PNN PhD Survey

Asking the relevant questions

Workplace malpractices:
Discrimination
Sexual Harassment
Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Contents

Summary

In the survey, PhDs were asked about whether they had experienced some kind of harassment at the workplace. The PhDs could choose from the pre-given options discrimination, sexual harassment and breaches of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. They also had the option to select the option "Other, namely…" to inform us about other kinds of harassment.

- 18.6% of the PhDs has experienced some kind of harassment at the workplace:
    - 8.6% of the PhDs have experienced discrimination
    - 4.9% of the PhDs have witnessed breaches of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
    - 3% of the PhDs have experienced sexual harassment
    - 4.5% of the PhDs have experienced other types of harassment, such as bullying and intimidation

- In the survey, women experience harassment more often than men (20.5% vs 13.4%). The majority of PhDs experiencing sexual harassment are women (95.5%). Discrimination is the most common type of harassment among men.

- PhDs at universities experience discrimination more often (9.8%), whereas PhDs at UMCs and other types of institutions more often experience breaches of the Code of Conduct (5.6%).

- Scholarship PhDs most often experience discrimination. This is due to the fact that many of them are international PhDs, who as a group also experience more discrimination than non-international PhDs. However, non-international scholarship PhDs experience discrimination more often than international employee PhDs. International PhDs less often experience breaches of the Code of Conduct.

- The most common type of discrimination is gender discrimination (45.1%), followed by discrimination based on national origin (41.4%) and discrimination based on ethnicity (24.8%). Gender discrimination affects mostly women, and discrimination based on national origin and ethnicity affects mostly international PhDs.

- The most common type of breaches of the Code of Conduct is unjustified co-authorship (64.5%), followed by deliberately failing to credit others' contributions (40.8%) and secretly rejecting research results (22.4%). Questionable methodological practices are relatively more common at UMCs while deliberately failing to credit others relatively often occurs at universities. Unjustified co-authorship is the most common type of breach at both universities and UMCs.

- The most common type of sexual harassment is verbal harassment of sexual nature (40.4%), followed by unwanted touching or physical contact (27.7%) and discussing sexual relations, stories or fantasies at work (19.1%).

- Most instances of harassment occur a couple of times or only once. Discrimination and other types of harassment occur relatively more often, sometimes on a monthly basis.

- PhDs who experienced breaches of the Code of Conduct and other types of harassment indicated most often that they needed some kind of help with their experiences. PhDs who experienced sexual harassment relatively indicated more often that they did not need help with their experiences.

- PhDs indicated that they were aware of their institution offering support in the case of breaches of the Code of Conduct, sexual harassment and other types of harassment, but often did not know whether their institution offered support in the case of discrimination.

- The majority of PhDs who experienced discrimination, breaches of the Code of Conduct or sexual harassment do not use the support structures of their institution. PhDs who experienced other types of harassment do use the support offered by their institution.

47.6% of the PhDs who used the support offered by their institution were satisfied with the support offered, 35.7% of the PhDs was dissatisfied with the support offered.

- PhDs who needed help but did not use the support offered by their institutions often found support elsewhere. Support for breaches of the Code of Conduct was found at supervisors and colleagues, while support for experiences of sexual harassment was found in the personal network of friends and family. PhDs who experienced discrimination found support at various types of sources.

Recommendations

- As one in five PhDs experience some kind of harassment, Universities, UMCs and research institutions should first of all explicitly communicate that harassment of any kind is unacceptable and act upon this. This can be done by implementing infrastructure via which victims of harassment can not only report the harassment, but that also allows for acting upon these reports. Especially for instances of discrimination, supporting structures still seem to be underdeveloped or unknown amongst PhDs.

- Infrastructure for dealing with harassment should:

    o **Be accessible**: all institutions should ensure PhDs are aware of the existing support and that this support is accessible. This should be the case for all groups of PhDs, regardless of gender, PhD arrangement, nationality or discipline. Special attention should be paid to groups who experience harassment relatively more often, such as women and international PhDs.

    o **Be independent**: PhDs should be certain that they can report the experiences of harassment in full confidentiality, without having to fear repercussions when reporting harassment. Ideally, the support structures are independent from faculties, departments and the board of the institution.

    o **Be able to act**: at the moment, the support offered to PhDs often stops at the report. The supporting structures often do not allow for taking concrete steps to address the source of the harassment or addressing underlying patterns that result in harassment. Taking steps against their harasser should be an accessible option for all who experience harassment.

    o **Take victims of harassment seriously**: not being believed when reporting harassment amplifies the negative effects of the harassment. The default position of the support structures should be to take the reports seriously, rather than dismissing them by default. This also holds for small acts of harassment, such as inappropriate comments: these should not be explained away, but be taken seriously, as a sum of small acts can strongly affect the victims.

    o **Be blind for status**: in many cases, the source of the harassment is a supervisor or other superior to the PhD who has a certain status within the institution. However, status should not be a license to harass. If universities, UMCs and research institutions are really committed to reducing harassment, they should not hesitate to take action even when high profile researchers are the ones engaging in harassment. PhDs also work for the university/UMC/research institution (even if they don't have an employment contract) and therefore also have the right to be protected from harassment.

Installing an Ombudsperson at all institutions would already be a step forward in improving the supporting structures for PhDs (and others) who experience harassment. PNN however believes that the Ombudsperson should be accessible from the start, and not as a last resort option. Current existing procedures often do not meet all five requirements mentioned above. Having to go through such, often lengthy and troublesome, procedures before being able to get proper help can be strongly discouraging for PhDs, as they work on temporary contracts that do not provide the time to engage in lengthy procedures.

Furthermore, the Ombudsperson should have the mandate to act on all kinds of topics. Topics should not be reserved for confidential advisors and integrity boards, as the unique position of the Ombudsperson is the ability to start an independent research. Independent research should also be an option for topics that are usually dealt with by existing support structures.

A national academic Ombudsperson could also provide a last resort solution for PhDs (and others) who prefer to report the harassment at an institution fully independent from their institution.

Samenvatting

In de survey werden promovendi gevraagd of zij op hun werk een vorm van ongewenst gedrag hadden meegemaakt. De promovendi konden kiezen uit de vooraf gegeven opties discriminatie, seksuele intimidatie en schendingen van de Gedragscode Wetenschappelijke Integriteit. Ze hadden ook de mogelijkheid om de optie "Anders, namelijk…" te selecteren om andere vormen van ongewenst gedrag te melden.

- 18,6% van de promovendi heeft een of andere vorm van ongewenst gedrag op de werkplek ervaren:
    - 8,6% van de promovendi heeft discriminatie ervaren
    - 4,9% van de promovendi heeft inbreuken op de Gedragscode wetenschappelijke integriteit meegemaakt.
    - 3% van de promovendi is seksueel geïntimideerd
    - 4,5% van de promovendi heeft te maken gehad met andere vormen van ongewenst gedrag, zoals pesterijen en intimidatie.

- Onder de respondenten van deze survey ondervinden vrouwen vaker ongewenst gedrag dan mannen (20,5% versus 13,4%). De grote meerderheid van de promovendi die seksuele intimidatie heeft meegemaakt zijn vrouwen (95,5%). Onder mannen is discriminatie de meest voorkomende vorm van ongewenst gedrag.

- Promovendi aan universiteiten worden relatief vaker gediscrimineerd (9,8%), terwijl promovendi aan UMC's en andere soorten instellingen relatief vaak overtredingen van de gedragscode meemaken (5,6%).

- Beurspromovendi ondervinden discriminatie het vaakst. Dit is te wijten aan het feit dat veel van hen internationale promovendi zijn, die als groep vaker discriminatie meemaken dan niet-internationale promovendi. Echter, niet-internationale beurspromovendi maken vaker discriminatie mee dan internationale werknemerspromovendi. Internationale promovendi hebben minder vaak te maken met overtredingen van de Gedragscode

- De meest voorkomende vorm van discriminatie is discriminatie op basis van gender (45,1%), gevolgd door discriminatie op grond van nationale afkomst (41,4%) en discriminatie op grond van etniciteit (24,8%). Discriminatie op basis van gender treft vooral vrouwen, discriminatie op grond van nationale afkomst en etniciteit treft vooral internationale promovendi.

- De meest voorkomende vorm van seksuele intimidatie is verbale intimidatie van seksuele aard (40,4%), gevolgd door ongewenste aanraking of lichamelijk contact (27,7%) en het bespreken van seksuele relaties, verhalen of fantasieën op het werk (19,1%).

- De meeste vormen van ongewenst gedrag overkomt promovendi een paar keer of slechts één keer voor. Discriminatie en andere vormen van ongewenst gedrag overkomt promovendi relatief vaker, vaak maandelijks.

- Promovendi die inbreuk op de Gedragscode en andere vormen van ongewenst gedrag hebben meegemaakt, gaven het vaakst aan dat ze een vorm van hulp nodig hadden bij hun ervaringen. Promovendi die seksuele intimidatie hebben meegemaakt, geven relatief vaker aan dat ze geen hulp nodig hadden bij hun ervaringen.

- Promovendi gaven aan ervan op de hoogte te zijn dat hun instelling steun biedt bij overtredingen van de Gedragscode, seksuele intimidatie en andere vormen van ongewenst gedrag, maar wisten meestal niet of hun instelling ook steun biedt in het geval van discriminatie.

- De meerderheid van de promovendi die discriminatie, overtredingen van de Gedragscode of seksuele intimidatie hebben meegemaakt, maakt meestal geen gebruik van de ondersteunende structuren die hun instelling heeft. Promovendi die te maken hebben

gehad met andere vormen van ongewenst gedrag maken vaak wel gebruik van de ondersteuning die hun instelling biedt. 47,6% van de promovendi die gebruik maken van de ondersteuning die hun instelling biedt, is tevreden over de geboden ondersteuning, 35,7% van de promovendi is ontevreden over de geboden ondersteuning.

- Promovendi die hulp nodig hadden, maar geen gebruik maakten van de steun die hun instellingen biedt, vonden vaak elders ondersteuning. Steun voor overtredingen van de Gedragscode werd vaak gevonden bij leidinggevenden en collega's, terwijl steun voor ervaringen met seksuele intimidatie vaker werd gevonden in het persoonlijke netwerk van vrienden en familie. Promovendi die discriminatie ondervonden, vonden steun op verschillende manieren.

Aanbevelingen

- Aangezien één op de vijf promovendi een vorm van ongewenst gedrag ervaart, zouden universiteiten, UMC's en onderzoeksinstellingen in de eerste plaats expliciet moeten communiceren dat iedere vorm van ongewenst gedrag onacceptabel is, en hier ook naar handelen. Dit kan gedaan worden door infrastructuur aan te leggen waarmee slachtoffers van ongewenst gedrag niet alleen het ongewenste gedrag kunnen melden, maar die ook de mogelijkheid biedt om actie te ondernemen. Zeker in het geval van discriminatie lijken ondersteunende structuren nog niet voldoende ontwikkeld of onbekend te zijn bij promovendi.

- Infrastructuur voor het aanpakken van ongewenst gedrag moet:

  - **Toegankelijk zijn**: alle instellingen moeten ervoor zorgdragen dat promovendi op de hoogte zijn van het bestaan van de ondersteunende infrastructuur en dat deze infrastructuur toegankelijk is. Dit moet gelden voor alle groepen promovendi, ongeacht geslacht, type promotietraject, nationaliteit of vakgebied. Er zou in het bijzonder aandacht moeten worden besteed aan groepen die relatief vaak slachtoffer zijn van ongewenst gedrag, zoals vrouwen en internationale promovendi.

  - **Onafhankelijk zijn**: promovendi moeten er zeker van kunnen zijn dat ze ongewenst gedrag in alle vertrouwelijkheid kunnen rapporteren, zonder repercussies hiervan te hoeven vrezen. Idealiter is de ondersteunende infrastructuur onafhankelijk van faculteiten, afdelingen en het bestuur van de instelling.

  - **Actie kunnen ondernemen**: op dit moment stopt de ondersteuning voor promovendi bij het melden daarvan. De huidige ondersteunende structureren bieden vaak niet de mogelijkheid om concrete stappen te nemen om de bron van het ongewenste gedrag aan te pakken. Het nemen van stappen tegen degene die het ongewenste gedrag vertoont zou een toegankelijke optie moeten zijn voor alle slachtoffers van dit ongewenste gedrag.

  - **Slachtoffers van ongewenst gedrag serieus nemen**: niet worden geloofd als je ongewenst gedrag aankaart, versterkt de negatieve effecten van het ongewenste gedrag. De ondersteunende infrastructuur zou als standaard moeten hebben om meldingen serieus te nemen, en niet om deze meteen in twijfel te trekken. Dit geldt ook voor kleinere soorten ongewenst gedrag, zoals ongepaste opmerkingen: these moeten niet worden wegverklaard, maar serieus worden behandeld, aangezien de som van kleine ongewenste gedragingen de slachtoffers ervan ernstig kan aantasten.

  - **Statusblind zijn**: in veel gevallen is de bron van het ongewenste gedrag een begeleider of een persoon in een hogere rang dan de promovendus die binnen de instelling een bepaalde status heeft. Status mag echter geen licentie zijn om ongewenst gedrag te vertonen. Als universiteiten, UMC's en onderzoeksinstellingen werkelijk toegewijd zijn aan het verminderen van ongewenst gedrag, zouden ze niet mogen twijfelen om actie te ondernemen, ook als *high profile* onderzoekers degenen zijn die het ongewenste gedrag vertonen. Promovendi werken net zo goed voor de universiteit/UMC/onderzoeksinstelling (zelfs als ze geen arbeidscontract hebben) en hebben daarom ook het recht om beschermd te worden tegen ongewenst gedrag.

Het aanstellen van een Ombudsfunctionaris aan alle instellingen zou al een grote stap voorwaarts zijn in het verbeteren van de ondersteunende structuren voor promovendi (en anderen) die ongewenst gedrag ervaren. PNN is echter van mening dat de Ombudsfunctionaris van het begin af aan toegankelijk moet zijn, en niet de laatste optie

mag zijn. Huidige procedures voldoen vaak niet aan de vijf bovengenoemde vereisten. Het moeten doorstaan van dergelijke, vaak lange en onaangename, procedures voordat het mogelijk is om de juiste hulp te krijgen, kan zeer ontmoedigend werken voor promovendi, aangezien zij op tijdelijke werken die vaak niet genoeg tijd bieden om lange procedures te doorlopen.

Bovendien zou de Ombudsfunctionaris het mandaat moeten hebben om alle mogelijke onderwerpen te behandelen. Onderwerpen moeten niet voorbehouden zijn aan vertrouwenspersonen en integriteitscommissies, aangezien de Ombusfunctionaris de unieke positie heeft om een onafhankelijk onderzoek te starten. Onafhankelijk onderzoek zou ook een optie moeten zijn voor onderwerpen die normaliter worden behandeld in bestaande hulpstructuren.

Een nationale academische Ombudsfunctionaris zou ook een laatste oplossing kunnen bieden voor promovendi (en anderen) die het ongewenste gedrag liever rapporteren bij een instelling die volledig onafhankelijk is van hun eigen instelling.

Introduction

Everyone wants to work in a safe working environment. As in any other organisation where people work together, however, problems inevitably arise at universities, UMCs and other research institutions. There has been a lot of attention recently for workplace malpractices in academia, following a LNVH report that shed a light on situations of harassment within the academic workplace[1]. In addition, a survey commissioned by FNV and VAWO reported that 40% of the employees in academia indicate that they have personally experienced a socially unsafe working environment.[2]

LNVH points towards the hierarchical structure of Dutch academia as one of the four main facilitating characteristics of widespread harassment in academia. In a hierarchical environment, individuals' professional progress is often determined by others in higher positions. Because PhDs are at the bottom of the academic ladder, they are especially vulnerable for harassment, including discrimination and sexual harassment. Unfortunately, PhDs have not been well represented in the studies mentioned above. Therefore, a clear picture of the PhDs' experiences of harassment is therefore still lacking.

While harassment may occur at any type of organisation, there is a particular type of workplace malpractice specific to academia. All academics have to adhere to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity[3], which ensures that all research meets scientific and ethical standards. However, not all academics adhere to the Code as rigorously as they should: it may be tempting for some to circumvent the rules in order to get more interesting results and a publication when your career depends on publishing. PhDs may notice breaches of the Code of Conduct by their supervisors or colleagues, or even be pressured to engage in questionable research practices themselves.

In the PNN PhD survey, we asked all PhDs whether they have had experienced discrimination, sexual harassment, breaches of the Code of Conduct, or other types of harassment. If they reported any of the above, we asked them more details about the type of harassment that occurred, how often it occurred, and whether their institutions offered support for dealing with harassment. In this report, we present the results of these questions.

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[1] LNVH (2019). Harassment in Dutch academia: Exploring manifestations, facilitating factors, effects and solutions.
https://www.lnvh.nl/uploads/moxiemanager/LNVH_rapport__lsquo_Harassment_in_Dutch_academia_
_Exploring_manifestations__facilitating_factors__effects_and_solutions_rsquo_.pdf

[2] FNV & VAWO (2019). Sociale veiligheid van medewerkers op universiteiten: onderzoeksresultaten. ["Social security of employees at universities", available in Dutch only.]
https://www.fnv.nl/getattachment/Nieuwsbericht/Sectornieuws/FNV-Overheid/2019/05/Helft-
universiteitspersoneel-ervaart-sociaal-onvei/20190506-FNV-en-VAWO-Onderzoek-sociale-veiligheid-
op-universiteiten-2.pdf?lang=nl-NL

[3] Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
https://www.vsnu.nl/files/documents/Netherlands%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20for%20Research%2
0Integrity%202018.pdf

Methodology

In this report, we will present the results of 1,601 PhDs who fully completed the PNN PhD survey. More information about the survey and the completion rate can be found in the [PNN Survey report on Survey information, Demographics and COVID-19](#).

Harassment

In the survey, we asked PhDs the following question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?". The PhDs were able to select multiple of the following options:

- No
- Yes, breaches of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
- Yes, sexual harassment
- Yes, discrimination
- Yes, namely…
- Prefer not to say

It was not possible to combine the option "No" with any other option.

In hindsight, the word 'harassment' was not well chosen. For instance, the term harassment is arguably unsuitable to refer to breaches of the Code of Conduct, which is rather a form of workplace malpractice. The term harassment may also have too strong a connotation to sexual harassment, and therefore be less often linked to other types of harassment, such as bullying or abuse of power. Because these types of harassment were not provided as answer options, this may have led to PhDs underreporting instances of these types of harassment. So, even though this question allows us to get insights in the extent to which PhDs experience discrimination, sexual harassment and breaches of the Code of Conduct, the question does not suffice to measure overall social safety of the working environment.

Though harassment is a word that does not properly cover the topics PhDs were asked about, we will keep using the word in the discussion of the results, rather than for instance workplace malpractices, because harassment was the word used in the questions.

General variables

Gender

At the beginning of the survey, we asked participants what their gender is. Two thirds of the respondents is female, and less than one third is male. 0.4% of the participants did not identify as male or female, 1.2% chose the option 'prefer not to say', and 1 respondent did not answer this question. Given the low numbers for the category other and prefer not to say, we will not display any results for these categories in further analyses.

Type of institution

The respondents were asked at what kind of institution they were doing their PhD. The respondents could choose between University, University Medical Center, non-University Medical Center, Research institutes connected to Universities, Independent Research Institutes Universities of Applied Sciences and Other. For those who answered "Other, namely…" and provided an open answer (n=22), we analysed the answers to see whether their institution could be categorized into one of the existing categories. This was the case for 9 respondents.

Due to small numbers in the categories other than University and UMC, we will use a 3-group classification of type of institution when discussing other survey results. In this classification, we combine the categories University and Research Institution affiliated to a university into one category, keep a separate category for University Medical Centers, and combine the independent Research Institutes, non-University Medical Centers, Universities of Applied Sciences and other into one category, labelled 'Other'.

Type of PhD arrangement
The type of PhD arrangements was measured using a complex procedure which allowed for capturing the large variation in PhD arrangements that exist within the Dutch academic system. For this purpose, different classification questions were used for different types of institutions. These institution-specific typologies were subsequently combined into one overall typology of PhD arrangements. A detailed account of this procedure can be found in the PNN Survey report on Survey information, demographics and COVID-19. The PhD typology used is the overall PhD typology that distinguishes between "Employee PhDs", "Scholarship PhDs", "External PhDs" and "Other" types of PhDs.

International PhDs
To determine whether PhDs were international PhDs, without determining this based on their country of origin, we asked the PhDs the following question: "Working in the Netherlands, do you consider yourself to be an international PhD?" Those who replied "Yes" to this question, were asked to indicate their country of origin (though it was stressed that they could skip this question if they did not want to answer this question). The responses to this question showed that 87 PhDs indicated that they were from the Netherlands. These PhDs were re-classified as non-international PhDs.

Note on graphs
In the graphs in this report, we often will have an x-axis or y-axis depicting percentages of PhDs experiencing harassment, while the value labels present the number of PhDs experiencing harassment. We do this to keep readers aware of the low number of PhDs experiencing harassment in some subgroups. In the text, we will however mostly refer to percentages as we then often compare groups. Readers can always calculate percentages themselves, as the number of cases, in total and for subgroups, is reported in the graphs itself or in the graph title.

Results

Occurrence of different types of harassment

We asked all PhDs the following question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?" The PhDs could select multiple of the following options:

- No
- Yes, breaches of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity
- Yes, sexual harassment
- Yes, discrimination
- Yes, namely…
- Prefer not to say

It was not possible to combine the option "No" with any other option.

81.4% of the PhDs indicated that they did not experience any kind of harassment at the workplace. This means that 18.6% of the PhDs unfortunately have experienced some kind of harassment. Which types of harassment PhDs have experienced and how often is depicted in figure 1.1. Here we see that the most common type of harassment is discrimination, which is experienced by 8.6% of the PhDs. The second most common type of harassment is breaches of the Code of Conduct (4.9%), followed by other types of harassment (4.5%). 3% of the PhDs indicate to have experienced sexual harassment at the workplace, and 2% prefer not to say what kind of harassment they experienced.
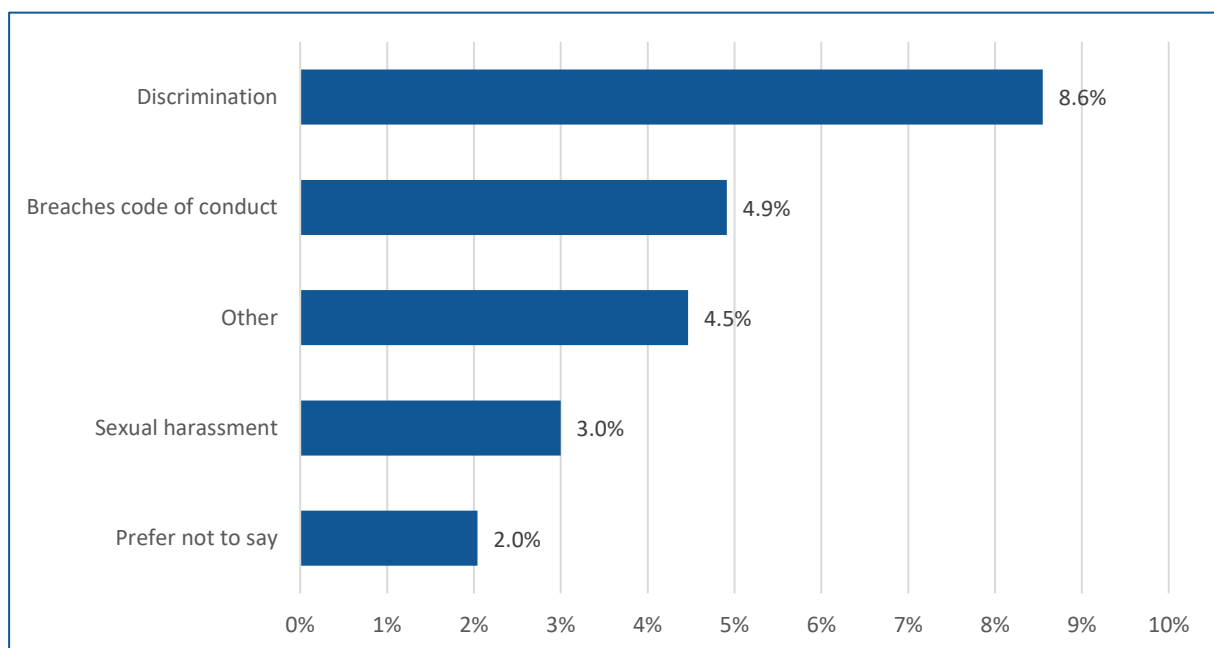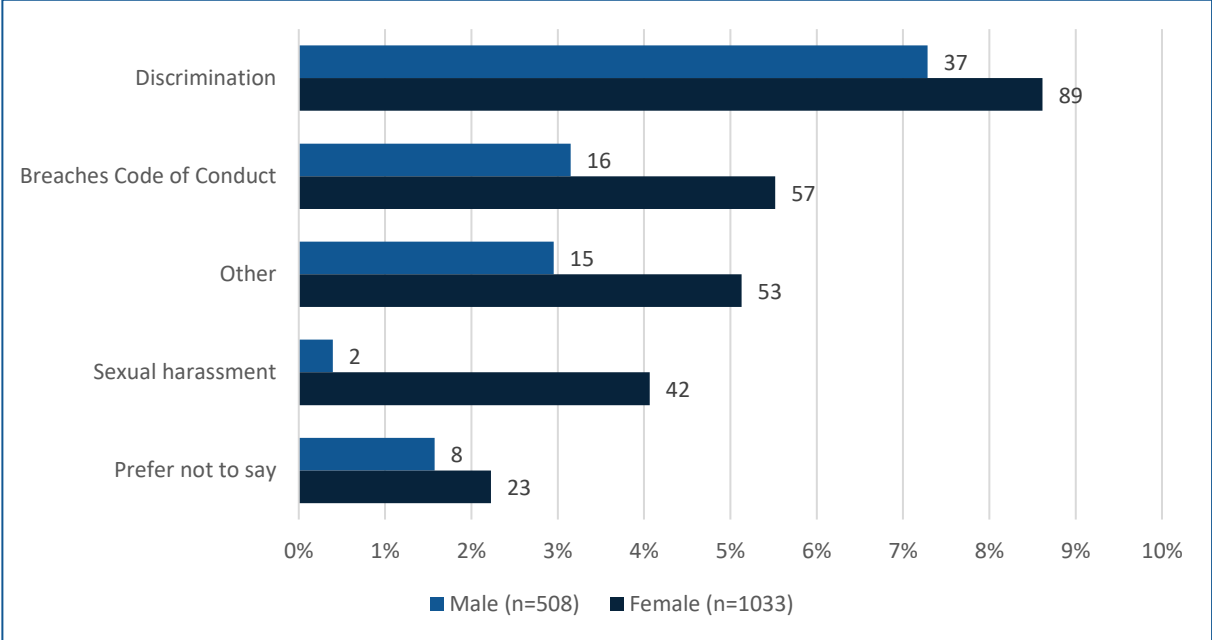

Figure 1.1. Responses to the question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?" (n=1,567). Category "No" (81.4%) omitted for readability. Axis maximum=10%.

69 PhDs specified what kind of other type of harassment they experienced. They often mentioned bullying (33%), various forms harassment that can be labelled as discrimination (sexism, ethnic discrimination) (29%) as well as disrespect and intimidation (both 8%). 10% explicitly stated that the harassing was done by the supervisor. Though we did not explicitly ask about these types of harassment that also relate to a unsafe working environment, they do pop up here as well. However, we suspect that these topics are underreported.

Gender

Dividing the results by gender allows us to examine whether women and men experience different types of harassment. 86.6% of the male PhDs have not experienced any form of harassment at the workplace. For female PhDs, this is only 79.5%. Women thus experience

harassment at the workplace more often than men. Which types of harassment are experienced by men and women is shown in figure 1.2. Here we see that women experience all types of harassment relatively more often than men. The most striking difference can be found for sexual harassment: whereas 4.1% of the female PhDs stated to have experienced sexual harassment at the workplace, only 0.4% of the men have stated to have experienced sexual harassment. This means that 95.5% of the PhDs who have reported experiencing sexual harassment are women. Among men, the most common type of harassment is discrimination (7.3%).

Figure 1.2: Responses to the question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?", per gender. Category "No" omitted for readability of graph. Axis maximum=10%.

Type of institution

We furthermore looked into the differences between types of institutions with regards to the occurrence of harassment at the workplace. Harassment occurs least often at other types of institutions: 89.3% of PhDs at other types of institutions indicate not having experienced
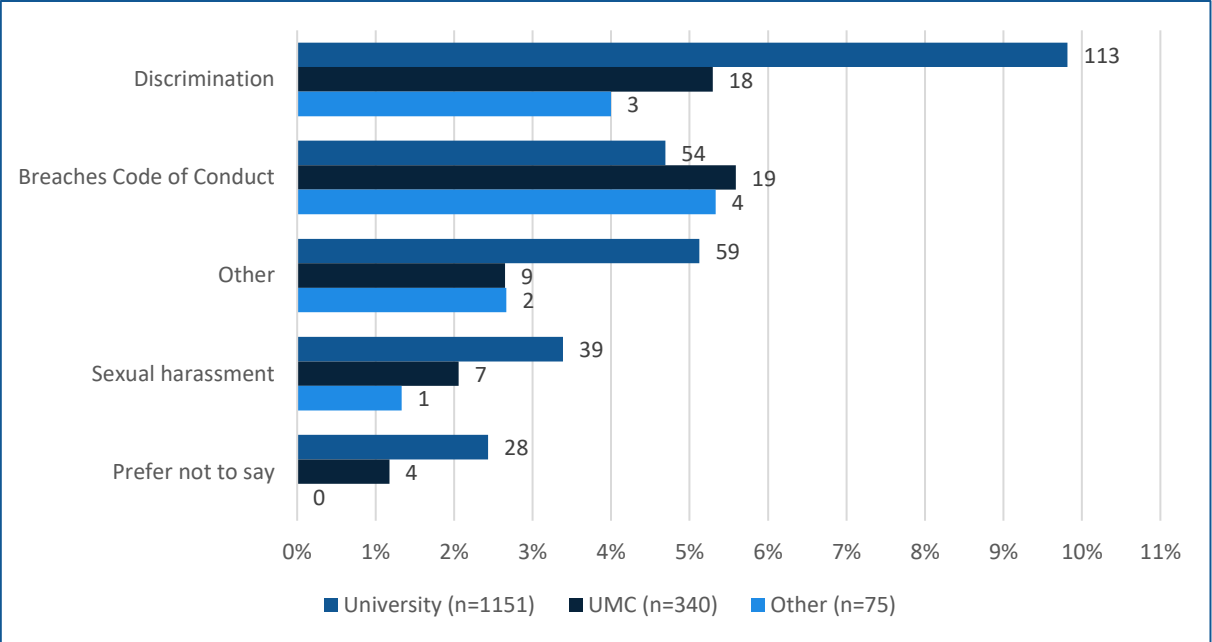

Figure 1.3: Responses to the question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?", per type of institution. Category "No" omitted for readability of graph. Axis maximum=11%.

harassment at the workplace. At UMCs, 85.6% of the PhDs indicate not having experienced harassment, and at universities, only 79.7% of PhDs indicate not having experienced harassment. Harassment thus occurs most often at universities.

Looking at what types of harassment occur at the different types of institutions (figure 1.3), we see that discrimination, sexual harassment and other types of harassment relatively often occur at universities, whereas Code of Conduct breaches happen relatively often at UMCs and other types of institutions. While discrimination is the most common type of harassment at universities (9.8%), the most common type of harassment at UMCs and other types of institutions are breaches of the Code of Conduct (5.6% and 5.3% respectively).

Type of PhD arrangement
There are also differences between types of PhD arrangements in the occurrence of harassment. Other types of PhDs indicate most often that they do not experience harassment at the workplace (88.1%), while only 72.8% of scholarship PhDs indicate that they do not experience harassment at the workplace. 82.4% of the employee PhDs and 80.5% of external PhDs indicate that they do not experience harassment at the workplace. Scholarship PhDs thus most often experience harassment at the workplace.
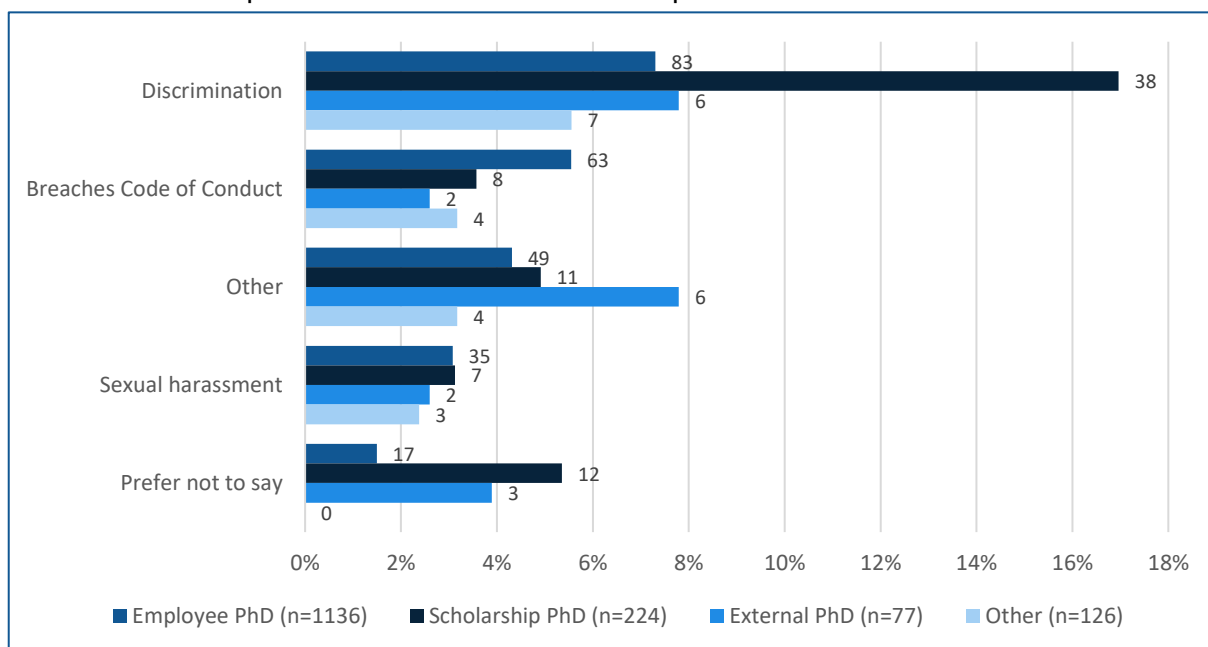

Figure 1.4: Responses to the question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?", per type of PhD arrangement. Category "No" omitted for readability of graph. Axis maximum=18%.

The types of harassment also differ per type of PhD arrangement (figure 1.4). Most striking is that scholarship PhDs relatively most often indicate to experience discrimination (17%). For employee PhDs, discrimination is also the most common form of harassment, but it occurs less often than for scholarship PhDs (7.3%). Employee PhDs also experience Code of Conduct breaches relatively often, whereas external PhDs more often experience other types of harassment. Scholarship PhDs also indicate relatively often that they prefer not to say what type of harassment they experienced.

The high score of scholarship PhDs on experienced discrimination might be due to the fact that international PhDs are overrepresented in this group. International PhDs are more likely to experience discrimination based on ethnicity. We therefore also present the occurrence of harassment per type of PhD arrangement separately for international PhDs and non-international PhDs (figure 1.5).

We indeed observe that international PhDs in all types of PhD arrangements experience discrimination more often than non-international PhDs. However, the differences between types of PhD arrangements are large. While international 'other' types of PhDs score highest
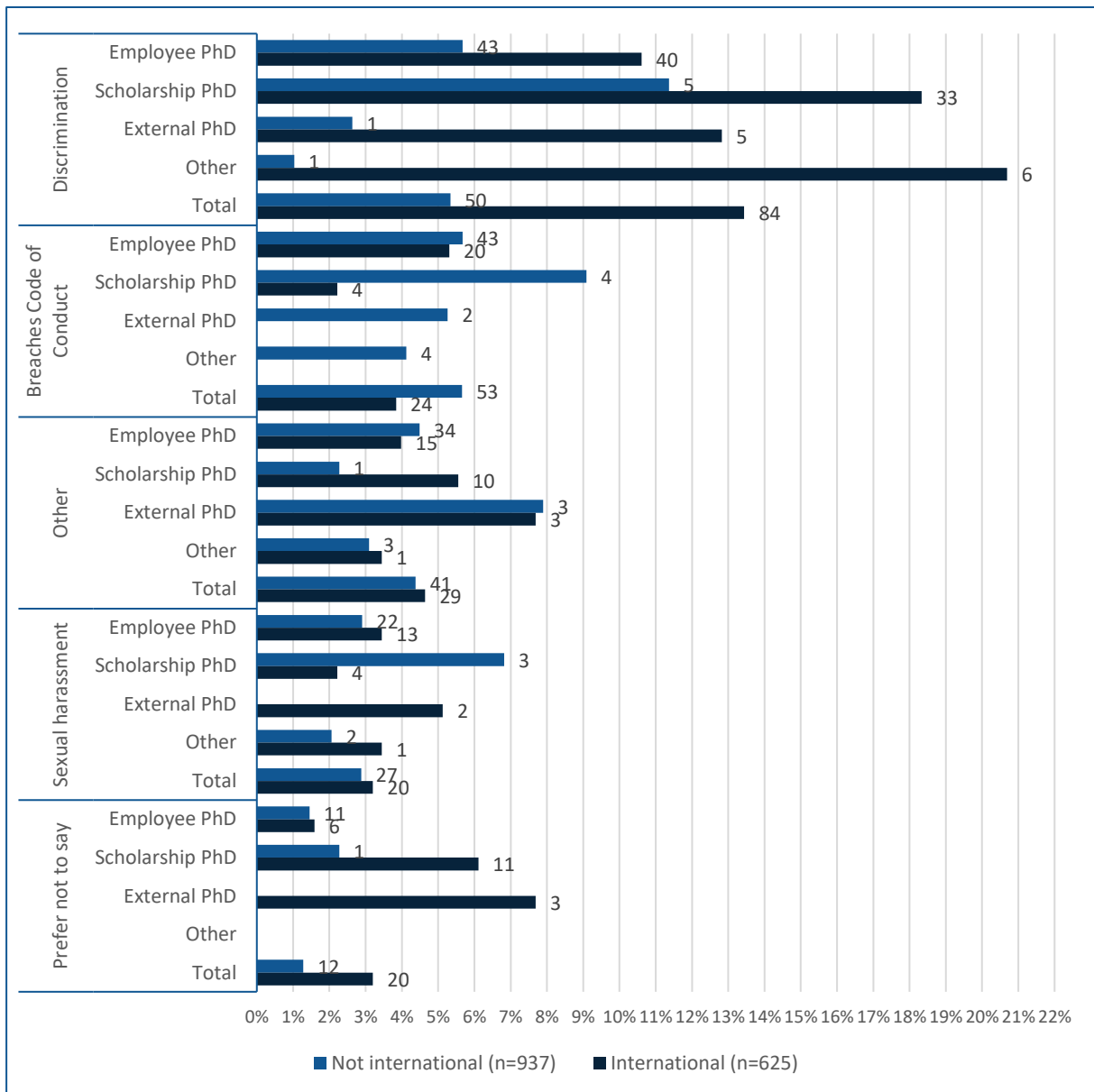
Figure 1.5: Responses to the question: "Did you experience any kind of harassment at the workplace?", per type of PhD arrangement separately for international and non-international PhDs. Category "No" omitted for readability of graph. Axis maximum=22%. Employee PhDs: international n=377, non-international n=758. Scholarship PhDs: international n=180, non-international n=44. External PhDs: international n=39, non-international n=38. Other types of PhDs: international n=29, non-international n=97.

on discrimination (20.7%), non-international 'other' types of PhDs rarely experience discrimination (1%). Within the group of scholarship PhDs, the differences between international and non-international PhDs is relatively smaller: 18.3% of international scholarship PhDs experience discrimination, compared to 11.4% of the non-international scholarship PhDs.

While international PhDs experience discrimination relatively often, they much less often experience breaches of the Code of Conduct, however, even though this is the second most common type of harassment for non-international PhDs. For all other types of harassment, the differences between international PhDs and non-international PhDs are much smaller.

Discrimination

The PhDs who indicated that they experienced discrimination (n=133) were asked what type of discrimination they experienced. They could choose multiple options from the types of discrimination presented in figure 1.6. Gender discrimination is mentioned most frequently (45.1%), followed by discrimination based on national origin (41.4%). The third most often mentioned type of discrimination is on the basis of ethnicity (24.8%). Less frequently mentioned types of discrimination are discrimination related to age (11.3%), pregnancy or parenthood (11.3%), mental or physical disability (9%), skin colour (6.8%) and sexuality (6%). Other types of discrimination are also mentioned relatively often (15%). The types of discrimination specified under other types of discrimination are diverse, ranging from language discrimination to discrimination on the basis of scholarship PhD status.
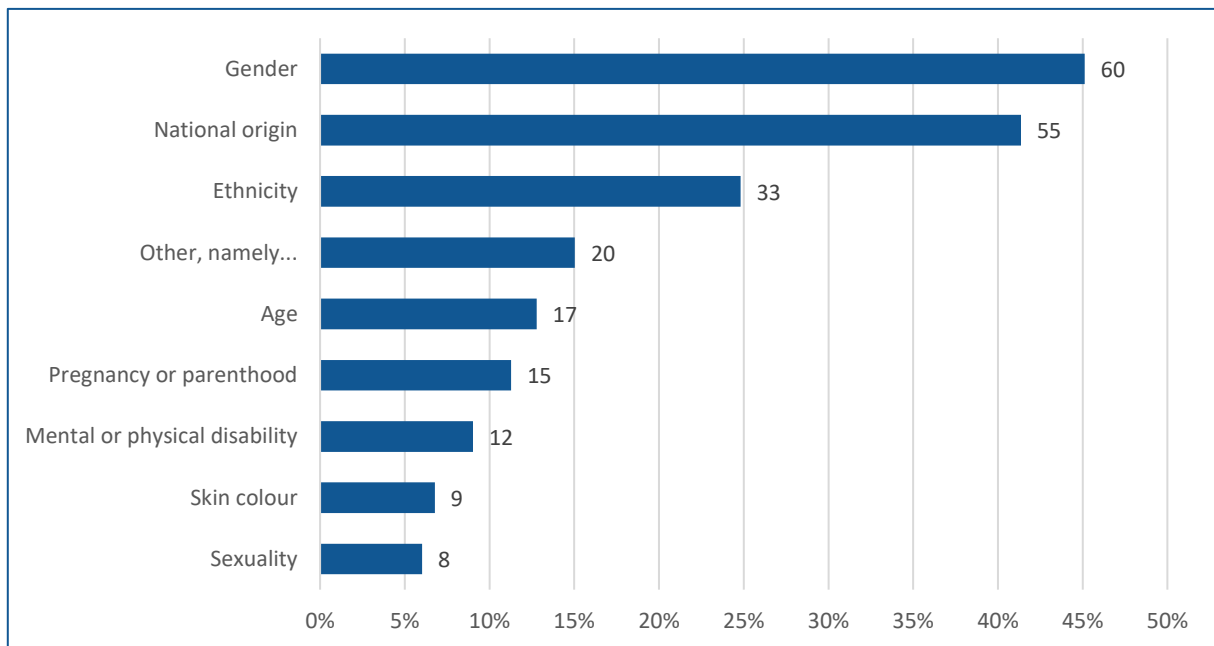

Figure 1.6: Responses to the question: "What kind of discrimination have you experienced?" (n=133).

Gender

Considering we expect the types of discrimination experienced to be different between men and women, we also present the results for these groups separately (figure 1.7). Here we see that gender discrimination is experienced by women much more often (53.4%) than by men (16.2%), with gender discrimination being the most common type of discrimination experienced by women. In contrast, men most often experience discrimination on the basis of national origin (45.9%), ethnicity (32.4%) and other types of discrimination (27%), also when compared to women. Women, compared to men, more often indicate to have experienced discrimination based on pregnancy or parenthood (13.6%), and mental or physical disabilities (9.1%).

International PhDs

We furthermore expect differences between international and non-international PhDs in the types of discrimination they experience. These results can be found in figure 1.8. Among non-international PhDs, gender discrimination is the most common (63.3%), while discrimination based on national origin is most common amongst international PhDs (61.9%). International PhDs also more often experience discrimination based on ethnicity, skin colour, and sexuality, whereas non-international PhDs relatively often experience discrimination based on age, pregnancy or parenthood, mental or physical disability and other grounds.
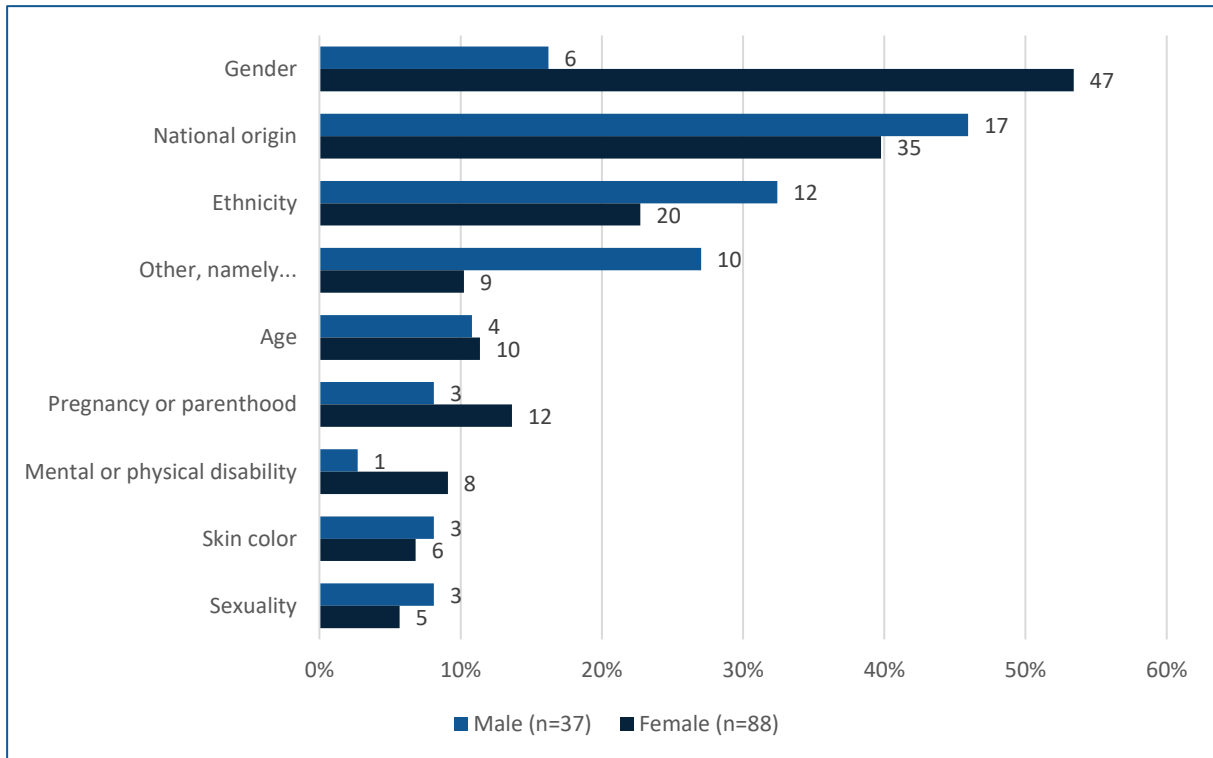
Figure 1.7: Responses to the question: "What kind of discrimination have you experienced?", per gender.
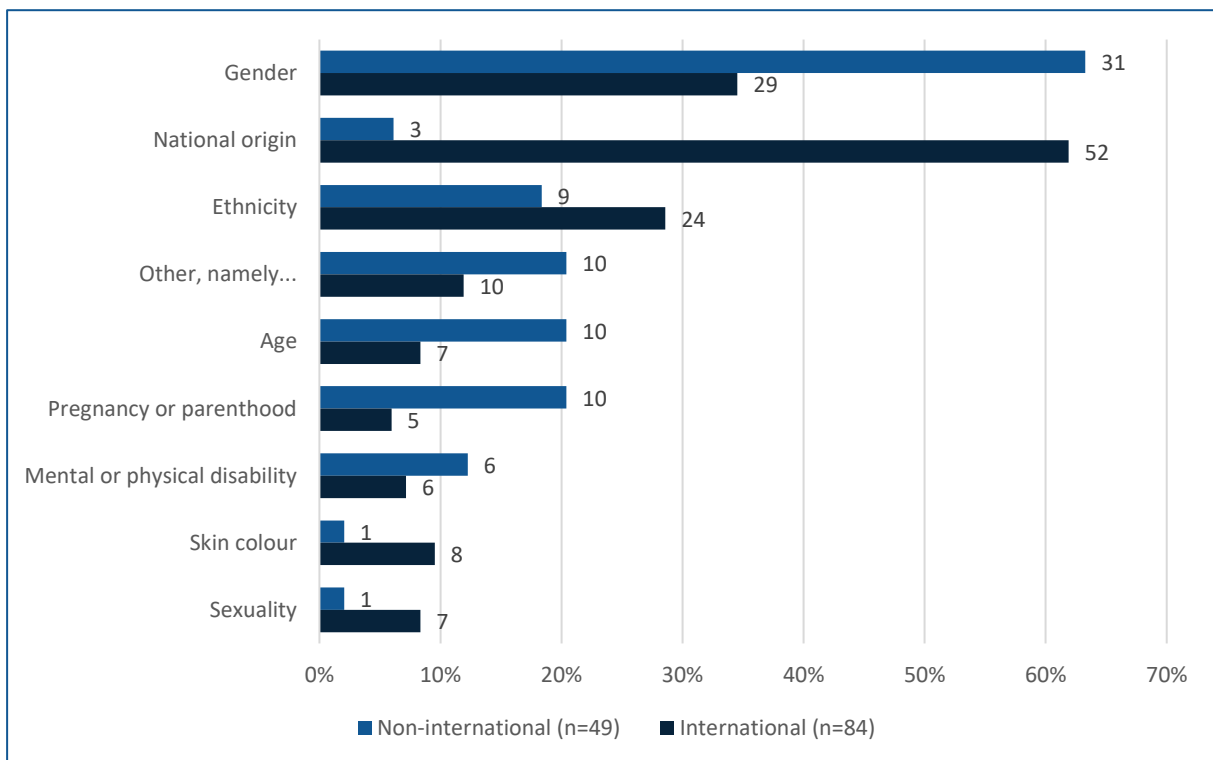

Figure 1.8: Responses to the question: "What kind of discrimination have you experienced?", for international PhDs and non-international PhDs.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

The PhDs who experienced breaches of the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity were asked to indicate what type of breaches they had experienced or noticed (n=76). They could select multiple answers from a list of options, presented in figure 1.9. Here we see that the most common breaches of the Code of Conduct is unjustified co-authorship (64.5%), and deliberately failing to credit others' contribution (40.8%). Questionable methodological practices, such as secretly rejecting research results, deliberately misinterpreting results or misusing methods all are mentioned between 19.7% and 22.4%. The most severe types of breaches of the Code of Conduct are least frequently mentioned: plagiarism (13.2%), falsification of research data (6.6%) and input of fictitious data (2.6%). Other types of breaches of the Code of Conduct are reported relatively often (27.6%). Here, PhDs mention various types of breaches, including unjust treatment of participants, using wrong methods or shady statistics, but also stealing research ideas or sabotaging research.
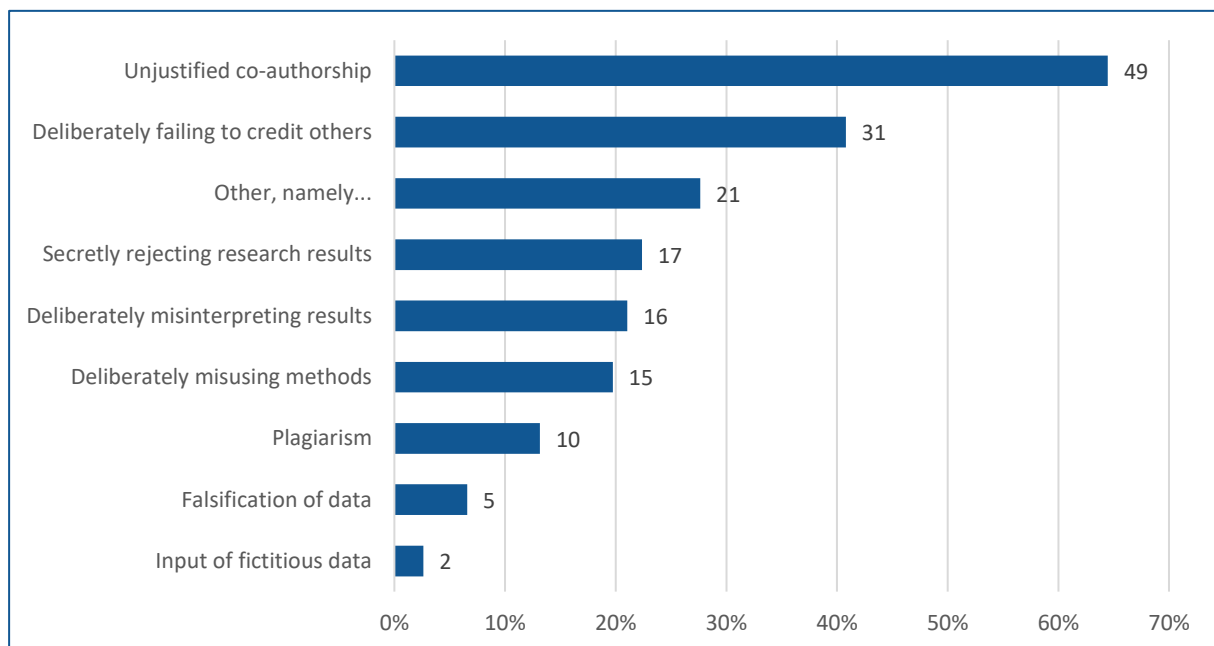

Figure 1.9: Responses to the question: "What kind of breaches of the code of scientific conduct did you experience or notice?" (n=76).

Type of institution

As breaches of the Code of Conduct were relatively more common at UMCs, we further looked into differences between institutions in the types of breaches of the Code of Conduct. We therefore present which types of breaches of the Code of Conduct occur at different types of institutions (figure 1.10). As the number of PhDs from other types of institutions who indicated to have experienced breaches of the Code of Conduct was very low (n=4), we only present results for universities and UMCs.

The results show that unjustified co-authorship is the most common type of breach of the Code of Conduct in this survey at both universities and UMCs, though slightly more at universities (66% vs. 57.9% respectively). At universities, PhDs more often indicate that they experienced deliberate failures to credit others (49.1%), whereas this is less common at UMCs (21.2%). At UMCs, PhDs more often experience questionable methodological practices than PhDs at universities. The three most severe, but also least common, breaches of the Code of Conduct happen relatively more often at universities, but given that these breaches are rare, it could be due to the lower number of respondents at UMCs in our survey explains why there are no occurrences of these types of breaches at UMCs in our data.
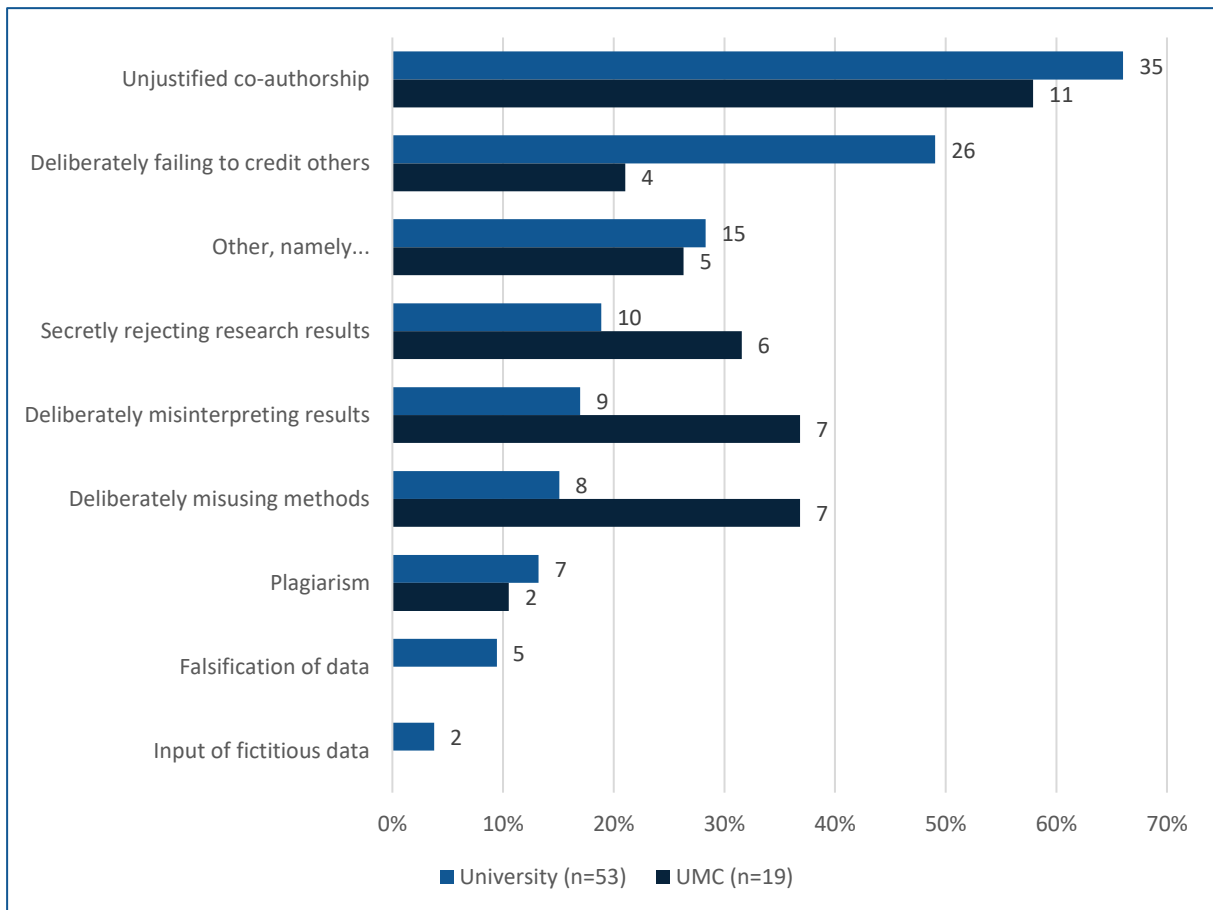
Figure 1.10: Responses to the question: " What kind of breaches of the code of scientific conduct did you experience or notice?", per type of institution.

Sexual harassment

The PhDs who indicated that they experienced sexual harassment (n=47) were asked to indicate what kind of sexual harassment they have experienced. They could select multiple answers from the options presented in figure 1.11. The most common type of sexual harassment is verbal harassment of sexual nature (40.4%). The second most common type of sexual harassment is unwanted touching or physical contact (27.7%). Discussing sexual relations, stories or fantasies at work (19.1%) and unwelcome sexual advances (14.9%) are also relatively common. Other types of sexual harassment are less common, with no respondents reporting feeling pressured to engage with someone sexually. However, there are still occurrences of physical acts of sexual assault (4.3%), requests for sexual favours (2.1%) and PhDs experiencing someone exposing themselves or performing sexual acts on themselves (2.1%). Other types of sexual harassment are also mentioned frequently (34%). Amongst these other types of sexual harassment, respondents frequently mentioned inappropriate comments or jokes, staring, and limited personal distance.
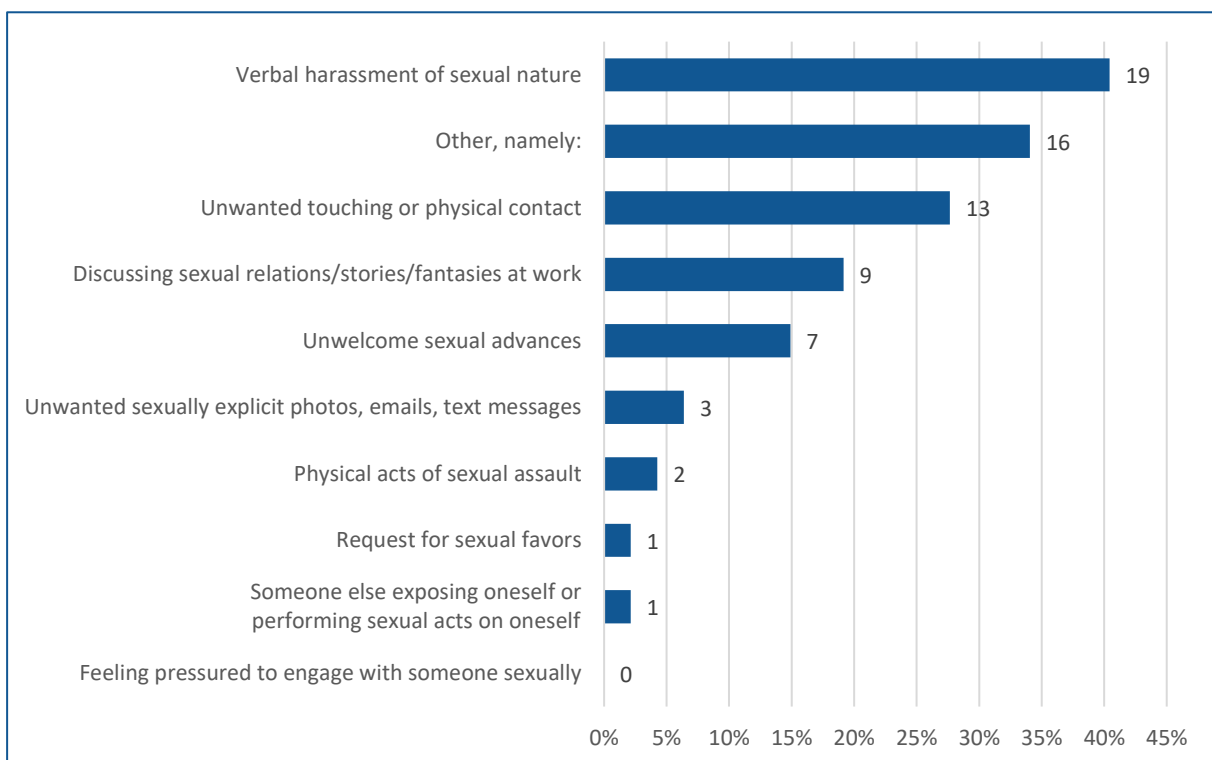

Figure 1.11: Reponses to the question: "What kind of sexual harassment did you experience?" (n=47).

Frequency of the harassment

All PhDs who indicated that they had experienced a form of harassment were asked to indicate how often that type of harassment took place. If someone experienced more than one type of harassment, this question was asked for each type of harassment separately. The responses to those questions can be found in figure 1.12. All types of harassment have occurred a couple of times. Breaches of the Code of Conduct and sexual harassment more often occur only once, while discrimination and other types of harassment often occur on a monthly, weekly or even daily basis.
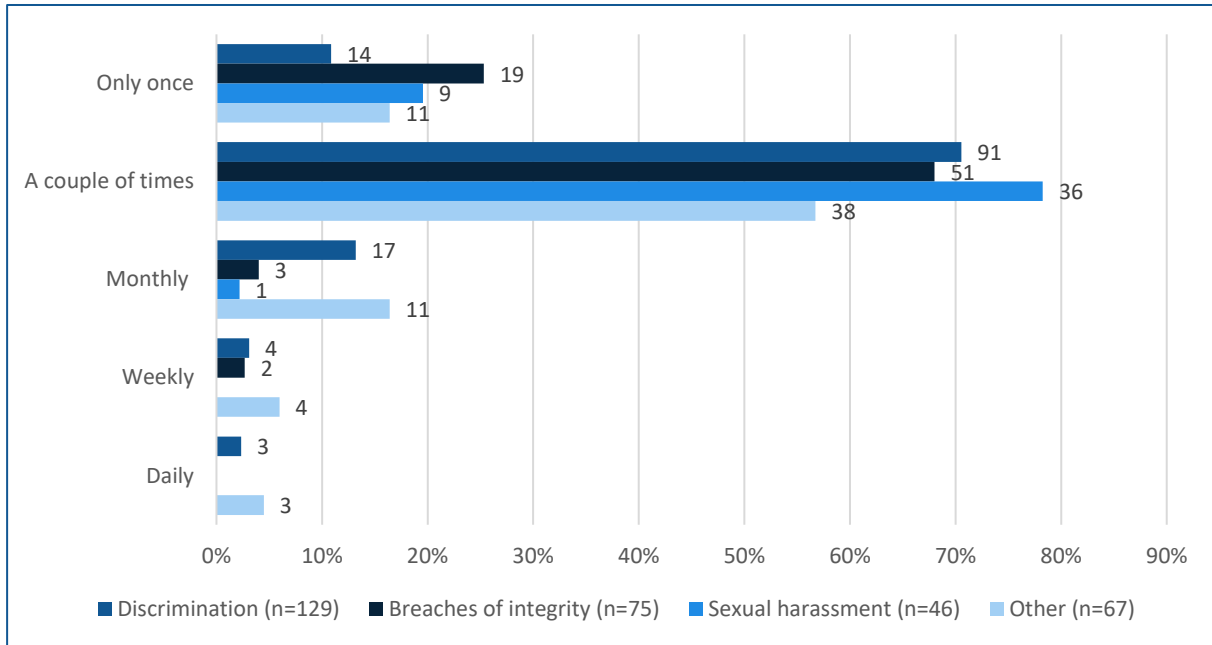

Figure 1.12: Responses to the question: "How often have you experienced [discrimination / breaches of the scientific Code of Conduct / sexual harassment / this type of harassment]?.

Needed help with the harassment

We furthermore asked the PhDs who experienced harassment whether they felt like they needed help or support with their experiences of harassment. If someone experienced more than one type of harassment, this question was asked for each type of harassment separately. The responses to these questions can be found in figure 1.13. PhDs who experienced breaches of the Code of Conduct (60.5%), as well as PhDs who experienced other types of harassment (55.2%) often indicated they felt like they needed help or support. PhDs who experienced sexual harassment more often indicated that they did not feel like they needed help or support (51.1%). PhDs who experienced discrimination are more divided, with 37.9% indicating that they felt they needed support, while 40.2% felt they did not need support, and another 22% of the PhDs were not sure about whether they needed help or not.
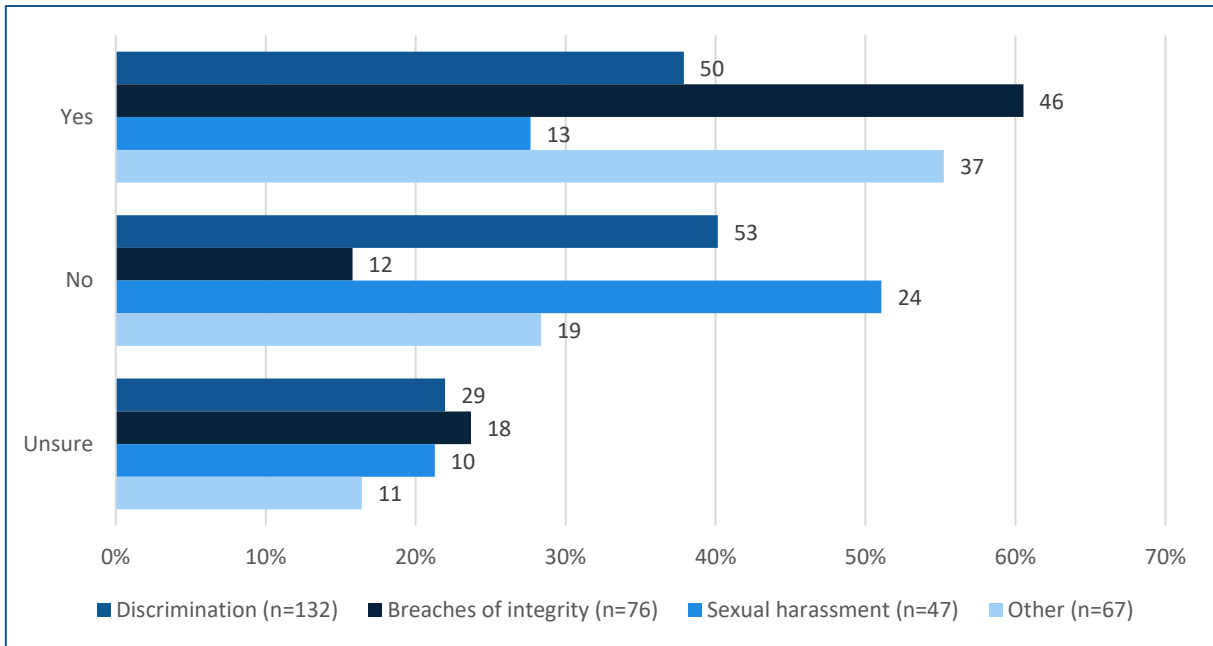
Figure 1.13: Responses to the question: "Did you feel you needed support or help with [your experiences of discrimination / your experience of breaches of the scientific Code of Conduct / your sexual harassment experiences / this type of harassment]?"

Support offered by institution

The PhDs who experienced any form of harassment were also asked whether their institute offers help specific to the type of harassment they experienced. If someone experienced more than one type of harassment, this question was asked for each type of harassment separately. The responses to these questions can be found in figure 1.14. PhDs most often indicated that their institution offers support in case of breaches of the Code of Conduct (53.9%), followed by sexual harassment (48.9%) and other types of harassment (45.6%). PhDs who experienced discrimination least often indicate that their institution offers support in case of discrimination (35.1%). This group relatively often indicates that they are not sure whether their institution offers support in cases of discrimination (48.1%).
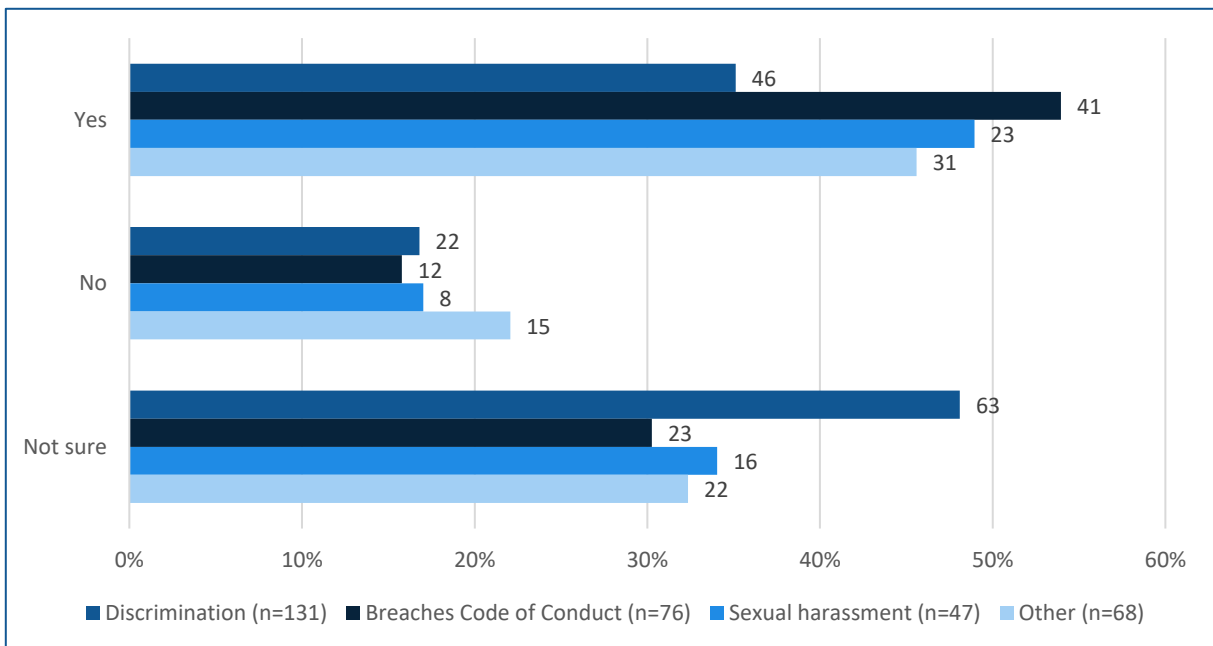

Figure 1.14: Responses to the question: "Does your institution offer support [in case of discrimination / in cases of breaches of the scientific Code of Conduct / for people who experience sexual harassment / concerning this type of harassment]?"

The PhDs who indicated that they needed help with experiences of harassment, and who indicated that their institution offers help for that type of harassment, were asked whether they used the support offered by the institution. If someone experienced more than one type of harassment, this question was asked for each type of harassment separately. The responses to this question are presented in figure 1.15. Interestingly, the majority of PhDs who experienced discrimination, breaches of the Code of Conduct or sexual harassment did not use the support offered by the institution (65.4%, 64.7% and 70% respectively). For other types of harassment, in contrast, the majority of PhDs did use the help offered by the institution (75%).
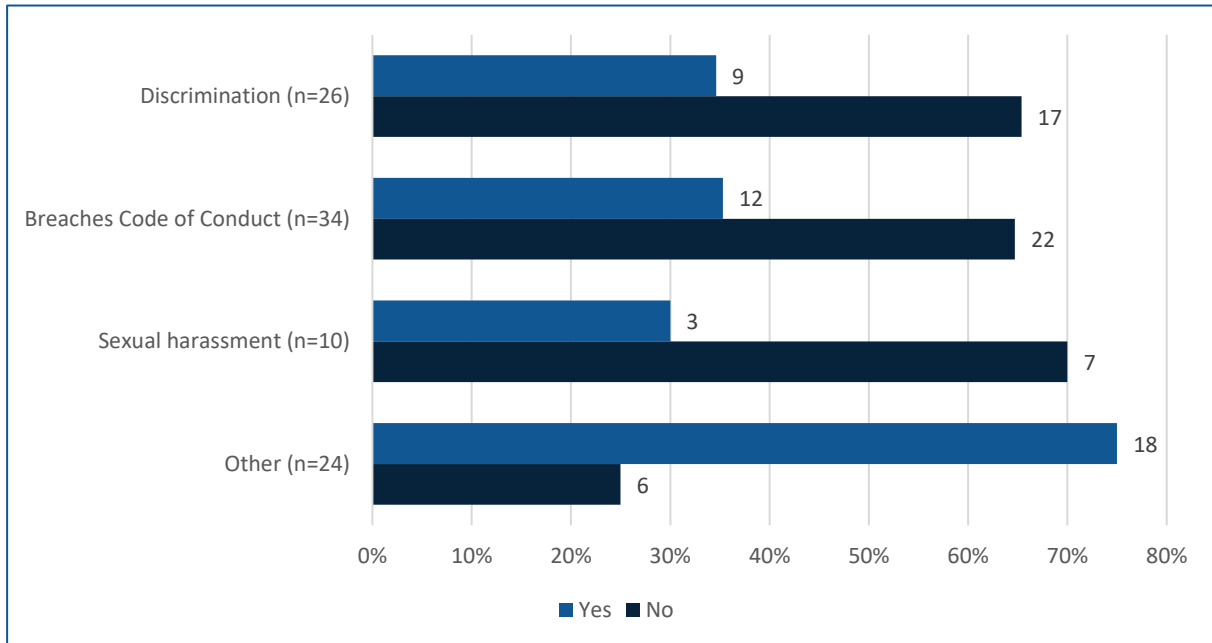

Figure 1.15: Responses to the question: Have you used the support your institution offers [in cases of discrimination / in cases of breaches of the scientific Code of Conduct / for people who experience sexual harassment / in cases of this type of harassment]?".

Finally, we asked the PhDs who had used the support offered by their institution to indicate the extent to which they were satisfied with the offered support. They could rate the support on a 5-point scale ranging from "Very dissatisfied" to "Very satisfied". Though this question was asked for all types of harassment separately, the number of respondents for some types of harassment was too low to show the results for each type of harassment separately. We therefore combined these items into one, indicating the extent to which PhDs are in general satisfied with support offered by their institutions when they experienced harassment.

The responses to this question can be found in figure 1.16. On average, the PhDs give the support offered by their institution a 3.14 with a standard deviation of 0.19. 47.6% of the PhDs is satisfied with the support offered, of which 11.9%-point is very satisfied. 16.7% is neutral about the support offered, and 35.7% of the PhDs is dissatisfied with the support offered, of which 9.5%-point is very dissatisfied.
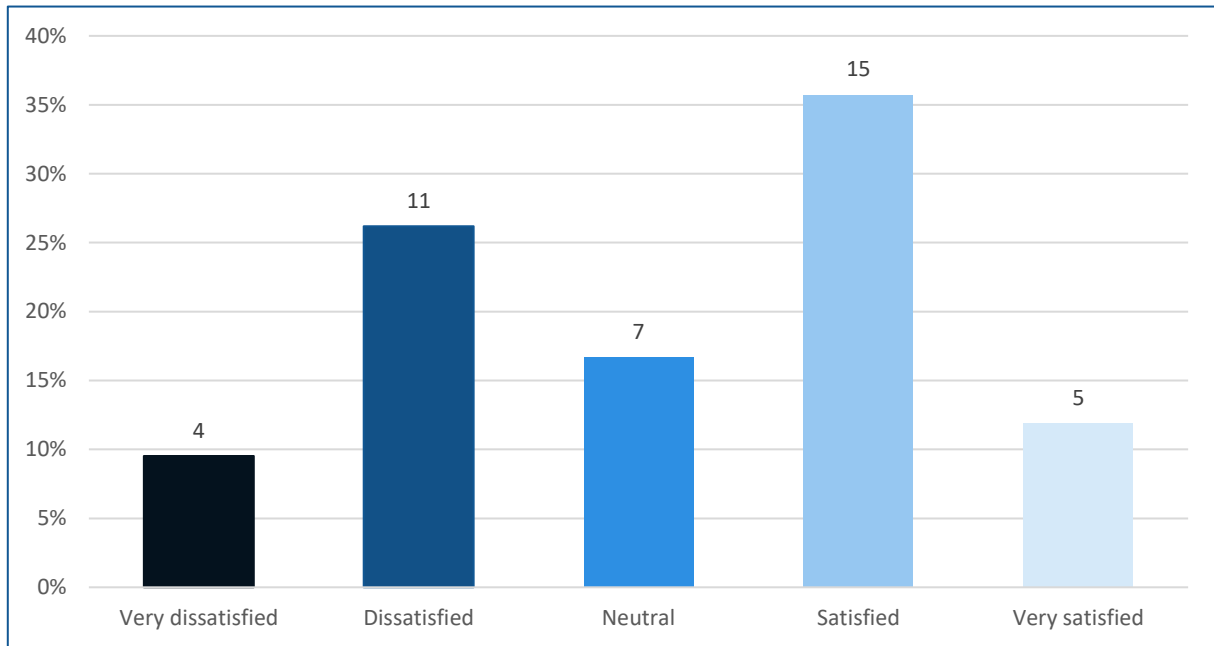
Figure 1.16: Responses to the question: "Were you satisfied with the support your institution offered you?" (n=42).

Other sources of support

The PhDs who experienced harassment and felt like they needed support from their institutions but did not receive or use it, were asked where they found support instead. This was an open question asked for all types of harassment separately. The responses were coded manually to get an overall view of the kind of responses that were given.

The coded results to these questions can be found in figure 1.16. In the case of breaches of the Code of Conduct, PhDs often found support with their supervisor or colleagues, while PhDs who experienced sexual harassment found support with their friends or another facility at their institution. Sexual harassment is also relatively often discussed with the partner. In the case of discrimination, we see a more diverse image of where PhDs find support, with PhDs finding support at work as well as in their personal network.

Several PhDs indicated that they actively sought but did not receive support. This was relatively often mentioned by PhDs who experienced sexual harassment. For all types of harassment, around one fifth of the respondents did not search for help at all, even though they felt they needed help.
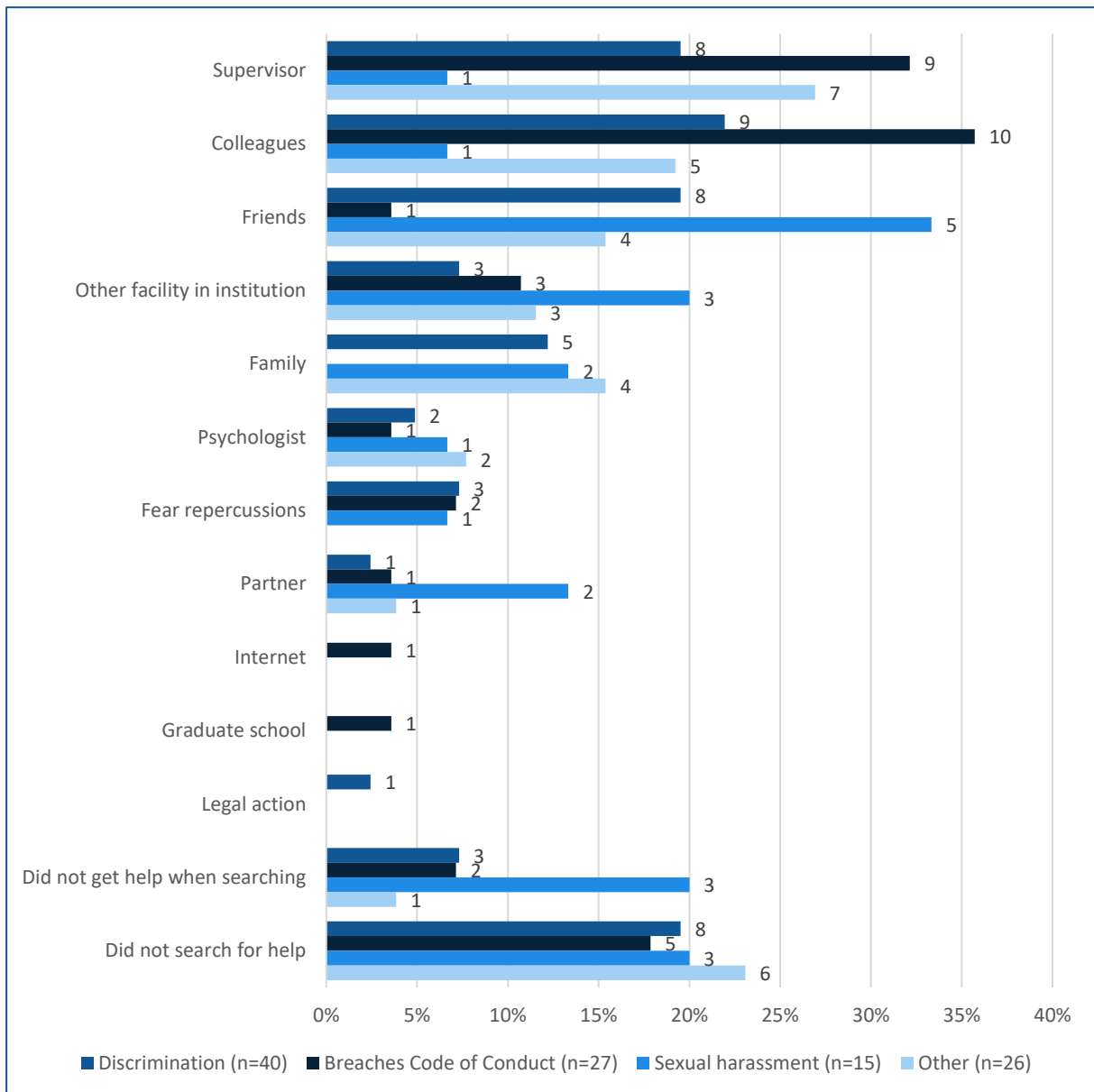
Figure 1.17: Coded responses to the open question: "Where did you find support for your experiences with harassment?".

Elaborations on harassment

At the end of the questions discussed above, respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on the harassment they had experienced. Here, we present an image of the stories the PhDs have told us, per topic. After the quotes, we do not present personal characteristics, but only the respondent number related to the original quote for reference. In some quotes, we left out passages because they were very long and not all parts of the quote were relevant for the illustration of the topic. Furthermore, some quotes have been partially paraphrased (text placed between brackets [ ]) when we felt that the original text might expose the identity of the respondent.

Discrimination

50 PhDs elaborated on their experiences with discrimination at the workplace. Discrimination of women was mentioned most frequently (n=10), followed by discrimination on the basis of the country of origin (n=8) and language (n=7).

> *"I wasn't allowed to go to a conference while all the guys were allowed to go, and I was in the same position to go. My promotor explicitly said so too."* (R.14).

> *"My co-promotor once said that students from my region cannot be expected to have good research publications."* (R.32).

> *"[…] It is hard for internationals to blend in when everyone just wants to speak Dutch only, especially in official meetings. […] I expressed that to my supervisors, but there is only so much they can do."* (R.49).

Next to the topics discussed above, the answers to the open question included a wide variety of topics. Practically all characteristics on the basis of which one can be discriminated, were mentioned at least once: gender (female, male and trans), pregnancy, age, ethnicity, being a scholarship PhD, religion, mental health and physical ability.

On several occasions (n=6), PhDs explicitly indicated that their supervisor was involved in the instance of discrimination, and an additional 4 PhDs indicated that the person who did the discriminating was a superior (for instance a full professor).

> *"My co-promotor was not amused by me being pregnant during my PhD and made all kind of comments regarding the decrease of my brain capacity and lack of commitment […]."* (R.33).

In some occasions (n=2), respondents explicitly mentioned that they either did not seek help because they feared repercussions, or that they were actively discouraged to take action.

> *"A full professor made a lot of racist and sexist comments to a group of students in my presence. My supervisors advised me not to act on this. […] [T]he faculty diversity person recommended to discuss this with the full professor. I found that quite bad advice and decided not to act further."* (R.2).

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

21 PhDs elaborated on their experiences with breaches of the Code of Conduct. They elaborated on the types of breaches encountered (as discussed above), but also on how they dealt with the experience. A 5 PhDs explicitly indicated that they did not have a good experience with the process of addressing the breaches of the Code of Conduct, or that they were discouraged from addressing it.

> *"[…] When I addressed the breaches, I was made clear that I had no chance to 'win' this as a PhD. I did not proceed to further steps as it would probably not change anything […]."* (R.18).

Another topic mentioned in the open answers was (fear of) repercussions (n=4). In these cases, PhDs wanted to report the breaches of the Code of Conduct, but decided against it out

of fear that it would negatively affect their career. Some experienced directly that reporting breaches of the Code of Conduct negatively affected them.

"Despite the person being very helpful and nice, engaging in legal procedures to 'make things right' would have, likely, destroyed my career." (R.4).

"I raised the issue. The board of [the institution] looked away. And I was scapegoated. [...]" (R.10).

Fortunately, some PhDs had a more positive experience, finding the support they needed to deal with the breaches of the Code of Conduct (n=3).

"I asked my supervisor about it, he acknowledged it was wrong, and gave me instructions." (R.7).

Sexual harassment

18 PhDs elaborated on their experiences of sexual harassment. They often mentioned that they experienced unwanted comments (n=4) or unwanted physical contact (n=3).

"The hugging professor: When he did you a favour, he would ask for a hug in return." (R.14).

Five PhDs also explicitly mentioned that those engaging in the sexual harassment were superiors.

"The sexual harassment I experienced constituted of unwelcome remarks about appearance and the sharing of sexual fantasies about me by superiors. [...] The pain of the harassment was more the realization that the perpetrators found it permissible, and the disbelief of male colleagues when I shared these experiences, rather than the remarks themselves. [...]" (R.17).

This previous quote also shows something that came back in some of the other answers, namely that PhDs who experience sexual harassment have a hard time being believed (n=2) or they do not feel safe enough to seek help at their institution (n=2).

"The problem is that I do not feel safe with the confidential advisor because she is very normative." (R.11).

Three PhDs also explicitly mentioned that they dealt with the sexual harassment on their own.

"It was a mild form of harassment which I could briefly discuss with a colleague and didn't feel the need to pursue further. But I think it is important to note that such mild harassment also occurs and can make it less comfortable to spend time in the workplace." (R.6).

Other types of harassment

As discussed in this report, the other forms of harassment that are mentioned frequently are bullying, disrespect and intimidation. This is also reflected in the responses to the open question, answered by 32 PhDs. 7 of them report verbal aggression and another 5 report intimidation.

"I find my promotor very intimidating. Sometimes she screams at us when she is not happy with our work. She is verbally aggressive on a very regular basis. I keep away from her as much as possible and try to plan as little meetings with her as possible, because I find it very unpleasant to be around her. She sometimes tells us we are dumb and stupid and that our ideas are stupid. [...]" (R.10).

Like the respondent from the quote above, five others also indicated explicitly that their supervisor is involved in the harassment they experience.

"My promotor uses very harsh language to state his/her ideas. S/He underestimates me, makes me feel useless and incompetent. S/He even once threatened me to find myself another supervisor if I do not do as s/he says." (R.21).

"My promotor bullies me to the extent that my co-promotor went to the head of department to report on the promotor. She is aggressive and fear-evoking, and in my first year threatened to not renew my contract if I didn't do what she said." (R.23).

Here, we also see that getting help is not always easy or successful, or that PhDs fear repercussions (n=3).

"Several bodies in our university helped, but not everything is coordinated nicely so some complaints are filed somewhere else than others. Overall, the help I got worked out for me, but not for the group as a whole. And I do still worry that my scientific career is in danger due to the whole situation." (R.26).

"[…] We went to the confidential advisor to discuss the issues we experience with our boss, but the confidential advisor could not do much for us. She said more people should come and complain. We tried to convince other colleagues to talk to the confidential advisor, but no one else dared to go, because they are all scared to lose their job if our boss found out we complained about her. The confidential advisor said she could talk to HR, but then we got scared too, because we were afraid our boss would find out. The confidential advisor also said we could talk to the dean or the rector magnificus, but that we could not be anonymous then, so we were too scared for that as well." (R.10).