suggests the absence of enforcement of ethical codes. Also, the results of the data analysis do not show other codes regarding the enforcement of codes at headquarters. The steps Uber takes are primarily focused on the enforcement of codes in the cab. The results indicate the absence of ethical training, ethical appraisal, and reward system concerning the enforcement at headquarters.

The internalization of ethical codes is not possible due to the absence of ethical codes, as aforementioned. The absence of internalization becomes clear from the following quote of the report of the law firm:

> *"And encourage senior leaders to exhibit the values on a daily basis and to model a more collaborative and inclusive Uber culture. Leaders who embody these values should be part of the process of redefining Uber's values and should be role models for other leaders within the company"* (Report Law Firm Covington, 2017).

The report suggests that the leaders are not encouraging ethical values and are not acting as role models within the organization. This means there is no promotion of ethics by the managers, and they are not acting as role models, which plays an important role in the internalization of ethical codes.

In sum, the absence of enforcement and internalization of ethical codes becomes evident from the quotes and enhances the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment type 2

The absence of enforcement of ethical codes in the cab becomes clear from the following quote: "*Five drivers across various states told CNN they were not provided any kind of sexual harassment or assault training.*" (CNN, 2017). This quote indicates the absence of sexual harassment or assault training, which is part of the enforcement of ethical codes and may influence the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab. This absence becomes clear from the following quote: "*In 2020, Uber will expand sexual misconduct and assault education to all US drivers. We are partnering with RAINN, the nation's largest sexual violence organization, to design this program.*" (Uber US Safety Report, 2019). After all the complaints of sexual harassment, Uber tried to take responsibility by publishing a Safety Report. This report demonstrates absolute numbers of sexual harassment in the cab and shows initiatives Uber takes to address sexual harassment. In 2017, Uber did not provide any education concerning sexual harassment. In 2019, this report of Uber announced an expansion of education concerning sexual harassment. This may imply that there was no available education, but they do provide sexual misconduct and assault education now.

In sum, the conclusion can be drawn that there is an absence of enforcement of ethical codes, but Uber is now trying to enforce the ethical codes by education. However, the absence of enforcement may have increased the likelihood of sexual harassment since the ethical codes are not enforced to stimulate ethical behavior in the organization.

4.3.3 Informal systems

The informal system consists of informal signals received by organizational members about (un)ethical principles (Tenbrunsel et al., 2003).

Sexual harassment type 1

The informal system is recognized as contradicting and insufficient in the results. The following quote can be interpreted as an informal signal: "*We seek to make Uber a just workplace and there can be absolutely no place for this kind of behavior at Uber — and anyone who behaves this way or thinks this is OK will be fired.*" (Newspaper Vox, 2017). The CEO defines sexual harassment as an unethical principle, which can be recognized as an informal signal by the organizational members. Unfortunately, this reaction of the CEO is contradicting with reality because the actions of the CEO are not in line with these words. This quote explains this:

"By way of example only, Kalanick once sent a memo to his subordinates lamenting the fact that he would remain celibate at a work-related event, writing "#FML," which in Internet-speak translates to "fuck my life," implying that he was upset that he could not have sexual relations with his subordinates." (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2017).

On one hand the CEO mentions sexual harassment as an unethical principle, but on the other hand his actions are inappropriate regarding sexual harassment. Therefore, the informal signals are contradicting and are not sufficient to educate the employees about (un)ethical principles. Moreover, the unethical decisions and actions regarding sexual harassment claims may imply that sexual harassment is tolerated. These actions do not make the unethical nature of sexual harassment clear through the use of informal signals.

In sum, the informal systems are probably not sufficient to prevent and address sexual harassment at headquarters. This may negatively affect the behavior of employees concerning sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment type 2

The report of Uber mentions the following in regard to the informal system, which can be interpreted as an informal signal: "*achieve Uber's goal of building a workplace in which "all the great minds" gather to work and succeed."* (Uber US Safety Report, 2019). However, this is something that has been mentioned in the report, and that does not directly focus on the employees. Therefore, we may consider the informal system to be absent, as there are no findings that show the presence of this system.

4.3.4. Organizational context

According to Brower and Shrader (2000), the type of organization can be divided into for-profit and non-profit. Uber is an organization that can be defined as a for-profit organization as it corresponds with the characteristics of a for-profit organization. The goal of a for-profit organization is to serve the community with a focus on money-making (Brower & Shrader, 2000). The goal of the ride-sharing company Uber is to make money with the services they provide. The intention to make money becomes evident from the following quote: *"They don't care about what happened," she said. "It's all about, how can we make money?"* (The Guardian, 2017). This quote illustrates the focus of the organization to make money at all

costs. The mentality to make money at all costs becomes evident from the following quote: "*The Uber way – a take-no-prisoners, win-at-any-cost mentality – has helped the company soar to market domination and a $70bn valuation, but not without a cost.*" (The Guardian, 2017). These two quotes illustrate Uber as a for-profit organization that influences both types of sexual harassment.

Uber as an organization consists mainly of men, as is demonstrated in the following quote: *"Out of over 150 engineers in the SRE teams, only 3% were women."* (Blog Susan). In the organization, there is a small number of engineers that are women. The number of women decreased however due to the incidents within the organization, as shown in the following quote:

> *"When I joined Uber, the organization I was part of was over 25% women. By the time I was trying to transfer to another eng organization, this number had dropped down to less than 6%. Women were transferring out of the organization, and those who couldn't transfer were quitting or preparing to quit."* (Blog Susan).

The organization can thus be described as a male-dominated organization. According to Tenbrunsel et al. (2019), organizations that consist mainly of men are more likely to have problems concerning sexual harassment. Remarkable is that this percentage of women has decreased in a few years from 25% to 6%, around 75% of women have left the organization. The consequences of the male-dominated workplace at Uber are argued in the following quote: "*Uber is also reeling from claims that the male-dominated workplace condones sexual harassment and is a hostile environment for female engineers.*" (The Guardian, 2017). The male-dominated workplace influences the work environment, and this may influence the likelihood of sexual harassment at headquarters. The distribution of men and females concerning sexual harassment in the cab is not known from the data analysis. The described results concerning the male-dominated workplace apply to sexual harassment at headquarters.

In sum, the context of Uber can be described as a for-profit, male-dominated, organization. These characteristics may influence the occurrence of sexual harassment in the organization and partly in the cab.

4.4 Leadership antecedent

As discussed in chapter 2, the behavior of leaders influences the organizational ethical climate (Dickson et al., 2001). According to Mayer et al. (2014), ethical leadership as part of the leadership antecedent is related to the unethical behavior in organizations. In this paragraph the aspects of ethical leadership will be discussed regarding sexual harassment.

4.4.1 Ethical leadership

As described in chapter 2, ethical leadership is defined by Mayer et al (2010, p.7) as: *"the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making"*. This definition implies an ethical leader should demonstrate ethical behavior through their actions and should try to promote ethical behavior in their employees. Ethical leadership is influenced by different aspects. The following aspects have been found in the analysis and will be discussed below: concern for others, punishing, role model, emphasizing ethical standards, justice.

4.4.1.1 Concern for others

As discussed in the theoretical part of this research, concern for others entails leaders acting in the best interest of employees, and treating them with dignity and respect (Brown, et al., 2005).

Sexual harassment type 1

In the current study, examples of managers' actions are included, these actions indicate the opposite of acting in the best interest of the victim and indicate that some managers are not treating them with dignity and respect. The blog of the victim Susan Fowler who wrote about her sexual harassment experiences at Uber presents an example in the following quote:

> *"I was then told that I had to make a choice: (i) I could either go and find another team and then never have to interact with this man again, or (ii) I could stay on the team, but I would have to understand that he would most likely give me a poor performance review when review time came around, and there was nothing they could do about that."* (Blog Susan, 2017).

The managers telling the victim to make a choice implies the victim must deal with the consequences of being harassed, which is not in line with the aspect of concern for others. Another action that has been taken by a manager shows no concern with the interest of the victim either:

> "*He told me I was on very thin ice for reporting his manager to HR. California is an at-will employment state, he said, which means we can fire you if you ever do this again. I told him that was illegal, and he replied that he had been a manager for a long time, he knew what was illegal, and threatening to fire me for reporting things to HR was not illegal. I reported his threat immediately after the meeting to both HR and to the CTO: they both admitted that this was illegal.*" (Blog Susan, 2017).

Sexual harassment is something that has negative consequences for the victim and is something that has to be taken seriously. The action above argued by Susan Fowler shows nevertheless that the manager is not concerned with the victim, but is concerned about the victim reporting sexual harassment instead.

    The conclusion can be drawn, based on this information, that some of the managers are not concerned with others in the organization, but are mainly concerned about the damage sexual harassment may have on themselves.

Sexual harassment type 2

The actions of the managers concerning this type of sexual harassment suggest an absence of concern for others. An incident of sexual harassment is questioned by managers, thereby harming the feelings of the victim. This becomes clear in the following quote:

> "*Kalanick, Eric Alexander ("Alexander"), Uber's then-Vice President for Business in Asia and Emil Michael ("Michael"), Uber's then-Senior Vice President for Business, bought into the narrative of rape denialism which focuses on whether a victim had been drinking, what she was wearing, or whether she knew the alleged rapist, rather than on the very real physical, emotional and financial toll that rape takes on a victim.*" (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2017).

Two managers are busy questioning whether it is the fault of the victim, instead of taking care of the victim. This example may indicate that these managers are not concerned with the feelings and consequences for the victim but are concerned with other aspects that seem important to them. Furthermore, the same managers are also responsible for another unethical action, namely: *"Managers handed off riders' personal information without seeking their permission, or even informing them."* (USA Today, 2019).

These actions highlight the absence of concern for others of some managers, which is something that probably negatively affects the occurrence of sexual harassment.

4.4.1.2 Punishing

Punishing is also part of ethical leadership, as discussed in chapter 2 (Brown et al., 2005). Punishing entails the correct punishment of the harasser (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019). The failure of a leader to correctly punish the harasser increases the likelihood of SH to continue (Tenbrunsel, Rees & Diekmann, 2019).

Sexual harassment type 1

First of all, the data analyzed presents instances of failure of correct punishment by the managers at headquarters, which will be shown in several quotes argued by the victim Susan Fowler. This aspect of failing to correctly punish the harasser probably leads to the continuation of sexual harassment at Uber. An example of failure of correct punishment becomes evident from the following quote: *"Fowler also wrote that her manager threatened to fire her if she ever reported his boss to HR again — which is called retaliation and is illegal according to equal employment laws."* (Newspaper Vox, 2017). The manager is threatening the victim of sexual harassment instead of punishing the harasser. This may enhance the continuation of sexual harassment because the harasser is not punished at all in this case. Furthermore, HR and upper management fail in the following example to correctly punish the harasser as shown in the following quote:

> *"When I reported the situation, I was told by both HR and upper management that even though this was clearly sexual harassment and he was propositioning me, it was this man's first offense, and that they wouldn't feel comfortable giving him anything other than a warning and a stern talking-to."* (Blog Susan, 2017).

In this case the harasser is getting away with harassing someone, a fact that does not fit the criteria for correct punishment. In sum, we may consider that some managers are more interested in protecting and helping the harasser instead of punishing the harasser. This indicates the absence of the implementation of correct punishment at headquarters. However, the findings of this phenonemon consists of the experience of only one victim at the headquarters, Susan Fowler. Other sources that highlight the perspective of other victims at headquarters are not available.

Sexual harassment type 2

The aspect punishing has not been found in the data analysis in regard to sexual harassment in the cab. Therefore, we cannot draw any conclusions about this aspect for this type of sexual harassment.

4.4.1.3 Role model

As described in chapter 2, ethical leaders are role models in developing an ethical climate and ethical behavior in the organization (Mayer et al., 2010). The employees learn from the role models what behavior is expected, rewarded, and punished. A role model is important in setting the example of what is the correct way to treat others.

Sexual harassment type 1

The results of the data analysis show several instances of how several managers at Uber are not acting as role models. An employee of Uber mentions the following: *"It seemed like every manager was fighting their peers and attempting to undermine their direct supervisor so that they could have their direct supervisor's job."* (The Guardian, 2017). This quote reveals that several managers are part of creating an unethical work environment, where it is normal to undermine and fight for power. These deeds are not giving the right example regarding behavior that should be expected, rewarded, and punished in the organization. Moreover, managers at Uber suggest that some unethical behavior should be allowed, as is made explicit in the following quote: *"They rightly point out that the company has been in this position before — what with its executives suggesting the company should be allowed to dig up dirt on journalists, its sexist ads and some of its own internal practices".* (Newspaper Vox, 2017). This makes clear that managers suggest it is allowed to behave in an unethical and inappropriate manner. For example, sexist ads are presented as something that should be

allowed, which is not in line with demonstrating ethical behavior. From these findings, the conclusion can be drawn that several managers at headquarters are not acting as role models. This probably results in employees learning that inappropriate behavior is expected, rewarded, and not punished.

Sexual harassment type 2

The current results concerning this type of sexual harassment again provide evidence for managers not acting as role models. A case of sexual harassment shows an example of a manager not acting as a role model: *"After Plaintiff's sexual assault, Alexander went directly to Delhi where he managed to obtain Plaintiff's confidential, private medical records generated by physicians who examined her after the brutal rape."* (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2017). A manager acting in this way, shows behavior that should not be expected or rewarded in the company, thereby giving the wrong signals to the drivers and riders in the cab. The same manager and two other managers also acted in an inappropriate way: *"Alexander, Kalanick and Michael discussed the records among themselves and with other staff at Uber, speculating that Plaintiff had made up the brutal rape in collusion with arrival of Uber in India in order to undermine Uber's business."* (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2017). The managers are discussing the personal and sensitive medical records of the victim with other staff, and act as if it is something normal, although it is not. These actions of managers are not in line with acting as a role model.

In conclusion, several managers are not acting as role models while they influence the behavior of the riders and drivers. They seem to feel free to do so since such inappropriate behavior seems to be perceived as something that is tolerated in the organization. Managers are setting the tone for unethical behavior in the organization since these actions are not punished at all.

4.4.1.4 Emphasizing ethical standards

As described in paragraphs 4.3.1, and 4.3.3 ethical standards are not described within the organization. This means that overall, there is no possibility to emphasize ethical standards. However, for both types of sexual harassment there are no codes found that are associated with this aspect. Therefore, we assume that the absence of ethical standards results in the absence of emphasizing ethical standards for both types of sexual harassment.

<u>4.4.1.5 Justice</u>

As discussed in the theoretical framework, leaders should have positive personal characteristics and should try to manage and influence the ethical behavior of their employees (Brown et al., 2005). Justice is another aspect that belongs to ethical leadership and counts as positive personal characteristic. Justice refers to acting correctly and fairly in a situation.

<u>Sexual harassment type 1</u>

The actions of the managers at headquarters indicate the absence of justice. The following quote is provided as an example of a manager not acting correctly and fairly in a situation of sexual harassment argued by Susan Fowler: *"Upper management told me that he "was a high performer" (i.e. had stellar performance reviews from his superiors) and they wouldn't feel comfortable punishing him for what was probably just an innocent mistake on his part."* (Blog Susan, 2017). In this case, upper management feels more comfortable by protecting the harasser instead of punishing him. We can argue that protecting the harasser is not in line with acting correctly and fairly in a situation of sexual harassment. Another action of management displays the injustice in a situation of sexual harassment:

> *"Some of the women even had stories about reporting the exact same manager I had reported, and had reported inappropriate interactions with him long before I had even joined the company. It became obvious that both HR and management had been lying about this being "his first offense", and it certainly wasn't his last."* (Blog Susan, 2017).

This quote indicates examples of management not acting correct and fair because they are lying about this being his first offense. Both of these quotes show that the actions of management are contrary to justice, which means there is no justice for the victims of sexual harassment at headquarters. In addition, the absence of this aspect may increase the occurrence of sexual harrasment since the harassers are protected.

<u>Sexual harassment type 2</u>

There have been no results found about the aspect justice with regard to this type of sexual harassment. Therefore, we cannot draw any conclusions about this aspect of leadership.

4.5 Role of the CEO

In this study, the role of the CEO is considered as of importance and is associated with leadership. The behavior and tone of the other leaders also plays a role but the behavior and tone of the CEO seem to be more influential regarding sexual harassment in the organization. Therefore, the role of the CEO will be discussed separately in this paragraph for both types of sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment type 1

The behavior of the CEO at headquarters can be described as contradicting, since the results make clear that his statements differ from his actions. The following quote demonstrates a statement of the CEO in regard to sexual harassment: *"What she describes is abhorrent and against everything Uber stands for and believes in," wrote Kalanick, who claimed it was the "first time this has come to my attention."* (Newspaper Vox, 2017). The CEO describes sexual harassment as something that goes against the norms of Uber. However, the CEO is also responsible for some inappropriate actions in regard to sexual harassment: *"Kalanick had already done an interview with GQ in 2014 where he said he had women on demand; "We call that Boob-er."Internet-speak translates to 'fuck my life,' implying that he was upset that he could not have sexual relations with his subordinates"* (The Verge, 2020). The CEO making sex-related jokes is associated with sexual harassment and is not in line with his statement about sexual harassment. This and other inappropriate actions of the CEO set the tone for sexual harassment in the organization. This behavior is observed by the employees in the organization and influences the organizational culture. The influence of the CEO in the organization is mentioned in the following quote:

> *"Kalanick, like all CEOs, has the responsibility to set the tone at the top and organizational culture at Uber. Had he established the proper tone and culture, Fowler's experience and those of other women employees might not have occurred or would have been addressed appropriately, and damage to the company's reputation avoided."* (The Business Journals, 2020).

This quote reveals the influence of the CEO in the organization, as he or she has the influence to form the organizational culture. In addition, the CEO also decided the role HR should take, shown in this quote: *"They say that's because Kalanick didn't think spending resources on*

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HR representatives who worked with staffers on things like managerial coaching or dealing with performance-related or other workplace issues was as important as investing in a robust recruitment process." (Newspaper Vox, 2017). The CEO decided the role of HR was to recruit talent and to fire personnel when needed. He did not focus on other workplace issues that are important in an organization. This decision of the CEO has caused several inappropriate decisions and actions on the part of the HR department, an aspect that will be discussed in the next paragraph.

In sum, we conclude that the behavior and management style of the CEO may have contributed to the culture and occurrence of sexual harassment at headquarters.

Sexual harassment type 2

The data analyzed point out how the CEO played a role in the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab. For example, the CEO reacted to an incident of sexual harassment in the cab by giving this statement:

> *"In December 2014, Travis Kalanick ("Kalanick"), Uber's Chief Executive Officer, went so far as to make the following public statement: What happened over the weekend in New Delhi is horrific. Our entire team's hearts go out to the victim of this despicable crime. We will do everything, I repeat, everything to help bring this perpetrator to justice and to support the victim and her family in her recovery."* (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2017).

This statement illustrates that the CEO is not accepting the occurrence of sexual harassment and that he cares about what happened with the victim. However, this statement contradicts with his actions regarding this incident:

> *"By focusing on "whether she was really raped at all," and painting Plaintiff as an opportunist and a liar, Defendants seemed to be assuring themselves that the only reason why a woman would report a sexual assault is for personal gain, rather than to prevent similar crimes from occurring again or to right an injustice."* (Counsel Wigdor LLP, 2017).

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After his statement, the CEO questioned if the victim was really raped instead of focusing on the consequences for the victim. This action is not in line with supporting the victim in her recovery, instead it is the opposite of supporting the victim. The behavior of the CEO is contradictory and does not help by preventing the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab.

Thereby, the behavior of the CEO may have contributed to the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab since he did not take the appropriate actions against sexual harassment to solve or prevent it.

4.6 Role of the HR department

The role of HR has been found to be of great influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment at headquarters. The role of HR has not been found in the results concerning sexual harassment type 2. Therefore, the role of HR will only be discussed for sexual harassment type 1.

Sexual harassment type 1

In the current results, the role of HR is notable and has been found to be very relevant in regard to sexual harassment at headquarters. As aforementioned, the CEO decided that the role of HR is to recruit and fire personnel and that they are not responsible for other workplace issues. This statement clarifies these priorities of HR: *"Some former employees also reiterated that the company's human resources department was poorly managed and the focus was largely on recruiting talent and firing people."* (Newspaper Vox, 2017). In this quote it is argued that HR executed the role the CEO expected from them, and they only focused on recruiting and firing employees. Therefore, HR was not trained or did not have any guidance concerning addressing and solving incidents of sexual harassment. The decision of the CEO may partly contribute to the fact that HR has not solved incidents of sexual harassment. In spite of this decision the HR department itself is considered to be responsible for inappropriate actions and decisions concerning sexual harassment. The following quote demonstrates that HR ignores the complaints of sexual harassment: *"Uber's human resources representatives ignored multiple reports of sexual harassment and sexism during her year-long stint at the company."* (Newspaper Vox, 2017). The HR department did not take any action for solving or addressing the incidents of sexual harassment as they ignored all these complaints. The results bring some cases to the surface where HR reacted to a complaint of sexual harassment, which show more inappropriate actions, for example:

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"I forwarded this absurd chain of emails to HR, and they requested to meet with me shortly after. I don't know what I expected after all of my earlier encounters with them, but this one was more ridiculous than I could have ever imagined. The HR rep began the meeting by asking me if I had noticed that *I* was the common theme in all of the reports I had been making, and that if I had ever considered that I might be the problem." (Blog Susan, 2017).

This example illustrates a situation where HR is not willing to help the victim and is not trying to solve or address sexual harassment. This also becomes clear from the following quote: *"The most concerning aspect of this situation is that HR and management had let a man continue to harass women in the workplace – an inexcusable lack of action."* (Business Journals, 2017). These actions and decisions of HR are not helping the victim and are instead protecting the harasser.

From the data analyzed, it can be concluded that HR did not do anything to prevent or address sexual harassment in an appropriate way, and this lack of action probably negatively influenced the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Chapter 5: Conclusion & Discussion

In this final chapter, the findings of this study will be summarized and reflected upon. Paragraph 5.1 contains the conclusion of this research and provides an answer to the research question. Paragraph 5.2 discusses the theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the contextual influences of the ethical climate that contribute to the causes of sexual harassment in workplaces. The present study has focused on the organizational and leadership antecedents as part of the contextual influences. To realize this goal, the following research question has been formulated: *"How do organizational and leadership antecedents of ethical climate influence the occurrence of sexual harassment?"*. First of all, the outcomes of this study have shown the presence of two types of sexual harassment in the organization, namely at headquarters and in the cab. Both types are influenced by the organizational and leadership antecedent. Therefore, in trying to formulate an answer to the research question and to fulfil the aim of this study, the conclusion will be separated into a conclusion for sexual harassment at headquarters and sexual harassment in the cab.

Sexual harassment type 1

The occurrence of sexual harassment at headquarters is negatively influenced by the following aspects of the organizational antecedent; ethical codes, enforcement of codes, internalization of codes, formal systems, informal systems, and organizational context. The data analyzed indicate that all these aspects are absent in the organization, which negatively influences the strength of the ethical climate, and has a negative impact on the occurrence of sexual harassment. Due to the absence of ethical codes, formal systems, and informal systems, there is no guidance and expectations in regard to preferred and not preferred behavior in the organization. This context creates a pretext to behave in an unethical way without facing appropriate consequences.

Another aspect that influences the occurrence of sexual harassment is the organizational context of Uber. Uber can be characterised as a for-profit, male-dominated organization. These two contextual characteristics influence the organizational culture and may increase the likelihood and occurrence of sexual harassment. Uber is extremely driven to

make money, at all costs, and therefore due to their attitude do not seem to care for the feelings of employees and victims. This focus on making money may have negatively influenced the organizational culture, and thereby, increased the occurrence of sexual harassment. Moreover, the organization being male-dominated may have contributed to a hostile environment, which may also have contributed to the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Second, this study suggests there exists a relationship between the leadership antecedent and the occurrence of sexual harassment at headquarters. To specify, the findings indicate the absence of ethical leadership within the organization, which negatively influences the behavior of employees. There is an absence of concern for others, rewarding, punishing, emphasizing ethical standards, and justice. All these aspects together negatively impact ethical leadership. We can thus conclude the leadership antecedent negatively influences the behavior of employees in the organization, and this affects the occurrence and likelihood of sexual harassment in the organization.

Besides these two antecedents, this study suggests that two new aspects also have a significant influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment, namely the role of the CEO and the role of the HR department. The CEO is considered to be the most influential leader in the organization and his unethical behavior and decisions has played a central role in the occurrence of sexual harassment at headquarters. Furthermore, the HR department plays an important role in addressing and solving sexual harassment. This happens in an unethical manner, with negative influences on the occurrence of sexual harassment.

To summarize, the conclusion can be drawn that the organizational and leadership antecedent, the role of the CEO, and the HR department negatively influences the strength of the ethical climate and thereby impact the occurrence of sexual harassment. This occurrence is influenced by the aspects of each antecedent discussed above.

Sexual harassment type 2

The occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab is influenced by the organizational antecedent. The following aspects are significantly related to this occurrence: ethical codes, enforcement of codes, internalization of codes, formal systems, informal systems. Overall, Uber did not do enough to set standards and expectations of preferred and not preferred behavior in the cab. As aforementioned, Uber is characterised as a for-profit organization, which also influences organizational culture, which indirectly influences the behavior of employees. To conclude, all these aspects together negatively influence the behavior of the

drivers and riders in the cab, and this influences the occurrence and likelihood of sexual harassment.

Secondly, the leadership antecedent has a significant influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab. The following aspects are absent concerning this antecedent: concern for others, emphasizing ethical standards, role models. The absence of these aspects negatively influences ethical leadership in the organization. Therefore, the leadership antecedent negatively influences the behavior of drivers and riders in the cab.

The role of the CEO plays an important role due to the high influence of his actions and decisions concerning sexual harassment in the cab. This behavior is observed by drivers and riders and may negatively influence their behavior. In sum, the organizational and leadership antecedent have a significant influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment in the cab.

5.2 Discussion

In this paragraph, the results of this study will be interpreted and reflected upon. First, the results will be compared to the existing literature to present the theoretical implications. Hereafter, the practical implications will be discussed. Next, the limitations of this research will be discussed. Finally, this paragraph will conclude with suggestions for further research.

5.2.1 Theoretical implications

The insights found in this study have resulted in some theoretical implications.

The results of this study contribute to the existing literature about workplace sexual harassment in relation to the ethical climate. The concept of sexual harassment in the context of ethical climate has only been studied by Tenbrunsel et al. (2019). The findings of the current study contribute to the literature concerning the relationship between the contextual influences of the ethical climate and sexual harassment. The results imply that, in the studied case, the antecedents of ethical climate are significantly related to workplace sexual harassment; the antecedents of ethical climate influence the occurrence of sexual harassment in several ways. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature by gaining insight into how ethical climate might affect the occurrence of workplace sexual harassment.

Moreover, further insights of this study relate to the ethical climate in an organization. Prior research has shown that weak ethical climates promote unethical behavior in organizations, thereby promoting sexual harassment (Mayer, 2014). The findings of this study

are in line with the arguments of Mayer (2014). It can be concluded that Uber has a weak ethical climate, due to the absence of policies and perceptions regarding preferred and not preferred behavior. The findings suggest that the absence of several aspects of the ethical climate increases the unethical behavior of employees, in turn augmenting the occurrence of sexual harassment. In addition, this study illustrates that the absence of ethical codes and formal systems influences the other aspects of the organizational antecedent and ethical leadership of the leadership antecedent.

Second, in line with the arguments of Tenbrunsel et al. (2019), the lack of corrective actions taken by the leader against harassers who engage in sexual harassment allows for the continuation of sexually harassing behavior. The insights in this study lay bare that, indeed, the failure of taking correct actions by the leader allows the continuation of sexual harassment in the organization. Mayer et al. (2010) argues that ethical leaders are role models in developing an ethical climate and ethical behavior. The insights in this study are in line with the arguments of Mayer et al. (2010). This research has shown that the leaders in the organization are fundamental in setting the ethical tone in the organization through their behavior. Moreover, the results have shown a new insight, namely that the CEO has a fundamental impact on setting the ethical tone in the organization, and more so than any other leaders in the organization.

The findings in this study indicate that the absence of ethical codes probably negatively influences the strength of the organizational ethical climate, the way sexual harassment is handled and the expectations concerning behavior of the individuals in the organization. The findings of this study contribute to the literature by providing insight into the influence and importance of the ethical codes on the occurrence of sexual harassment. These findings are in line with the arguments of Schewpker & Hartline (2005), who argue that ethical codes have a great impact on the organizational ethical climate.

Multiple findings indicate the importance and great influence of the HR department concerning sexual harassment. Even though the role of the HR department is not part of the organizational antecedent, it is found to be of great importance. It is an interesting opportunity for further research. This finding could be expanded by examining the influence of the HR department on the occurrence of sexual harassment; it could thereby contribute by means of providing insight into contextual influences which contribute to the occurrence of sexual harassment.

Throughout the analysis, it became clear that the role of the CEO also plays an important role in the occurrence of sexual harassment. The findings show that the CEO has a greater impact than any other leader in the organization. Therefore, this finding is also an interesting opportunity for further research. This finding contributes to the leadership antecedent by providing a new knowledge, namely that the CEO plays an important role when it comes to the influence of leadership on sexual harassment.

5.2.2 Practical implications

The significant relationship between the organizational and leadership antecedent of the ethical climate and the occurrence of sexual harassment has practical implications for addressing sexual harassment in practice. It means that by fostering an ethical climate, businesses may be able to decrease the likelihood of sexual harassment. However, this relationship is not self-evident. The organization must put time and effort into fostering an ethical climate to create ethical behavior in the organization, to decrease the likelihood of sexual harassment.

First of all, it is suggested that the ethical codes are of great influence on the organizations' ethical climate. Therefore, it is highly essential to implement ethical codes in the organization that stimulate ethical behavior. More specifically, the first step would be for organizations to incorporate an ethical code of conduct. Hereafter, the organization should incorporate these ethical codes of conduct in the policies that give guidance on how to address and solve sexual harassment.

Secondly, this study indicated the important role of the HR department in the organizations' headquarters. The HR department contributes to forming an ethical climate, which influences the occurrence of sexual harassment. It is of importance to give attention to the role of the HR department and to incorporate ethics in their processes and procedures. This will positively influence the ethical climate and shape the perception and behavior of employees in the organization. This means that upper management and HR should draft new policies together, with a focus on incorporating the ethical codes of conduct. Finally, this illustrates how ethical leadership can be seen as influencing the organizations' ethical climate, which affects the ethical behavior of employees. Practically, the managers in an organization should be motivated to practice ethical leadership because of their influence on the employees. Given these outcomes, organizations should implement leadership education, where leaders learn to integrate an ethical leadership style. This will result in leaders serving

as a motivation for the employees to adopt ethical behavior, so that the organizational ethical climate will be positively affected.

5.2.3 Limitations of this research

Although the researcher tried to ensure quality standards, this study has several limitations. First of all, it is important to mention that this study did only use documents in the analysis. This study has not applied triangulation, and the findings are thus not obtained from different data sources. The absence of triangulation in this study might decrease the validity and reliability of the results of this study. Furthermore, applying one data collection method can lead to a certain bias in the results because there is no incorporation of different perspectives on the phenomenon of workplace sexual harassment.

Second, the data in this thesis only represents what others have said about Uber. Therefore, there is no possibility to check whether what is stated is true, which means that the findings rely on others. The effect of this limitation has been softened by telling more about who says what and by adding nuance in the findings. However, it is still a limitation which may affect the reliability of the data.

Thirdly, this master thesis has been unable to encompass the entire framework of Mayer. Although the interest of this study is to gain insight into how the organizational and leadership antecedent influences sexual harassment, the full range of antecedents of this framework are not incorporated. The researcher has chosen to incorporate only the antecedents that are measurable through document analysis. Incorporating all the antecedents of the framework was not feasible due to the data collection method. This means that the limited scope of this research has implications for the results.

Another restriction of this study relates to the generalisability of the findings of this research. This research was focussed on one specific for-profit organization, and this implies the results cannot easily be transferred and applied to other organizations. Future research is needed to dig deeper in the current results and to broaden the scope of organizations to provide more in-depth insight into the relationship between the ethical climate and sexual harassment.

5.2.4 Further research

This study results in some recommendations for future research on workplace sexual harassment and how it is influenced by the antecedents of the ethical climate. Tenbrunsel et

al. (2019) suggest that the work on ethical climates should be further integrated with the phenomenon of sexual harassment. This research incorporated only the organizational and leadership antecedent, but to broaden the understanding of how workplace sexual harassment relates to the antecedents of the ethical climate it would be recommended to examine all the four antecedents. This could provide insights into the way sexual harassment is influenced by the whole ethical climate, which is necessary to develop a full picture.

Future research could combine several data collection methods to broaden the perspectives on this research topic. This could give a more comprehensive, complete, and detailed overview of this particular problem. Applying triangulation would increase the validity and reliability of the results.

More research should be carried out to find empirical evidence if there is a difference between the ethical climate of a non-profit and for-profit organizations and their influence on the occurrence of workplace sexual harassment. To transfer the results to other organizations, more research has to be done concerning this difference. In doing this, further insights will be generated into the differences between non-profit and for-profit organizations. More studies concerning this difference could also generate interesting new insights.

Another recommendation is associated with the role of the HR department. It would be interesting to investigate this new finding of this study more extensively. As is elaborated on above, this study illustrated the central and important role of the HR department. The role of this department has not been mentioned in the literature, and therefore, it would be interesting to investigate their role and influence on the occurrence of sexual harassment more extensively.

Finally, another future direction of research relates to the role of the CEO. This thesis proves the impact of the role of the CEO on the occurrence and likelihood of sexual harassment in the organization. However, further research with more focus on their role is suggested to dig deeper in the influence of the CEO.

In all, this study shows the necessity that organizations should do more against sexual harassment. There are still too many cases of sexual harassment in organizations. Organizations should take responsibility to address and solve sexual harassment to decrease the number of cases. Future research can help to expand research on the contextual influences that contribute to the occurrence of sexual harassment. More in-depth insights into these influences could help organizations to gather insights in how to prevent and address the occurrence of this problem. However, as described in the introduction there are some

movements, for example, the #Metoo movement. These movements indicate that our society is changing and is trying to acknowledge this problem. In conclusion, it is important to keep paying attention to this problem and for organizations to take their responsibility to address and prevent sexual harassment.

5.3 Personal reflection

The process of writing this Master Thesis provided me with the opportunity to learn more about this particular topic but has also been of value for my personal development. As typical for any Master Thesis, this thesis involved a long process of ups and downs.

A few years ago, I finished my Bachelor of Human Resource Management at a University of Applied Sciences. The thesis I wrote back then was mainly practice-oriented. Therefore, it was quite a struggle for me to write a thesis with an emphasis on theory. This resulted in challenges in finding a suitable theory and academic writing about this theory. This was a huge learning process.

The biggest hurdle in this process for me was writing in academic English. I tried to manage this challenge by learning from other students, reading a lot of English, reading about grammar, and asking people to check my English. In all, I think I have developed myself as an academic writer, but improvement is always possible. In the end I am really proud of myself to have finished this Master Thesis, written in sufficient English.

Appendix

Appendix 1 Document analysis form

Type of document

What kind of document is it?

For example, newspaper, blog, annual report

Observing the document

Who wrote it?

Date of the document?

Origins of the document?

Scanning the document

Where is the document about?

What are the main points of the document?

The goal of the author of the document?

Coding the document

- Open coding
- Axial coding
- Selective coding

Comparing the codes with the table below.

Concepts	Sexual harassment	Unwelcome, sex-related behavior
	Ethical climate	Ethical organizational procedures & policies, and perception employees
Organizational antecedents	Type of company	• For-profit • Non-profit

	Organization characteristics	• Ethical codes • Ethical control: enforcement & internalization • Enforcement: monitoring, ethical training program, ethical appraisals reward system of ethical behavior • Internalization: promoting the discussion, ethical training, role models
	Organizational characteristics regarding sexual harassment	• Organizational context • Formal system • Informal system • Power • Job structure
Leadership antecedent	Leader demographics	Age, tenure, gender, and management level
	Leader personal characteristics	Age, work tenure, educational level, integrity, power, and resources
	Ethical leadership	Moral person Moral manager

Appendix 2 Codebook

Not included

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