Developing an Ethics Curriculum for the Hong Kong Hospitality Industry

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Doctor of Education
School of Education
University of Leicester
2004
Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my own work, except where due acknowledgement is made, and that it has not been previously submitted to any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualification.

Signed: ______________________

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Developing an Ethics Curriculum for the Hong Kong Hospitality Industry

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education,
University of Leicester, 2004.

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Abstract

Due to the unique characteristics of the hospitality industry, ethical issues are never far from any action taken by its practitioners, more so than in any other industry. Ethical ambiguities mostly arise from the fact that employees and customers of different backgrounds have diverse expectations and ethical standards (Stevens & Fleckenstein, 1999). Therefore, educators must incorporate ethics into the curricula of hospitality programmes to enhance hospitality students’ ethical beliefs.

However, despite the general consensus that ethics education is crucial to the development of an individual and that academics should take a proactive role, efforts made by hospitality institutes in cultivating professional ethics are fragmented. A study by Enghagen (1991) indicates that only four per cent of hospitality and tourism programmes in the US offer ethics as a separate course. The study by Yeung (2001) observes that not one of the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong offers an ethics course. Thus, the major aim of this study is to identify the issues that need to be considered in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry. This is achieved by assessing the needs for such a curriculum and identifying any constraints to its implementation. This study conducted in-depth interviews with a total of twenty-two hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students to solicit their views about the issue of ethics in the hospitality industry in Hong Kong as well as an ethics curriculum in an hospitality programme.

The study identifies the current issues concerning ethics in the industry; the types and range of ethical issues encountered; the methods adopted by industry to deal with any problems; the current ethical orientation of hospitality students; the availability of a code of conduct; and the functions of professional associations as some of the major issues for consideration when developing an ethics curriculum for the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. The study finds that the need for an ethics curriculum to enhance the ethical standards of the industry is acute. The study also identifies the overcrowding of the current curriculum and both the management of hospitality schools and industry lack interest in implementing as the two most important barriers to the implementation of an ethics curriculum.
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**Key words:** ethics, curriculum, hospitality, needs, barriers
Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the help that I have received from many individuals during the course of this study. First and foremost, a particular debt of deep gratitude is owed to Professor Clive Dimmock, supervisor of my thesis, for his invaluable guidance and advice throughout. He has been most supportive and thought-provoking. I would also like to thank Dr Marianne Coleman for her guidance in the first stage of my study. She helped me clarify my ideas in the assignments for the various modules of study. I am also grateful to those professors who have taught on the EdD (Hong Kong) programme. Their teaching has given me many scholarly insights into my study and my work in educational development. My appreciation also goes to Ms Julie Thomson, Mr Roland Sheldon, Ms Pat Carter and Ms Julie Hardisty for their wonderful administrative support.

My special appreciation is due to the ten hospitality industry executives, the six hospitality educators and the six hospitality students from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University who provided invaluable insights in the interviews conducted with them. They have been very genuine and helpful in volunteering their views, and without their contribution this study would not have been possible.

And to all the people, left unnamed, who have directly or indirectly helped with this study, I express my appreciation and gratitude.

I appreciate the opportunity that undertaking this programme as presented. This includes the following publications which have resulted from this study:


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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Aims and objectives of study

The hospitality industry is one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world. The word 'hospitality' means 'to provide care/shelter for travellers (Walker, 1999). It mainly includes sectors such as hotels, motels, inns and restaurants. Because of the unique characteristics of the industry, such as its labour-intensive nature, the odd working hours and the numerous direct guest contacts, ethical standards is an issue that we must address. To name a few issues, bribery, corruption, discrimination and sexual harassment are potential problems in its day-to-day operation. Thus, the success of a hospitality organization to provide quality service depends very much on the employees having strong ethical values (Hall, 1992). A review of the hospitality programmes in higher institutions in Hong Kong, however, has revealed a vacuum in their curricula in respect of an ethics education which would help prepare students for the various challenges they will face at work. Therefore, the major goal of this study is to examine the issues that need to be considered in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry. However, due to constraints of time and resources, this study will thus mainly confine itself to the hotel industry in Hong Kong, using it as its point of reference regarding the issue of ethics in the hospitality industry. The hotel sector in Hong Kong is comprised by the 87 member hotels of the Hong Kong Hotels Association, with a current total of approximately 34,000 guest rooms and nearly 31,000 employees (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2003). Consequently, the study has the following specific objectives:

1. To investigate current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong.
2. To assess the need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong.
3. To identify the barriers to the implementation of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong.

With a clearly defined and well-designed education in hospitality ethics, graduates will be better equipped to make appropriate judgments in their career. This is also crucial to the
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education institutes because it would help enhance their image and their reputation for producing quality graduates with integrity. Most important of all, it will instil confidence and trust in the industry executives that the graduates they recruit not only excel academically, but that they have also received formal guidance and training in ethical values and beliefs. It is very much through such true professionals that the industry will continue to prosper and survive.

1.2 Importance of hospitality industry in Hong Kong

With the gradual change of the economy from manufacturing to service provision, the hospitality industry has been playing an important role in the cultural, social and economic development of Hong Kong, and in shaping the city to be one of the most popular travel destinations in the world. Presently, the travel and tourism industry is the most important source of foreign exchange. The number of tourists visiting Hong Kong increased to 13 million in 2000, with revenue of approximately US$8 billion. This constitutes an increase of 15.3% in visitor arrivals and of 9.4% in tourism receipts over 1999. In the first half year of 2001, the total number of tourist arrivals increased by 7.5% compared with the same period in the previous year (Hong Kong Commercial News, 2001). Therefore, despite the downturn of the hospitality industry in 1997 and 1998 during the Asian economic crisis, the industry is expected to reach another new height due to the promotional and marketing efforts to expand tourism by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government. Examples of new tourist attractions include Hong Kong Disneyland (to open in 2005); an international wetland park; and a new world-class performing arts venue. In addition, the government set up an International Events Fund in 1998, which has HK$100 million in seed money available for the Hong Kong Tourism Board (previously called the Hong Kong Tourists Association) to loan to promoters who wish to stage a variety of international events in Hong Kong over the next five years.

In addition, in a recent survey conducted by the Travel and Leisure Magazine in the United States, Hong Kong was voted best city in Asia 2001, followed closely by Bangkok, Singapore and Kyoto. In the contest for best city in the world, Hong Kong ranked ninth, and for best hotels in the world, five hotels in Hong Kong were ranked among the top 25
hotels in the world. They are the Hong Kong Peninsula Hotel, the Hong Kong Mandarin Hotel, the Inter-Continental Hotel (formerly The Regent Hotel), the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Shangri-La Hotel. In the airline sector, Cathay Pacific Airways of Hong Kong was voted second-best airline in the world (*Apple Daily News*, 2001). According to the World Tourism Organization (1998), Hong Kong will become the fifth most popular tourism destination worldwide in the year 2020 while Mainland China will rank number one. These awards are recognition of the important role played by the travel and tourism industry in Hong Kong.

### 1.3 Decline in ethical standards

Despite the strategic importance of the hospitality industry for the economy, the public has always expressed concerns about alleged unethical practices in the industry. The problems arise from the unique characteristics of the industry that often place its employees in ambiguous situations. Many ethical ambiguities stem from the different backgrounds and cultures of employees and guests, who may have completely different expectations and ethical standards. What is generally acceptable in one country and in one culture may not be acceptable in another. This often leads to accusations of harassment, racism, discrimination and theft. As a result, the hospitality industry has been criticized for putting its employees and guests in awkward situations that are ethically ambiguous and questionable (Stevens & Fleckenstein, 1999). Examples of ethical issues include the issue of "truth-in-menu" in food and beverage management, and the continual conflict between hotels striving to sell rooms and facilities and their practice of overbooking. In this thesis, ethics is defined as a branch of philosophy, sometimes called "moral philosophy". Ethics is a set of moral principles and values that we use to answer questions of right and wrong (Angelo & Vladimir, 1991; MacKinnon, 2001). It is strongly suspected that the ethical problems in the hospitality industry are probably only symptomatic of a wider problem in political and business life.

In Hong Kong, concerns about ethics started to be expressed in the 1960s when corruption became a common practice in doing business. At that time, Hong Kong was perceived as a "moral jungle" where no ethical standards existed. In response to this, the Hong Kong
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Government established the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in 1974 that aims to fight against corruption in government departments as well as in the private sector. In 1995, the Hong Kong Ethics Development Centre (HKEDC) was formed under the Community Relations Department of ICAC.

Apart from the business sector, research conducted in 1996 by the ICAC reported that the ethical problem is equally serious in schools and universities. It found that university graduates were using unethical means to maximize their own interest and secondary school students would place self-interest over other virtues in importance (Economic Times, 1996). This fairly corroborates the study by Cheung (1996) in which many Hong Kong employers bitterly comment that the high school and university graduates they recruit are inconsiderate and irresponsible with no regard for ethics.

In Mainland China, the motherland of Hong Kong, the problem of unethical business practices is believed to be even worse. It is said that practices such as theft of intellectual property, corruption, bribery, money laundering and environmental pollution are so common that they have severely damaged the international reputation of China (Forney, 2000; Lu, 2001). As a result, the Chinese Government has decided to take firm remedial actions. For instance, some 212 former members of law enforcement departments have been removed from their posts for unethical or illegal conduct (China Business Information Network, 1998). Mr. Jiang Zemin, the former president of the People’s Republic of China, condemned his people in a public speech, saying that

Several leading cadres are exchanging power for money and power for sex. It’s reached the point where they are blinded by lust for profit – their hearts are blackened by greed, their audacity envelops the heavens and they defy all laws human and divine (Apple Daily News, 2000).

Unethical practices are not limited to particular geographical areas. For example, in the United States, apart from the notorious “Watergate” political scandal, many reports indicate that American society has experienced a decline in moral and ethical standards since the 1960s. This is reflected in the increase of murder, rape, child abuse, domestic violence and drug addiction (Bok, 1976; George, 1987; Pratt & McLaughlin, 1989;
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Damitio & Schmidgall, 1993). Specifically, a 1986 study reports that 63% of adult Americans are dissatisfied with the ethical standards of their country (John, 1986). In a similar study carried out in 1987 by the US News and World Report, it is found that 71% of respondents indicate dissatisfaction with the level of honesty and ethical behaviour in corporate America (Kullberg, 1988).

The study by Vallen and Casado (2000) also notes a decline in ethical standards among undergraduate students. It found that approximately 24% of students’ résumés contain false information, and that there is an increasing willingness on the part of students to lie in their application for financial aid. The report also found that in April 1999 twenty-four students in a business ethics course at San Diego State University were dismissed from class and put on academic probation for cheating.

The above incidents demonstrate that ethical problems are found everywhere, and the following examples of unethical practices in the Hong Kong hospitality industry provide evidence that the ethical problems found there are serious enough to require urgent attention.

1.4 Examples of unethical practices in the Hong Kong hospitality industry

From time to time, prostitution occurs in hotels because the primary purpose of a hotel is to rent private bedrooms for the use of guests. This is found to be particularly common in lower class hotels in Hong Kong where some guests desire the companionship and sexual services of prostitutes. Quite often, the hotels simply condone – or are even actively involved in – these practices. In most cases, employees may unethically assist a guest in soliciting the services of a prostitute. Generally, some sorts of consideration, typically monetary, is given in return for a referral. This also applies to local residents who patronize prostitutes and seek hotel rooms because they offer a safer and more discreet rendezvous.

Even more commonly found is the practice of hotels requesting a credit card from guests to establish their credit. Even if guests intend to pay cash for their stay, they are often asked to produce a credit card. As a result, many ethical challenges arise concerning the credit cards
information kept on file. Often enough, hotel employees are discreetly approached to reveal guests’ personal and credit cards information in return for monetary rewards. In March 1997, thirteen staff of an exclusive hotel in Hong Kong were arrested by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in its crackdown on a five million Hong Kong dollars counterfeit credit card scam. The hotel staff had been recruited by a crime syndicate and bribed to pass on details of wealthy and VIP guests staying in their five-star hotel. The syndicate simply copied the genuine credit cards. The fake cards were destined for use in Japan, Canada and Europe (South China Morning Post, 1997a).

Hotels often purchase furniture, fixtures and equipment (FF&E), either as individual replacements for worn items or as part of an overall renovation project. For day-to-day operations, they also purchase operating supplies for bathrooms and bedrooms, dining rooms and kitchens, public areas and conference centres, building maintenance and grounds, and administrative offices. These purchases in turn have provided excellent opportunities for bribery. Despite the conflict-of-interest sanction precluding soliciting and accepting gratuities such as gifts, personal loans or services from the vendor community, many hotel employees fail to observe their employers’ policy. One notorious example occurred in 1997, when two engineering staff of the Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong and Excelsior Hotel and three contractors were arrested over bribery worth HK$10 million. They were convicted of offences because the maintenance contracts were awarded in return for bribes, going back to the early 1990s, with the value of maintenance contracts said to have been more than HK$100 million (South China Morning Post, 1997b).

In 1998, nine employees of the Peninsula Hotel Hong Kong were detained by the ICAC. They were charged with providing and accepting bribes to defraud the hotel of millions in parking fees. The ICAC officers started their investigation after receiving an anonymous letter that claimed the valets had pocketed parking fees from customers by falsifying their parking time. The letter reported that the practice had been in existence for two years with the consent of some supervisors, who in turn had accepted money from the parking valets (Hong Kong Standard, 1998).
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The hotel industry, or rather its employees, also experiences all sorts of discrimination. Among them, discrimination in regard to employment is commonly found in Hong Kong, particularly pertaining to gender, age and marital status. This was criticized in a presentation given at a hotel conference by Ms Maria Lee, general manager of the Rosedale in the Park Hotel Hong Kong, who stated that in 2001 only three of the seventy-eight member hotels of the Hong Kong Hotels Association had female general managers. This highly unequal number of male and female general managers is alleged to be solid proof of the existence of a “glass ceiling” for women executives in the industry. In 1993, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University conducted a survey of 231 female hospitality employees and found that an overwhelming 93% felt they had been discriminated against because of their marital status; 91% of instances was in relation to career prospects and 89% in relation to promotion. These employees felt that they had been discriminated against because they were likely to refuse evening, weekend and holiday shifts in order to meet their family commitments. In addition, the most sought-after positions of guest relation officer and public relation officer and the position of manager were given to single females (South China Morning Post, 1993).

The hotel industry in Hong Kong is disgracefully found to have charged some hotel guests of different nationalities, particularly Japanese, higher room rates. In September 1997, a Japanese mass circulation newspaper published a list of the rates offered to Japanese and non-Japanese guests at seven major hotels in Hong Kong. It was evident that the rates offered to Japanese tourists were between 24% and 310% higher than those offered to guests of other nationalities. A South China Morning Post investigation seeking to confirm or disconfirm the accusation found that Hong Kong tour operators blatantly asked for higher rates from Japanese visitors (South China Morning Post, 1997c). The hospitality industry obviously has failed to learn from its mistakes. Fifteen months after the scandal that caused international embarrassment, a Sunday Morning Post investigation revealed that at least one travel agency in Hong Kong continued to quote customers different rates depending on their nationality (South China Morning Post, 1999).
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The hotel industry has also a long history of showing a lack of concern for environmental protection. For example, the Gold Coast Hotel was fined $100,000 in 1995 for discharging dirty water into the sea. This was the third time that the hotel had been prosecuted for pollution offences. It was convicted repeatedly for discharging up to 1,300 cubic meters of dirty water each day, which far exceeded the limit of its licence. The hotel was condemned for putting public interest and health at risk.

In addition, the hotel industry is also condemned for neglecting public safety. The accusation is very serious seeing that hotel owners collectively refused to install fire sprinklers as required by law in 1997. The sprinkler requirement was a government response to a fire in 1995 that raged through the top floors of the Ambassador Hotel in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Standard, 1995). Another accident that alerted the government to the importance and urgency of installing sprinklers was the fire at the Duanxi Hotel in Shenzhen in 1996, which killed twenty-nine people and injured another thirteen. In both cases, the lack of a sprinkler system and locked emergency exits were blamed for the high death toll (Hong Kong Standard, 1996). Despite being a life-threatening issue, most hotel operators in Hong Kong took an uncompromising attitude to avoid the cost of installation.

Another unethical practice the industry is commonly accused of is that of sexual harassment. The industry is particularly susceptible given its characteristics, such as the ambiguity of “hospitality service,” the unusual hours and conditions of work, the interaction of persons in the delivery of service, and traditional personnel practices in the industry. When servicing hotel guests’ needs, the fine line between service and entertainment can be easily misunderstood, leading to inappropriate expectations among those involved in offering and receiving “hospitality”. Sexual harassment can appear in many forms, such as encountered by waitresses at all-male banquets, where many guests consider it “sporting fun” to try to make body contact in inappropriate places. Hotel guests often make sexual demands of front desk clerks; others request room service and then disrobe in front of the server or the housekeeper. In hotels, bar patrons frequently assume that the server will not risk losing a potential good tip by resisting improper advances and demands for sexual favours. It is also common for female housekeeping attendants working
alone in guestrooms being approached by male supervisors who have entered the guestroom simply in order to make sexual advances.

Another area providing opportunities for unethical behaviour involves hotel sales and marketing. It is only fair that potential guests should be given complete information on which to base their decision whether to stay at a given establishment. The description given by a hotel should accurately reflect the services available and therefore all advertising and promotional materials should be a true picture of the premises. Nevertheless, this is often not the case. For example, how usual is it for a hotel that is undergoing renovations to offer that information in advance to a potential guest? One can imagine the annoyance and frustration of a guest who is awakened at 7 am by the sound of jackhammers on the floor above.

Overbooking is another type of malpractice in the hotel industry, with hotels commonly accepting more reservations than they have vacancies. It helps to maximize their profits but at the expense of their guests. Thus it has been one of the biggest on-going controversies to have attracted the attention of the lawmakers of many countries as well as of public interest groups. Ethically, a guest has a right to expect that the hotel will honour his or her reservation, based on the premise that a reservation is a legally binding contract, and failure to provide the accommodation reserved is a breach of contract. Even worse, front desk clerks often hold rooms for their favoured or regular guests and to begin rejecting guests with non-guaranteed reservations much earlier than the stated cut-off time if it appears that the hotel has overbooked.

1.5 Importance of ethics education

The discussion thus far has illustrated the general decline of ethical standards in the hospitality industry, and ethics education is probably the most effective solution to the problem. As Davis and Welton (1991) point out, the long-term strategy to improve ethics in societies is to address the issues by educating students attending tertiary institutions. This echoes the belief of Clark (1983), who stresses the importance for educational institutions to offer ethics teaching. Most studies and reports tend to agree with the notion that higher
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education is pivotal to providing individuals with a basic appreciation of moral values; it is also considered the engine house for effecting a positive change in ethical standards and behaviour in students (MacKenzie, 1948; Nucci & Pascarella, 1987; Pratt & McLaughlin, 1989).

It is possibly true that business schools in the United States were the first to have recognized the importance of ethics education. Since 1979 all business schools accredited by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in the US have been required to include ethical issues in their course work. The AACSB believes that the topic is necessary in preparing students for ethical challenges in their future employment. The subject of “business ethics” is mandatory in every course throughout the curriculum, regardless of whether the course is compulsory or offered as an elective (Herman & Cullen, 1986). For example, in accounting the study of ethics provides professional codes for auditing; similarly, in law and medical schools the teaching of professional ethics is an important subject in the curriculum (Kelly, 1980; Pellegrino et al., 1985; May, 1994). The US Education Secretary Bill Bennett commented that all universities should teach ethics in a serious way, not just with a course or two but a comprehensive programme (Butcher, 1997). In the study by Mathiasen (1998), it is also claimed that although there are many aspects of university student development, including intellectual, physical, psychosocial, career and spiritual development, teaching staff surveyed seemed to agree that higher education should play a proactive role in students’ moral development. This can be accomplished through class discussion, critical analysis of theories and case studies, reflective thinking and community service activities. Business ethics can be defined as the application of ordinary ethical or moral principles of human action in business operating in a free or mixed market economy (Zuzworsky, 1996). However, whether higher education should be confined to teaching “applied ethics” related to students’ future careers is debatable. It is argued that basic moral values in general, despite being usually formed in childhood, should be discussed and challenged for they have a profound influence on students’ ethical decision making.
1.6 Ethics education in hospitality programmes

Despite the general consensus that ethics education is crucial in individual development and that higher education should take a proactive role in its provision, efforts made by hospitality education institutions and by the hospitality industry to improve professional ethics are found to be fragmented. While much has been written on the teaching of ethics in business schools, one study indicates that only 4% of hospitality and tourism programmes in the US offer ethics as a separate course, while in 36% of cases it is integrated into a functional course, and in another 34% into a business law course (Enghagen, 1990). It is found that hotel schools at large are not putting adequate efforts into ethics education. The only relatively significant move to introduce ethics teaching is to be found in the two national conferences organized in the United States to bring together faculties interested in hospitality ethics education. The first conference was held in 1991 in Park City, Utah, while the second conference was held in 1995 in Tampa, Florida.

Considering the limited progress in teaching ethics in the world, this study is interested in examining the issue with regards to the hospitality programmes offered in Hong Kong. Are they taking up their responsibilities in developing and promoting strong ethical standards in their students in readiness for the ethical challenges awaiting them in the industry?

In Hong Kong there are many institutions that offer hospitality and tourism programmes at different levels. At the certificate and diploma levels, there are the Vocational Training Centres, the Caritas Bianchi College and the Institute of Vocational Education – Haking Wong. They provide Form 3 (grade 9) and Form 5 (grade 12) students with the opportunity to take courses related to hotel, catering, travel and tourism studies. The duration of these courses ranges from three months to two years. In addition, three institutions in Hong Kong provide hotel and tourism programmes at higher diploma and degree levels (see Table 1). The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, founded in 1979, is the largest hotel and tourism school in Hong Kong (and also in Asia), with over 950 students. The SHTM offers programmes ranging from higher diploma to bachelor degree (BA) to master of science degree (MSc) and to research degrees, including master of philosophy (MPhil) and doctor of philosophy (PhD). The
intakes of higher diploma and degree students each year are approximately 126 and 75 respectively. The School of Hotel Management (SHM) of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, founded in 1999, is the only other one in Hong Kong that offers a hotel management degree programme. Since the SHM has only been established for a few years, it has only five staff in its current academic team. It has an annual intake of 50 students and its first batch of students graduated in 2002. Presently many foundation and language subjects are taught by other departments. Finally, the Department of Hotel, Service and Tourism Studies (HoSTS) of the Institute of Vocational Education - Chai Wan delivers higher diploma courses in hospitality and tourism programmes. These have two main streams, namely, Higher Diploma in Hotel and Catering Management, and Higher Diploma in Travel and Tourism Management. The intake is 60 students in each stream each year.

Table 1: Major hospitality and tourism programmes in Hong Kong (October 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutes</th>
<th>Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPOLYU)</th>
<th>The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)</th>
<th>Institute of Vocational Education - Chai Wan (IVE -CHAI WAN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM)</td>
<td>School of Hotel Management (SHM)</td>
<td>Department of Hotel, Service and Tourism Studies (HoSTS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year Founded</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme</td>
<td>BA (Hons) in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management</td>
<td>BBA in Hotel Management</td>
<td>HD in Hotel and Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HD in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management</td>
<td></td>
<td>HD in Travel and Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Academic Staff</td>
<td>40 (Full Time)</td>
<td>3 (full-time) 2 (part-time)</td>
<td>22 (full-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>BA: 225 (Full Time) HD: 378 (Full Time) BA: 125 (Part Time) HD: 250 (Part Time)</td>
<td>150 (full-time)</td>
<td>360 (full-time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Study</td>
<td>BA: 3 years full-time or 4 years sandwich HD: 3 years sandwich</td>
<td>3 years full-time</td>
<td>3 years full-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Subjects</td>
<td>BA: 102 credits (36 subjects) HD: 72 credits (24 subjects)</td>
<td>BBA: 99 credits (33 subjects)</td>
<td>HD in Hotel and Catering: 22 subjects HD in Travel and Tourism: 24 subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to understand the efforts made by the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong's institutions of higher education, an examination of the higher diploma and degree
programmes offered by SHTM (HKPOLYU), SHM (CUHK) and HoSTS (IVE-CHAI WAN) is likely to reveal the present status and degree of emphasis placed on the teaching of ethics. Of these three institutions, the course document issued by the SHTM indicates a very minimal teaching of ethics. The only components related to ethics are found in two subjects, namely, “Organization and Management” and “Information Systems Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism”. In both cases, only three hours out of a total of forty-two contact hours are allocated to discuss “business ethics” and “ethics of hotel and tourism information management” respectively. Another possible option for the students are the three ethics-related electives offered by the Department of General Education, namely, “Social Ethics”, “Gender & Ethics” and “Morality & Politics”. The higher diploma students are required to complete one elective in their course of study, while the degree students have to complete two. However, the decision to enrol in one of these ethics-related electives is at the students’ discretion. Since there are altogether 49 open electives that students can choose from, it is most likely that most will graduate without formally receiving much education in ethics.

The SHM reveals in its course document and subject list that the programme does not offer any subject on hospitality ethics or on general ethics. Of the two hundred and thirty general education subjects offered, only two subjects, namely, “Ethics Issues of Contemporary Society” and “Law, Ethics and Society” relate to the discussion of ethics. In view of this, the efforts by the SMH to promote the ethical development of students must be considered insufficient.

Finally, the HoSTS currently adopts a structured system that is non-credit based. The higher diploma students in both Hotel and Catering Management and Travel and Tourism Management are required to complete twenty-two and twenty-four core subjects respectively in their three years of study. The list of compulsory subjects does not include any teaching of ethics, and there is no system of open electives and general education built into the course structure.
1.7 Statement of problem

Despite the possibility that hospitality educators may discuss ethical issues in class informally, a careful scrutiny of the course documents of the three programmes shows a strong neglect of ethics teaching and the lack of a hospitality ethics curriculum at the three institutions. In view of the importance of ethics teaching in a hospitality programme, seeing that a true professional in the industry requires strong ethical standards, it can be concluded that the tertiary level hospitality programmes in Hong Kong are apparently not meeting their responsibilities in promoting and enhancing students' ethics. It should be realized that, being the key suppliers of prospective human resources to the hospitality industry, they are negligent in their duties, and that their apathy in developing in their students high levels of personal integrity and strong ethical standards will severely jeopardize the future of both their graduates and the industry as a whole. Without proper ethical training as part of their education, students will have relatively low awareness of and sensitivity towards ethical issues. Consequently, in their career, students will find it difficult to deal with challenges in their day-to-day work and their failure may ruin their careers as well as the reputation of the hospitality industry in Hong Kong.

1.8 Objectives and significance of study

In view of the importance of strong ethical behaviour in the hospitality industry (Allen, 1992; Stevens & Fleckenstein, 1999; Vallen & Casado, 2000) and the obvious lack of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong, it is necessary to investigate in depth the issue of ethics teaching in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. The major aim of this study therefore will be to help develop an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry through conceptualizing the issues of teaching ethics in a framework (see Figure 1). However, due to constraints of time and resources, this study will only attempt to achieve the first two steps of the process, that is, the assessment of needs and the identification of constraints on the implementation of such a curriculum. However, future research will be suggested to support the formulation of objectives, the design of content and materials, and the selection of teaching strategies and of methods of evaluation.
In assessing the needs for ethics teaching, the framework suggested here stresses the importance of both internal and external stakeholders. It is believed that for an applied academic discipline such as hospitality management, both internal and external stakeholders should play an important role in the development of its curriculum. The views of both stakeholders should be ascertained and cross-examined. This would ensure that the curriculum delivered is relevant to the needs and requirements of the industry. Unlike the models of Tyler (1949) and Taba (1962), the process also suggests that the identification of constraints should form an integral part in developing a curriculum.

Figure 1: Further revision of curriculum development process

The accomplishment of the first two steps is of paramount importance because it helps justify the need for such a curriculum and identify obstacles that might hinder the development and implementation of a hospitality ethics curriculum. The final introduction of such a curriculum guarantees that the graduates will be better equipped to make
appropriate ethical judgments. It is also of benefit to the educational institutions themselves because it serves to enhance their image and their reputation for producing graduates of high personal honour. Most important of all, the inclusion of ethics teaching instils confidence and trust in the hospitality practitioners that the graduates they recruit from the educational institutions not only excel in academic performance, but have also received formal guidance and training in developing ethical values and beliefs. With the increasing complexity of the industry, the ability to observe accepted ethical standards is now regarded as an important attribute of true professionals. It is through these that the industry may continue to prosper and survive.

Since most of the previous studies pertaining to ethics teaching in hospitality programmes were carried out in the United States, and no similar research has been carried out in Hong Kong so far, this study breaks new ground in conceptualizing the development of an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry.

1.9 Research questions

It is hoped that at the end of the study the following research questions, divided into main, specific and subsidiary questions, can be answered.

Main Research Question:

- What considerations apply in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Specific Research Question 1:

- What are the current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

1.1 How do the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students perceive the issue of ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?
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1.2 What are the common ethical issues the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students perceive in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?

1.3 What are the mechanisms currently adopted by hotels in Hong Kong to maintain ethical standards in their organizations as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Specific Research Question 2:

• Is there a need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

2.1 What are the views of the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students on solving the ethical problems in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?

2.2 What are the values of the people in Hong Kong nowadays as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

2.3 What are the factors affecting the ethical beliefs and values of people as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

2.4 What is the degree of need and importance for the implementation of an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Specific Research Question 3:

• What are the barriers to the implementation of ethics teaching in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality educators?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

3.1 What is the degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum in their hospitality programme as perceived by the hospitality educators and students?

3.2 What are the barriers that hinder the teaching of ethics in their hospitality programme as perceived by the hospitality educators?
1.10 Limitations of the study

First of all, the School of Hotel Management (SHM) at The Chinese University of Hong Kong has a very short history of only four years. Presently the school has only five faculty members, which constitutes a very small sample size when compared to the other two institutions. As a result, many statistical analyses comparing results across the three institutions cannot be conducted. Due to the lack of networking, this project had difficulties in collecting data from The Chinese University. Furthermore, due to the constraints of resources such as time and manpower, the study had to limit its scope to the first two steps of the revised model of curriculum development. Respondents are limited to the three major stakeholders in the hospitality industry, that is, industry practitioners, educators and students. Since previous studies as well as textbooks on ethics in the hospitality industry are extremely scarce, relevant literature and references are difficult to find. As a result, this study had to rely on newspaper clippings as a major source of secondary data. Other limitations of the study will be further discussed in the methodology chapter.

1.11 Organization of the study

Chapter 1 outlines the background of the hospitality industry and its ethical issues, and provides a statement of the problem researched as well as of the aims and objectives of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on major ethics theories, ethics education and curriculum development. Chapter 3 gives a full explanation of the research methods adopted by the study, including a discussion of topics such as types of research, scope of research, development of research instrument, sampling methods, data collection and methods of analysis. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study, focusing on the main, specific and subsidiary research questions. Chapter 5 discusses the major findings of the study and its conclusions. Chapter 6 provides recommendations to all relevant parties regarding the implementation of a hospitality ethics curriculum as well as the upholding of ethical standards in the hospitality industry, and ends by suggesting areas for future research.
Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 Structure of literature review

This chapter provides a thorough review of the relevant literature relating to the subject of this study, that is, the ethical issues in the hospitality industry and the design of a hospitality ethics curriculum. The chapter discusses existing knowledge and any applicable theories or frameworks as resource material for identifying the problem area, the specific research purposes and the questions asked in this study. As a result, this chapter is structured around five themes.

First, as the central discussion of this study evolves around the key issue of ethics, the review of the literature begins with a brief definition and a general description of the meaning of ethics and related decision-making theories. This will help ensure that readers have the same understanding of what is meant by ethics in this study and therefore the same frame of reference.

Second, since developing a hospitality ethics curriculum is another aim of this study, the chapter discusses some proposed concepts of curriculum and explains the various theoretical components of curriculum development before delving more deeply into ethical issues. Knowledge of this literature lays the foundation for the study. The focus of the literature review then returns to hospitality ethics education.

The third section examines the importance of professional associations in upholding the ethical standards of their fields. A few examples of Hong Kong associations, such as The Medical Council of Hong Kong, The Law Society of Hong Kong, The Hong Kong Tourism Commission and The Hong Kong Tourism Board, will be discussed. This discussion will reaffirm the importance of ethics education, particularly in situations where professional associations fail to act over issues of professional ethics.

The fourth section examines the literature relating to challenges faced by hospitality ethics education, namely, its importance, needs, objectives, curriculum, constraints and barriers.
The fifth and final part of the literature review presents an overview of the extent to which hospitality ethics education is included in hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. Gathering this information is crucial because it provides evidence for the contention that there is a general lack of hospitality ethics education in Hong Kong and that therefore the problems identified in this study can no longer be ignored. The review of the literature helps to justify the purpose and shows the benefits of the study. The following flowchart shows the main structure of the literature review chapter.

Figure 2: Structure of literature review chapter

2.2 Definition of ethics

The word “ethics” underpins this study and must therefore be defined. The researcher feels that there is a need to commence the literature review by providing some definitions of ethics cited in the literature as well as brief descriptions of the most familiar theories concerning ethical decision-making.

To begin with, Kwansa and Farrar (1992) explain that the word ethics is derived from the Greek word “ethos”, meaning “character”. Ethics is always recognized as a branch of philosophy, itself often referred to as “moral philosophy”. It is claimed by many that ethics
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is related to fundamental questions about a good life, and about what is better or worse, and from an objective perspective about whether there is any right and wrong, and how we know if there is (MacKinnon, 2001). Such a definition of ethics assumes that its main objective is to help people decide what is good or bad, better or worse, either in some general way or related to a specific ethical issue.

Some people consider ethics and morals to be the same thing while others see slight differences between them. For example, Pojman (1995) places ethics in the whole domain of morality and moral philosophy for they have many features in common, such as values, virtues, principles and practices. Velasquez (1998), on the other hand, refers to ethics as an activity of examining one’s moral standards or the moral standards of a society. It involves asking questions such as how these standards apply to our lives and whether these standards are reasonable or unreasonable, that is, whether are there good reasons or poor ones to support them. Ethics is the study of morality. It is both the investigation activity and the results of that process. Morality is the principle that ethics investigates and it is definitely not the same as ethics.

Despite these differences in its interpretation, the major concern of organizations today is the ethical element of human behaviour that relates to the “rightness” or “wrongness” of what people do as well as how their behaviour affects other people. In business, ethics refers to the customs, attitudes, values and morals that operate within its field (Joseph & John, 2000). It is also defined as a science des moeurs (science of manners), an investigation of the truthful opinions, values and behavioural patterns of business people, managers and employees, as well as the factual consequences of ethical or unethical behaviour in business enterprises (Verstraeten, 2000). A behaviour is considered to be an ethical issue when a judgment of right or wrong is required. Ethics is the science of judging particularly in relation to human ends and the relationship of means to those ends. Ethical and unethical acts are believed to have influence on individuals, firms, the business community and society as a whole (Garret, 1996). Each ethical judgment is also described to be situation-specific. Ethics should be studied in accordance with the salient aspects of a setting of the event (Barnett & Karson, 1987).
In the hospitality industry, business ethics has major effects on the performance and success of a company. In a survey by Hall (1988), 1,000 member hotels of the American Hotel & Motel Association were asked to define ethics. Although the responses were varied, most agreed that ethics relates to treating everyone in a fair and equitable manner. Some general situations are described by Haywood (1987), who admits that hoteliers always encounter serious ethical issues, such as acceptance of kickbacks and gifts from suppliers, hiding of income from taxation authorities, lack of interest in setting up and maintaining proper safety and security systems and raiding of competitors’ staff. Also, as the hospitality industry aims to serve customers to their level of satisfaction, service providers are regularly confronted with conflicting interests of the guest and the hotel (Upchurch, 1998).

Following the definitions and a discussion of the meanings of ethics and hospitality ethics in particular, a brief description of various major theories of ethical decision-making is presented. A detailed account of the major theories is not necessary because making ethical judgments is not the theme of this study.

2.3 Ethical decision-making

In management, it is essential that all decisions be made based on ethics. According to Hansen (1992), most managers’ rules of thumb (or heuristics) belong to one of five philosophies or theories.

2.3.1 Deontology

This philosophy focuses on the principles of right or wrong. It argues that a person’s actions are not justified by the consequences associated with these actions, but rather by the motives underlying these actions. In other words, deontology focuses on the morals and character of the agent rather than the consequences actually produced by his actions. This branch of philosophy focuses on universal statements of right and wrong.
2.3.2 Utilitarianism
This philosophy is based on the thesis that an action is right if it leads to the greater good for the largest number of people or, conversely, to the least possible bad consequences (Beauchamp & Bowie, 1983). Utilitarianism forces the decision-maker to consider all the outcomes of his decision and to weigh one option against another to determine what is best for society as a whole (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990). The majority of problems deal with deciding what is good and what is bad, and how utility and justice can be determined. This philosophy also ignores actions that are wrong. According to Whitney (1990), utilitarian theory is the most applicable theory in the hospitality industry because of its universal applications.

2.3.3 Egoism
This philosophy focuses on the individual’s long-term interest. Whereas in utilitarianism the emphasis was on society, in egoism the focus is on individuals. If an action on balance will produce more good than evil for a particular individual in the long run, then the action is considered ethical. Philosophers of egoism argue that acting against one’s own interest is contrary to reason.

2.3.4 Relativism
This philosophy emphasizes that ethical decisions are a function of a culture or of an individual. In other words, no uniform rules exist that apply to everyone (Reidenbach & Robin, 1990). It is clearly implied that all moral norms have a relative perspective, and that a moral standard is simply an historical product sanctioned by custom (Beauchamp & Bowie, 1983).

2.3.5 Justice
This philosophy argues that the ethics of an act is determined by the notion that equals ought to be treated equally and un-equals ought to be treated unequally with an emphasis on fairness. Justice can be considered from two angles: (a) distributive justice, which focuses on how fairly things are distributed, and (b) procedural justice, which develops rules or procedures that result in fair or just outcomes (Hansen, 1992).
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After reviewing the theoretical backgrounds of ethics and its theories, the next section reviews the literature on curriculum development. Since ethics and curriculum development are the central issues of discussion in this study, an understanding of the conceptual framework of curriculum development is equally important. It is crucial because it reveals some of the variables that need to be examined in this study. As a result, the literature on concepts such as curriculum objectives, curriculum content, evaluation of curriculum and curriculum stakeholders will be discussed.

2.4 Defining curriculum

The field of curriculum studies is always perceived to be a massive field in its attempts to be comprehensive yet still remains ill-defined. Different curriculum theorists (Smith et al., 1957; Taba, 1962; Foshay, 1969; Tanner & Tanner, 1975; Goodson, 1994; Marsh, 1997) have different views on what constitutes a curriculum. For example, Foshay (1969) defines curriculum as all the experiences a learner has under the guidance of the school while Taba (1962) defines it as a plan for learning. Goodson (1994) views curriculum as an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal, which means that a curriculum can be designed as a programme of activities to help students achieve certain specific end results or accomplish stated objectives by learning. Marsh (1997) equates a curriculum with a syllabus or the content or the body of knowledge the school wishes to transmit. However, all the proposed definitions of curriculum are widely criticized and frequently modified or replaced by others. Thus both Kelly (1989) and Connelly and Lantz (1991) stress that there is still no widely accepted definition of the term as it varies with the concepts that a researcher or practitioner uses in his or her curricular thinking and work. Consequently, it is important to define the use of the word curriculum in any study.

Despite the wide range of definitions, this researcher fully supports the argument offered by Kemmis and Stake (1993), who state that for any definition of curriculum – if it is to be practical, effective and productive – it must offer much more than a statement about the knowledge content that the school is intended to transmit to the students. It should go beyond this to explain and justify the purposes of such transmission as well as the possible
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consequences and effects of exposing the students to such knowledge. In their view, a curriculum should be considered as a versatile concept that is constructed, negotiated and renegotiated at a variety of levels and in a variety of arenas. They go on to elaborate that, if a curriculum is broadly referred to as the total programme of an educational institution, schools should plan their curriculum as a whole. For this reason, the curriculum offered by a school and received by individual students should not be simply a collection of separate subjects. At the very least, a total curriculum must be given prior consideration where teachers and curriculum planners work out a basis on which it can be built.

2.5 Curriculum development

In the United States and Britain, several publications between 1949 and 1975 serve collectively to provide a reasonably comprehensive set of curricular commonplaces that help to define the nature and scope of curriculum as a field of study. These are: Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (Tyler, 1949), Toward Improved Curriculum Theory (Herrick & Tyler, 1950), Fundamentals of Curriculum Development World Book (Smith et al., 1957), Collected Papers and Source Materials on Curriculum Operations and Structure (Herrick, 1962), Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice (Taba, 1962), and An Introduction to Curriculum Research and Development (Stenhouse, 1975). Explicitly or implicitly, all of these address four macro-curricular commonplaces: goals, learning activities, organization and evaluation. Other educational theorists who have shown great interest in discussing curriculum development also include Tanner and Tanner (1975), Apple (1979), Goodlad (1979), Beauchamp (1981), Schubert (1986), Walker and Soltis (1986).

Tyler’s four basic questions have influenced curriculum development specialists around the world. Despite some disagreeing with the way Tyler structures questions and sub-questions in the so-called “Tyler rationale”, it will be difficult to deal with curricular issues comprehensively without discussing his particular curricular commonplaces. Curriculum development is dealt with more implicitly in the work by Smith et al. (1957), who introduced the significance of the philosophical, political and social context within which curricular decisions are made. Smith et al. stress the point that the study of curricula must
include the perspectives and processes contributing to these decisions. Herrick’s contribution in his 1962 study was to develop the more micro-curricular commonplaces of the field of curriculum study. He focuses on the problems of fusing organized subject matter, knowledge of the learning process, and the special characteristics of learners so as to create what he calls “organizing centres” – focal points for drawing students into the learning. This was to be done sequentially, with each successive organizing centre building around a theme, skill, concepts or value serving as an organizing element. Herrick attempted to clarify other curricular commonplaces, such as continuity, sequence and scope. Finally, Taba’s work successfully addresses side issues of inquiry not commonly addressed by other scholars.

Nicholls and Nicholls (1978) provide a fairly clear and comprehensive definition of curriculum development. It is referred to as the planning of learning opportunities, which is intended to bring about certain changes in students and to assess the extent of these changes. They claim that in the development process educators need to establish very clearly what they are trying to achieve with their students, what methods they can use to do this, and finally how they can assess the success of their endeavours. Without a structured process, curriculum development would be an unplanned initiative. Indeed, despite the wide interpretation of curriculum development, there are only four basic elements, which are common to all scholarly theories. These are the selection of objectives, selection and organization of content, selection and organization of learning experiences, and lastly evaluation.

The final step of this curriculum development suggests that it could be looked at as a cyclical process.
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Figure 3: Curriculum process (Nicholls & Nicholls, 1978)

However, the above process is criticized for overlooking the fact that the four aspects are closely interrelated and changes in any one aspect may affect all others. As a result, the diagram has been re-drawn as below. It should be noted that content is sometimes used instead of materials, and assessment and feedback have been put together as evaluation.

Figure 4: Elements of the curriculum (Nicholls and Nicholls, 1978)

However, the two models of curriculum development processes proposed in Figures 3 and 4 are still considered to have flaws. When the stages in these models are broken down into smaller steps, other elements should be added to address the models' deficiencies. These steps may consist of analysing students' attainments, strengths and weaknesses and the
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school culture. In other words, the analysis of situational factors will allow a much broader and more comprehensive approach to diagnosis. Therefore, the models in Figures 3 and 4 should be further refined to include a component called "situation analysis", as in Figure 5:

Selection of Objectives ← Situation Analysis ← Evaluation

↓

Selection and Organization of Content

Selection and Organization of Methods

**Figure 5: Revised curriculum process (Nicholls and Nicholls, 1976)**

However, this researcher feels that there are still other elements missing in a model of the process of curriculum development. The model should include an element that stresses the importance of both internal and external stakeholders in education in determining the requirement of a particular curriculum. The existence of a curriculum is only justified if the requirement is identified. The situation analysis is to be replaced by the identification of blocks and constraints, of the drivers and impetus for the implementation of the curriculum. The identification should take into consideration factors such as students' strengths and weaknesses and culture. Also, it should be conducted in the early stages of the development process as it may influence other elements, such as the formulation of objectives and the selection of teaching methods. The identification of constraints provides a better understanding of how a curriculum can be successfully introduced. This researcher proposes a further revision of the theoretical model of the process of curriculum development, as shown in Figure 6:
2.6 Needs assessment

A need can be defined as a discrepancy between an existing set of conditions and a desired set (Borg & Gall, 1989). For example, if an educator makes the assertion that there is a need to place more emphasis on science education in the school curriculum, it means that there is a discrepancy between the existing curriculum and a desired curriculum. This statement of need reflects a judgment about the present merit of the curriculum. For this reason, professional evaluators are interested in the determination of need states in education.
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This study recognizes the importance of needs assessment because it is a tool by which the researcher can be assured that the intervention, once selected, is related to basic gaps and problems, not just to obvious symptoms or some dubious ideas. It is a critical step to ascertain that the problem attacked is real, important and worthy of solving. The assessment of needs is imperative because it provides the basis for setting objectives for curriculum or programme development (Kaufman & English, 1981).

The identification should stress the importance of external and internal views. Concerning external views, the simple truth is that what schools do and accomplish is of concern to stakeholders, especially those who hire their graduates. Thus external referents such as employers and professional organizations should be the starting point for functional and useful educational planning, design, implementation and evaluation (Kaufman & English, 1981; Grant, 2002). On the other hand, internal views from teachers, students or school management are equally essential. Their views can be used as a frame of reference for planning and implementation.

2.7 Curriculum stakeholders

Apart from the major elements discussed above, education stakeholders also play an important role in curriculum development. Education is essentially a political activity and no one who practises it can remain unaware of the political dimensions in their work. Therefore the design and management of a curriculum may involve many stakeholders, including school-based personnel such as teachers and principals, and university-based specialists, industry and community groups, government agencies and politicians (Kelly, 1989; Glassgow, 1997).

However, the influence on curriculum development exerted by these stakeholders represents many different kinds of pressure that can be described as a battleground of competing ideologies. For example, one group is concerned with the vocational, utilitarian and economic functions of schooling while others may stress the notion of education as a form of personal development. In addition, Pratt (1994) points to the importance of a school's senior management and the key role it plays in curriculum development among
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the different stakeholders. In practice, senior management has the power of veto over any significant change in any school department and thus the support of this group is almost essential for success.

Many theorists support the notion that apart from senior management, teachers are crucial in curriculum development (Holt, 1987; Elliott, 1998; Walker, 1988). This view disputes the notion that curriculum change is a social experiment in which teachers play a central role since without their professional input, there can be no curriculum development. In particular, when change strategies attempt to manipulate teachers against their will, a new curriculum development will fail. Therefore any development or change is more likely to be accepted when the teachers, who are most affected, are involved in the process. As Print (1993) proposes, teachers should increasingly act in four curriculum decision-making roles, i.e., as implementers, adapters, developers and researchers.

In addition, according to the total quality management (TQM) concept by Deming (1986), customer satisfaction is the main key to company success. As a result, organizations must go out to survey what is important to their customers, both internal and external customers (Kanji & Tambi, 1999; Drexler & Kleinsorge, 2000). In the field of education, internal customers include students and parents while key external customers are the industries that employ the school graduates.

Many studies have examined the role of students played in curriculum development (Allen, 1995; Marsh, 1997). They strongly suggest that schools consult the consumers of their services, i.e., the students and their parents, and that if the school is serious about empowerment in education, then students must be encouraged to voice their concerns, opinions and plans as learners.

Apart from meeting the need of internal customers, many researchers have looked into the relationship between institutions and employers (Craft, 1992; Turtle, 1994; Pearce, 1995; Hillman and Albert, 1999; Karathanos, 1999; Tam, 1999). They conclude that higher education institutions today are facing enormous pressures from their external customers
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because there is a widening gap between the needs of industry sectors and the products and services provided by education providers. Institutions are asked to show evidence that they are providing good quality education that is value for money as people are losing confidence in their “ivory tower” image. Thus, what used to be a good match between societal needs and university performance is now highly unacceptable (Chazan, 1985; Chaffee & Sherr, 1992). As a result, many studies have confirmed the importance of the views of industry (Marsh, 1997; Kanji & Tambi, 1999; Willis, 1999; Conaway & Fernandez, 2000), and their general consensus is that gathering input from industries, and knowing their expectations, are essential steps in curriculum development.

In summary, as suggested by Pratt (1994), the development of a curriculum should be facilitated by establishing a climate of trust among the various customers, consulting widely, thus ensuring that the curriculum meets recognized needs.

After reviewing the literature on the theories and concepts of ethics and curriculum development, the rest of the chapter will now address the literature relating to an hospitality ethics curriculum. To begin with, the discussion will show how some professional or industry associations in Hong Kong have played their role in maintaining professional ethics in their professions or industries, and how this is related to ethics education. The discussion is highly relevant to this study because it brings to light the importance of ethics education when professional or industry associations fail to act as monitor and regulator of ethics in their profession or industry. The professional bodies of the hospitality industry in Hong Kong are one such example of failure.

2.8 **Professional associations in Hong Kong**

In view of the importance of ensuring high ethical and professional standards, many professions have set up associations in an attempt to prescribe and monitor the behaviour of their members. In Hong Kong, two prominent examples are The Medical Council of Hong Kong (MCHK) and The Law Society of Hong Kong (LSHK). They not only provide a code of practice and guidelines to their members but are empowered to expose and discipline any of their members who are alleged to be guilty of professional misconduct. In other
words, the two organizations were founded with the aim of acting as a control mechanism to ensure professional quality and standards and to foster the trust and confidence of the public in their members.

Regrettably, not all professional associations in Hong Kong serve a similar function nor have the authority to monitor and discipline their members. The hospitality associations in Hong Kong are an example. Their primary aim is to promote the industry in both local and overseas markets and to provide information to tourists. When it comes to ethical and professional issues, the associations have no legitimate power deriving from the articles of the association over any one of its members. Ensuring that the industry as a whole or its individual members observe professional ethics very much relies on strong self-discipline and the ethical standards of the individuals working in the industry. In this environment, ethics education for individuals before entering the hospitality workforce is thus even more essential than for any other professions.

A close look is taken below at the aims of the Medical Council, the Law Society and the four hospitality associations in Hong Kong respectively, which may provide clear evidence of how they differ from each other in terms of their role in monitoring professional ethics and standards.

2.8.1 The Medical Council of Hong Kong
The Medical Council of Hong Kong is a good example of an association that was founded with the purpose of ensuring and promoting professional quality and ethics among its members. It aims to protect patients, foster ethical conduct by its members and help them develop high professional standards. The Council is authorized by the Medical Registration Ordinance to maintain a register of all eligible medical practitioners, administer the Licensing Examination, issue guidelines and a professional code, and – possibly most significantly – exercise regulatory and disciplinary powers over the profession. To achieve these goals, the Council is supported by various committees, including the Licentiate Committee, the Examination Sub-committee, the Education and Accreditation Committee and the Ethics Committee (http://www.mchk.org.hk).
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According to its constitution, the Council has disciplinary powers over a registered medical practitioner in accordance with the rulings set out in the Medical Registration Ordinance. The main purpose of exercising this power is not only to discipline its members but also to protect the public where necessary. By doing so, it secures public confidence in the profession and in its widest sense preserves the integrity of the profession. For instance, when the Council finds that a registered medical practitioner has committed a disciplinary offence, it may, at its discretion, order the removal of the name of the registered medical practitioner from the General Register or from the Specialist Register or reprimand the registered medical practitioner.

Among the functional committees, the Ethics Committee in particular advises and makes recommendations to the Council on matters of medical ethics and professional conduct. It disseminates a professional code of conduct to all registered medical practitioners in relation to ethical issues such as professional responsibilities to patients, use of drugs, financial arrangements and abuse of professional position.

2.8.2 The Law Society of Hong Kong
Another association in Hong Kong that helps to monitor the professional standards and practices of its members is the Law Society of Hong Kong. It is an association of the solicitors in Hong Kong. In accordance with its stated objectives, it aims to promote high standards of work and ethical practice in the profession; to ensure compliance with the law and regulations affecting solicitors; to guide solicitors on professional practice matters and to help them develop their practice; to present the views of the profession to the government and other bodies; and finally to provide services to its member (http://www.hklawsoc.org.hk).

Since one of its tasks is to uphold the high standards and ethical practice of solicitors, the Society is given constitutional duties and powers to investigate and refer allegations of professional misconduct to the Solicitors’ Disciplinary Tribunal or to intervene in a solicitor’s practice in cases of dishonesty, undue delay or fraud.
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The Law Society is governed by a Council, comprising twenty elected members serving for a three-year term, meeting twice monthly (or more frequently if necessary) for the conduct of business. The key responsibility of the Council is to receive and consider reports from five Standing Committees as well as to determine issues arising from its own motions. The five functional committees support the objective of the Society, that is, to ensure professional standards and ethics. The Standing Committees are a Compliance Committee to deal with regulatory aspects of the profession; an External Affairs Committee to handle public policy issues and manage the Society's professional and community relations; a Policy and Resources Committee to oversee policy co-ordination and the management of the Society's business and its budget; a Practitioners Affairs Committee to develop legal policy affecting the profession and good practice law reform; and finally, and probably most importantly of all, a Standards and Development Committee to set and maintain standards of work and ethical practice through practice rules and guidelines, and which organizes the Continuing Professional Development programmes.

In addition to the activities of these five committees, the Society also provides a guide to professional conduct to the solicitors in Hong Kong. This guide was first published in 1995 and has proved most helpful for practising solicitors and foreign lawyers, their staff and students. The sixteen-chapter guide covers a wide range of topics mostly related to work ethics, such as a solicitor's practice, competence and quality of service, fiduciary duty, confidentiality, conflict of interest between clients, relations with other solicitors, relations with the bar, relations with third parties, complaints and discipline as well as professional undertakings.

Finally, the Society is given the power to investigate members and certain non-members for alleged professional misconduct. It possesses the authority to call for an explanation of conduct that appears to the Council to be dishonourable, improper or unethical, whereas actual disciplinary measures are the reserve of the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal.
2.9 Key hospitality organizations in Hong Kong

In contrast to the Medical Council and the Law Society, the hospitality associations in Hong Kong seem to have no intention of playing a proactive role in regulating the professional conduct of their practitioners nor of demanding the power to discipline them. Most of them are set up to act as marketing agents for the industry. The four main hospitality associations in Hong Kong are The Tourism Commission (TC), The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), The Hong Kong Hotels Association (HKHA) and The Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC). A review of their aims below provides a better understanding of how their emphases are different from those of the two professional associations discussed above.

The Tourism Commission (TC) was established in 1999 by the Hong Kong SAR Government with the core vision to establish and promote Hong Kong as Asia’s premier international city, a world-class destination for leisure and business visitors. It recognizes that competition for visitors throughout the region is fierce and therefore reckons that they must continually upgrade the tourism product to meet the challenge head-on.

To achieve its vision, several exciting new projects are slowly taking shape, expanding the horizons of Hong Kong’s tourism potential and cementing its position as Asia’s top visitor destination. Hong Kong Disneyland and the Fisherman’s Wharf are two examples. Numerous small-scale plans, such as for the Tsimshatsui Promenade, an additional full-scale convention and exhibition centre and a new cruise terminal in the harbour, will be implemented to enhance the attractiveness of Hong Kong and to make the sites more visitor friendly. The Tourism Commission keeps developing new attractions to enhance the drawing power of Hong Kong and to sustain the long-term development of the tourist industry. All of these plans fall into the “hardware” category. In the “software” category, the TC aims at improving a number of administrative procedures, such as benchmarking the current visa regime against its regional competitors and simplifying visa applications by adopting electronic processing (http://www.info.gov.hk/tc).
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Despite the TC having expressed its concern over the standards and performance of the industry in its corporate statement, its emphasis on this is far less when compared to the that which it places on the development and marketing of its hardware and software. Its stated strategies to enhance professional standards and behaviour merely include introducing an appropriate regulatory regime for inbound tour agents, promoting the Quality Tourism Services Scheme to the retail and dining sectors of the industry, and cultivating a hospitality climate among the community at large. The TC is not empowered to discipline any member for professional misconduct and seems to be more interested in acting as a policy maker and marketer concerned with enhancing Hong Kong’s attractiveness and with strategically promoting Hong Kong in the international arena.

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB), on the other hand, is a “quasi-governemental” body set up in 1957. Working closely with the Tourism Commission, the HKTB also acts as a “marketing agent” for the Hong Kong Government on tourism. The main aims of the HKTB, as stated in its mission statement, are to increase the number of visitors to Hong Kong, to further the development of Hong Kong as a tourist destination, to promote the improvement of facilities for visitors, to market Hong Kong’s attractions overseas, to coordinate the activities of the tourism industry and to advise the government on matters relating to the tourism industry (http://www.hktourismboard.com). As in the case of the TC, the task of monitoring professional standards and behaviour is not meant to be a focal point for the HKTB.

The Hong Kong Hotels Association (HKHA) was founded in 1961 and now has 78 member hotels. Between them, these hotels offer over 35,566 rooms, that is, more than 90% of the total room inventory in Hong Kong (http://www.hktourismboard.com/hkha/). However, unlike The Medical Council of Hong Kong and The Law Society of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Hotels Association is simply an association registered with the Hong Kong Government, like many others, with no statutory powers or authority to oversee and monitor the practices and behaviour of its members. Its main aims are to improve direct benefits and services to the member hotels, to set up communication with government on
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issues affecting the local hotel industry, to improve cooperation with the HKTB and the Federation of Hong Kong Hotels Owners, and to improve community and public relations.

Of the four hospitality organizations, The Travel Industry Council (TIC) seems to be the only one with a concern for maintaining the industry's professionalism and ensuring ethical behaviour. The TIC was established in 1978 to protect the interests of tour agents in Hong Kong. After continuous lobbying by the TIC, the Hong Kong SAR Government enacted a Travel Agents Ordinance in 1985 to make it mandatory for all outbound agents to be licensed (http://www.tichk.org).

Entrusted under the Travel Agents (Amendment) Ordinance, the TIC is vested with the responsibility for maintaining a high standard of professionalism within the industry and protecting the interests of both the trade and travellers. It is composed of eight Association Members, some 1,200 member agents, a Board of Directors, an Appeals Board, a number of committees and an Executive Office. Before coming to any decision to implement a policy, the Board must first consult the relevant committees and then have the Executive Office carry it out.

Under Article 10 of the Articles of Association of the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC), every member of the TIC is bound by the Codes of Conduct promulgated by the Board of the TIC for the purposes of regulating the conduct and business and other practices of travel agents. The Codes of Conduct being implemented include a General Code of Conduct for TIC Members, a Code of Business Practice for Outbound Package Tours, a Code of Advertising Practice for TIC Members and a Code of Business Practice for Inbound Package Tours. The TIC is probably the only hospitality organization that provides a comprehensive set of codes of conduct and practice for its members and the profession as a whole.

From the discussion above it is clear that the hospitality associations in Hong Kong have, to a great extent, neglected the role they could play in maintaining high professional and ethical standards in the industry. They obviously have not realized that without a proper
industry mechanism to control the quality and conduct of their members, their success and reputation will be at stake. When industry players thus fail to take up the tasks of regulator and controller, the hospitality institutes in Hong Kong are in an even stronger position, with an even greater obligation and even more indispensably, to ensure that their programmes will provide their students, that is, the potential employees of the industry, with proper training and education on what constitutes professionalism and ethics. In other words, there is an even more compelling need for the inclusion of ethics education in hospitality programmes than in any other disciplines as long as the industry lacks the mechanisms to control and monitor the behaviour of its profession.

2.10 Culture and ethical orientation

It is hypothesized that there is a close link between the values and the ethical orientation of an individual. As Hunt and Vitell (1986) recognize, the culture and value system that distinguish the members of one category of people from those of another has a strong correlation to the ethical decision making of an individual member of a given culture. This correlation is further elaborated in the study by Ford and Richardson (1994), which investigated variables that influence ethical beliefs and behaviour. Their study concludes that culture is a fundamental determinant of ethical decision making, that is, that culture directly affects how an individual perceives ethical problems, alternatives and consequences. Culture is defined as the collective mental programming of a people. It is also the belief and values of a people (Hofstede, 1984).

In the study by Hofstede (1984), Hong Kong culture is identified as collectivist, large in power distance, masculine and weak in uncertainty avoidance. The studies by Triandis (1995) and Tsui and Windsor (2001) have also found Hong Kong to be a collectivist city and positively correlated with a lower score for ethical reasoning. Tsui and Windsor (2001) noticed that social ties are tighter in Hong Kong because one owes lifelong loyalty to one's in-group. To break this loyalty is one of the worst things a person can do. Therefore morality among collectivists is more contextual and their supreme value is the welfare of the collective. On the other hand, the study by Kim et al. (1994) finds that a higher ethical
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reasoning score is consistent with individualism as it focuses on personality held principles such as freedom of own interests.

Tsui and Windsor (2001) show that Hong Kong, being a large power distance city, correlates negatively with higher ethical reasoning scores. According to Hofstede (1984), a large power distance is large inequalities between those with power and those without. The study concludes that small power distance is exemplified by more equal relationships among people, and by relationships which emphasize social justice. Hong Kong is found to be more tolerant of hierarchies and autocratic leadership than low power distance countries such as the United States. This in turn leads to, as Young and Franke (2000) put it, the need for managers to set good ethical examples and enforce corporate ethical guidelines is more important in high power distance cultures than in low power distance cultures. In this situation, the provision of good ethics training and education, especially for managers and prospective managers, is crucial.

The studies by Vitell et al. (1993) and Chang and Ding (1995) find that Hong Kong is positively correlated with unethical behaviour because of its masculinity culture. This echoes the statement by Hofstede (1991) that individuals from highly masculine cultures are less likely to be influenced by formal codes of ethics, that is, deontological norms, particularly when personal and company interests conflict. Due to the fact that individuals from highly masculine cultures are driven by personal achievement and material success, they are more apt to place their own self-interests above the interests of other stakeholders. Feminine cultures, in contrast, tend to have a stronger sense of responsibility and thus individuals are more likely to obey a company’s rules. Because feminine cultures are less materialistic, less interested in personal recognition, and more relationship oriented, employees from such countries are less likely to place their own self-interests above the interests of other stakeholders. They tend to be more concerned with environmental issues and less tolerant of aggressive, dollar-driven behaviour.

Finally, Hong Kong, a city low in uncertainty avoidance, correlates negatively with ethical behaviour. Hofstede (1991) reports that individuals with high uncertainty avoidance
believe that company rules have to be kept at all times and are not to be broken. According to Hunt and Vitell (1986), deontological norms are "guidelines" and "rules" to guide ethical behaviour in an organization, thus countries of high uncertainty avoidance are more likely to adhere to a formalized set of deontological norms than individuals from low uncertainty avoidance nations. This is supported by Young and Franke (2000), who presume that adhering to a company's rules applies to high uncertainty avoidance individuals because unethical behaviour involves uncertain probabilities and the consequences of getting caught. However, Hong Kong people will take advantage of a situation if they consider it beneficial to them. They are relatively casual in observing guidelines or principles.

In addition to the studies above, the unique mentality of Hong Kong people has aroused the concern of the public for some years. In a survey conducted by the ICAC in 1995, it is reported that the get-rich-quick mentality among Hong Kong's youth has a relationship with their increasing tolerance of graft. Of respondents under the age of twenty-four, 83% admit that ethical standards among the younger generation are deteriorating. Anti-corruption sentiment is found to remain strong among older age groups, perhaps because they still recall how badly the territories suffered from graft before the creation of the ICAC. But the younger generation has no such unpleasant memories to keep their attitudes in check (South China Morning Post, 1996).

Last but not least, in a survey of Hong Kong people's values conducted by the City University of Hong Kong, 60% of the 230 respondents indicated that they put money ahead of everything else. They value having jobs with high social prestige and earning more money the most. The survey concludes that Hong Kong people ignore factors regarded as important by western countries, such as creativity, ethics and the appreciation of life (Eastern Express, 1994).

Based on the values and culture of Hong Kong, which were said to be collectivist, low in uncertainty avoidance, masculine and characterized by large power distance, it is evident
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that they tend to be associated with a negative ethical orientation. This in turn suggests that there is a strong need to raise the ethical standards observed in Hong Kong society.

2.11 Need for hospitality ethics education

The most common way to improve the ethics of an organization or profession usually include the use of codes of ethics and training programmes for employees, or creating an organizational culture of ethical behaviour through communication and advertising. Reynolds (2000) considers these to be less effective, making little change to the ethical situation of companies. Instead, he suggests taking one step back by educating people about ethics before they enter the workforce, and for this reason formal ethics education is advocated as the most effective way to change people's internal orientation.

Many previous studies hold similar views (Hosmer, 1988; Bishop, 1992; Enghagen & Hott, 1992; Kwansa & Farrar, 1992; Lampe, 1997; Oddo, 1997; Wong, 1998; Vallen & Casado, 2000). They generally see that it is important to add ethics to a curriculum because in the heat of management at work, there is often the potential for harming others. This is particularly true with the increasing complexity and sophistication of the workplace. Enghagen and Hott (1992) argue that the value system of a person is not static and is inclined to experience considerable modification and refinement over time. If students get into the habit of considering the ethical implications of decisions and internalize this process especially during their years of tertiary education, they are more likely to carry it over into the workplace and transfer their awareness to their careers. As Macfarlane (2001) says, students will become more flexible in handling ethical issues if they have a thorough concept of ethics.

As a result, most of the above researchers view higher education as a critical and final opportunity to instil ethics in students. As Cheung (1996) claims, the inclusion of ethics education in higher education can help students to think beyond individual interests in decision making, that is, not to see their own interests only but rather to see the welfare of society as a whole. As Whitney (1990), Lampe (1997) and Reynolds (2000) put it, any
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internal change brought about through ethics education will foster positive attitudes towards ethical issues at work.

Ethics in the hospitality industry is an important issue and the increasing interest among hospitality scholars during the past few years is encouraging (Damitio & Schmidgall, 1993). The link between hospitality industry and unethical behaviours is well supported since virtually every critical issue in the hospitality industry has an ethical component (Whitney, 1990). All functional areas of hospitality, such as operations, finance, marketing, human resources and management, involve ethics in day-to-day activities. It is essential that future hospitality managers are not only aware of ethical issues but have adequate ethical knowledge to make practical decisions based on sound ethical principles.

A discussion of some characteristics of the hospitality industry will clearly illustrate the fundamental need for ethics in the industry. First, as Eller (1992) says, employees are knowingly or unknowingly more susceptible to non-ethical practices. The hospitality industry is a business aimed at satisfying guests’ needs. The fine line between service and entertainment can be easily misunderstood. This may lead to inappropriate expectations and awkward, unpleasant and sometimes ugly situations among those involved in offering and receiving hospitality.

Second, there are numerous items used daily in the inventory of any hospitality operation, e.g., toilet paper, soap, silverware, knives, items of food etc., and there is always a temptation to steal them. These items are easily accessed by staff members. A large organization can hardly keep track of small, inexpensive and insignificant items. It is also very difficult to have an efficient inventory control system because of the large variety of items in any hospitality operation.

Third, employees in hospitality work long, irregular hours and during holidays. They spend more time at odd hours with customers and employees. The ambiance, décor and sleeping rooms are natural temptations for unethical practices, including theft, discrimination and sexual harassment.
Finally, personnel practices in the hospitality industry have traditionally made physical attractiveness, physical attributes and sociability the primary bases for hiring and placement decision. This has indirectly resulted in some unethical practices.

Despite the close link between the hospitality industry and unethical behaviours, the survey by Hall (1988) of 1,000 US hotel with 300 rooms or above indicates that about 36% of the respondents (general managers or key executives) believe that America's hotel, restaurant and institutional schools are not doing enough in teaching ethics while another 35% say they do not know. Only 24% said they are doing an acceptable job. Finally, approximately 62% of the hoteliers want more training in ethics and express a desire for the American hospitality industry to develop a programme to promote greater ethical and moral responsibility and understanding.

2.12 Objectives of hospitality ethics education

Many past studies (Parks, 1986; Bok, 1990; Menzel, 1997) argue that the primary objective for discussing ethical issues in class is to teach students how to incorporate their values into the decision-making process. Ethics education does not aim at teaching students the difference between right and wrong but rather seeks to encourage them to be more perceptive in detecting ethical problems and be able to think critically about work-related moral issues for the benefit of the public.

Other scholars (Bok, 1976; Konrad, 1978; Hanson, 1987; Murray, 1987; Henderson, 1988; Hosmer, 1988) similarly express the view that ethics cannot be truly taught in higher education but are hopeful that through discussions of ethics and ethical issues, a higher level of awareness might assist students in their decision-making processes. For these scholars, higher education should focus on the teaching of applied ethics, such as accounting ethics, hospitality ethics and ethics in practicing law. As Glass and Bonnici (1997) explain, by teaching applied ethics the subject not only provides students with an in-depth understanding and evaluation of their own personal responsibilities and values, more
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importantly it is giving them a wider responsibility both internally and externally in the corporate world and society at large.

According to Macfarlane (1998), the key objective of teaching business ethics is to develop the critical thinking of the students to help them to synthesize and make sense of a broad range of business disciplines. As defined by Epstein (1989), applied ethics is a branch of ethics that focuses on general principles and develops analytical approaches in a particular discipline. The analysis can be carried out at four levels. The first level concerns macro-ethics, that is, the norms and values of the total political-economic system. The second level concerns intermediate ethics, focusing on the conduct of groups of business firms, while the third level focuses on the conduct of specific firms. The last level of analysis concerns individual ethics, focusing on the conduct of individuals. Unfortunately, most of the above studies were conducted into teaching ethics in general business studies and very few have attempted to look at hospitality programmes.

2.13 Constraints on integrating ethics into a curriculum

Despite the general consensus on the need for ethics education, there has been little formal courses in hospitality programmes that teach ethics so far. A few studies have attempted to identify and investigate the constraints on or barriers to the inclusion of ethics teaching in a curriculum in secondary and tertiary education.

One of the major barriers identified by Crain and Carruth (1992) and Oddo (1997) is the self-appraisal of secondary school teachers regarding their ability to teach ethics. Many staff members expressed the feeling that they were not comfortable to discuss ethical theories and issues in class because they were not trained ethicists. In fact, most reported never having attended a course in ethics. It would be similar to asking teachers to teach mathematics or biology when they have not been trained in those areas. This concern is also shared by school managements who have the same reservation about the ability of their staff to teach ethics despite the fact that they do realize the need and importance of ethics education.
The difficulty in allocating time to teach ethics is another commonly agreed constraint found in secondary schools (Starratt, 1994). Most respondents in his study indicated that they simply did not have the time to teach ethics as they were already falling behind in their primary job of teaching basic skills in language and science. They strongly argued that they just could not afford the time and resources to teach ethics when they were not getting their jobs done in academia.

Two studies have been conducted that investigated the difficulties perceived by accounting academics in teaching ethics in their programmes (Mintz, 1990; Gunz & McCutcheon, 1998). In both studies it was found that only slightly more than half of the respondents integrated ethics into their courses. Those who did not cited as curriculum constraints the lack of subject and teaching materials, and their lack of ability to teach ethics. In addition, these studies revealed that the teaching of ethics was completely subject to the desires of staff in the context of their academic careers. As most academics consider productivity in research the primary criterion for success in academia, they are afraid that their subjects will diverge from the “mainstream” within their department and not be valued. One other fundamental difficulty identified was that the existing knowledge about cases of ethical dilemmas in accounting practices is limited. Most material is either theoretical or anecdotal and only very few textbook discussions are of real-world cases. Finally, a decreasing number of staff with an increasing workload and continuing pressure to incorporate new technical material are also reported to be significant constraints in both studies.

The study by Menzel (1997) also indicates a lack of support from universities for staff training and development in ethics as one of the reasons for the lack of it. Despite 55% of survey respondents agreeing that their departments supported training and development of staff to improve their education in ethics, less than 10% say their schools provide instructional release time for such training and development.

Very few studies have attempted to examine the underlying constraints on hospitality education. The only relatively comprehensive study was one by Enghagen (1990), who conducted a questionnaire survey of 113 member institutions of The Council of Hotel and
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Restaurant Institutional Education (CHRIE) in the US. The study brings to light that although approximately 74% of the hospitality programmes do include ethics in their curriculum, only 42% make it a required component while 31% include it as an elective only, and 26% do not include ethics in their programmes at all. Viewed positively, these results show a high degree of concern with ethics in American hospitality schools. But on the other hand, the findings also suggest a huge gap in that over one fourth of the programmes do not offer ethics in the curriculum at all and one third offers it only as an elective. When asked about the major reasons for not including ethics in the curriculum, eleven institutions said that the programmes were too crowded already, while four pointed at the lack of interested and qualified staff to teach ethics. In addition to hospitality programmes, the study also surveyed some business schools in the US and identified similar barriers, i.e., that the curriculum is too full already and that there is a lack of qualified and interested staff to teach ethics.

Apart from the constraints identified above, the culture of a society is believed to have a role to play (Miller & Miller, 1976; Andrew, 1979; Thurow, 1987). They argue that ethics are basically learned early in life through socialization and are well established even before a student enters a tertiary institution, thus the teaching of ethics in places of higher education may be of little value. As Starratt (1994) claims, ethics teaching should not belong to schools at all, but rather to homes and churches. It is his conviction that ethical principles are based on values that reflect cultural traditions, religious socialization and personal preferences. Thus, getting people to agree on a proper ethical response to a specific situation is especially difficult when different religions and cultures exist in a society. Starratt feels that issues which were considered ethically questionable in the old days may now have become acceptable, such as casual sex, deceit in advertising, subtle forms of bribery of public officials, violations of contractual agreements, minor pilfering of company supplies, street violence or illegal drug use.

In spite of the literature on factors that hinder the development of ethics education, no attempts have been made to understand the strategies that may foster the introduction of ethics education in hospitality programmes, which probably explains why hospitality ethics
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education has never developed. The current investigation into the strategies for hospitality ethics education in this study is thus overdue.

2.14 Lack of hospitality ethics education in Hong Kong

Due to the absence of a control mechanism by the hospitality associations in Hong Kong over the practices and conduct of their members, hospitality programmes are even more important than they would be ordinarily in the education of future industry employees. An overview is given below of the current status of ethics training in hospitality programmes at three major educational institutions in Hong Kong, namely, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Institute of Vocational Education.

2.14.1 School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) – The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

The SHTM at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University mainly offers higher diploma and degree programmes in hotel, catering and tourism management. Its degree students have to gain a total of 102 academic credits, equivalent to 36 subjects. However, among the core/compulsory subjects there is not one subject that addresses the ethical development of students (see Table 2). The subjects are largely divided into language subjects (e.g., Putonghua, College Chinese and English for Academic Purposes), general business subjects (e.g., Organizations and Management, Business Law and Business Accounting) and hotel / catering / tourism functional subjects (e.g., Introduction to Housekeeping, Food and Beverage Management and Tourism Development).

Apart from the above subjects, students are also required to take three hospitality electives from a pool of forty-nine electives (see Table 3) available to them in their three years of study. Disappointingly, not even one single elective is related to hospitality ethics. Finally, in addition to core subjects and hospitality electives, students must choose and complete two general education subjects from a list of forty-nine subjects offered by the Department of General Education. Subjects are basically divided into four domains, namely, philosophical judgment, aesthetic judgment, value judgment and scientific judgment (see Table 4). Of these forty-nine subjects, three are directly related to the study of ethics,
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namely, “Morality and Politics”, “Social Ethics” and “Gender and Ethics”. Few students will choose these three subjects out of a total of forty-nine, with the probability of a student taking even one being approximately 12.4%.

For the higher diploma programme of the SHTM, students must gain seventy-two credits, equivalent to twenty-four subjects, from a pool of core subjects similar to those in the degree programme (see Table 5). (Students are not required to take the final level subjects of the degree programme.) For the hospitality electives, students are required to take four electives from the same pool of electives as that offered to the degree students. This means that the higher diploma students, who are comparable to their degree counterparts, are not offered any core subjects/electives that are linked to the teaching of ethics. As part of their general education, they are only required to take one subject from the same forty-nine general education subjects offered to other students. Pessimistically speaking, the probability of a student taking any one of the three ethics subjects mentioned above drops to 6% for the higher diploma students.
### Table 2: Core/compulsory subjects in BA(Hons) programme in SHTM at HKPOLYU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HKPOLYU</th>
<th>BA(Hons) in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Subjects</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hotel Subjects</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English for Academic Purposes</td>
<td>• Introduction to Front Office Operational Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information Technology</td>
<td>• Introduction to Housekeeping Operational Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Business Law</td>
<td>• Front Office and Housekeeping Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Hotel, Catering and Tourism Industries</td>
<td>• Facility and Property Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Hotel, Catering and Tourism Marketing</td>
<td>• Hotel Occupancy Forecasting and Yield Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General Education</td>
<td>• Hotel Project Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College Chinese</td>
<td>• Catering Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organizations and Management</td>
<td>• Introduction to Food Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Economics</td>
<td>• Introduction to Food Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business Accounting</td>
<td>• Food and Beverage Operations Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quantitative Methods</td>
<td>• Beverage Operations and Management in Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leisure Behaviour</td>
<td>• Catering Operations Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management Accounting in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurship in Catering Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information Systems in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Tourism Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English in the Workplace</td>
<td>• Introduction to Tourism Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Putonghua</td>
<td>• Principles of Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Service Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Tourism and Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human Resources Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Event Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research Methodology in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Tourism Policy and Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategic Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Contemporary Tourism Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English for Professional Purposes</td>
<td>• Final Year Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3: Hospitality electives in SHTM at HKPOLYU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HKPOLYU</th>
<th>HD/BA(Hons) in Hotel, Catering and Tourism Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hotel Elective</strong></td>
<td><strong>Catering Elective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resort Management</td>
<td>Wine Studies I (Old World)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Environment Management</td>
<td>Wine Studies II (New World)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multinational Hotel Enterprises Management</td>
<td>Culinaria – Europe I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Office and Housekeeping Management</td>
<td>Culinaria – Europe II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel and Catering Facility and Property Management</td>
<td>Culinaria – SE Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservation and Information Management</td>
<td>Culinaria – SE Asia and Far East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Planning and Design</td>
<td>Culinaria – China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and the Control Environment of Hotels</td>
<td>Culinaria – Select Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Studies in International Hotel Industry</td>
<td>Food and Beverage Operations Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Occupancy Forecasting and Yield Management</td>
<td>Banquet, Special Events Catering and Dining Themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Project Development</td>
<td>Club Management Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tourism Elective</strong></td>
<td><strong>Common Elective</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airline and Airport Management</td>
<td>Cross-cultural Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts and Theories of Tourism Development</td>
<td>Promotion Management for Tourism and Hospitality Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Hotel and Tourism Development</td>
<td>Cross-cultural Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to Theme Parks and Attractions</td>
<td>Hospitality Computer Programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism and Development in the Developing World</td>
<td>Managing Service Quality and Guest Satisfaction – Research and Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism Development in Remote Areas</td>
<td>Customer Relationship Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive and Impact Analysis of Tourism</td>
<td>E-business in Hospitality Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Tourism Studies</td>
<td>Developing High Potential Hospitality and Tourism Executives: People Management over turbulence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Tourism</td>
<td>Japanese Hospitality culture and Communication I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaming Management</td>
<td>Japanese Hospitality culture and Communications II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibition Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Convention and Meeting Management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### General education subjects at HKPOLYU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HKPOLYU</th>
<th>General Education Subjects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Philosophical Judgment Domain</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical Thinking</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Aspects of Western Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Morality and Politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Science, Superstition and Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Law, Politics and Society</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Philosophy and Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understanding the Chinese Culture: its Philosophical Elements and Practical Implications</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ways of Chinese Wisdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Aesthetic Judgment Domain</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appreciation of Chinese Music</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Art and Aesthetics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Film Art and Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hong Kong Cinema</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appreciation of European Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appreciation of the Four Great Classical Chinese Novels</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Modern Chinese Fictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contemporary Chinese Fictions</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sexual Themes in Literature: East and West</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Representation of Gender and Sexuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Cantonese Opera</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Shakespeare and Love</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hong Kong Visual Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Social Meaning of Hollywood Genre Film</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Value Judgment Domain</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Social Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• World Issues and Human Responsibilities</td>
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<td>• Life and Death</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Culture and Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Worldviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Popular Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender and Ethics</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chinese Culture and Society</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Chinese Personality and Culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Culture in Comparative Perspective</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Culture, Media and Society</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sport and Leisure in Human Development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• The New Chinese Identities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Critical Issues in Hong Kong Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Gender Relations in Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Psychological Well Being in Chinese Culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Judgment Domain</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Monitoring the Changing Earth</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Energy and the Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Nuclear Perspectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exploration of the Cosmos</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Ecological Perspectives–The Challenge of our Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exploring the Psyche– the Inner Journey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Our Endangered Earth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Food Hygiene and Nutritional Health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Inquiry into Health, Disability and Culture</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interactive Entertainment Forms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media Literacy and Design Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The underlined subjects are directly related to ethics.*
Table 5: Core/compulsory subjects in higher diploma programme in SHTM at HKPOLYU

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Subjects</th>
<th>Hotel Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• English for Academic Purpose</td>
<td>• Introduction to Housekeeping Operational Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Hotel, Catering and Tourism Industries</td>
<td>• Introduction to Front Office Operational Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introduction to Hotel, Catering and Tourism Marketing</td>
<td>• Introduction to Hotel Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hotel, Catering and Tourism Information Technology</td>
<td>• Front Office and Housekeeping Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General Education</td>
<td>• Facility and Property Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• College Chinese</td>
<td>Catering Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Putonghua</td>
<td>• Introduction to Food Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management Principles in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Introduction to Food Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accounting in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Applied Food Service and Production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leisure Behaviour</td>
<td>• Food and Beverage Operations Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management Accounting in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Beverage Operations and Management in Catering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information System in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>Tourism Subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• English in the Workplace</td>
<td>• Introduction to Tourism Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Service Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Principles of Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human Resources Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism</td>
<td>• Introduction to Travel Agency Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stream Electives</td>
<td>• Tourism and Transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-stream Electives</td>
<td>• Event Management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The subjects offered to both degree and higher diploma students in the SHTM at HKPOLYU strongly suggest that the teaching of ethics, and hospitality ethics in particular, has not received the amount of attention that it should. It is disappointing to have to conclude that the only ethics subjects available to students are the three subjects offered by the Department of General Education.

2.14.2 School of Hotel Management (SHM) – The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Students of the SHM are required to complete a total of 99 credits to graduate, which includes 82 credits in hotel core and elective subjects, 15 credits in general education and 2 credits in physical education. The hotel core and elective subjects fall into the few main areas in the operation of hotels such as rooms division, food and beverage, human
resources, sales and marketing, accounting and finance and strategic planning. A review of the subject names (see Table 6) shows similar results to those for the SHTM at HKPOLYU in that there is no inclusion of either any core subject or elective on hospitality/general ethics.

Since The Chinese University of Hong Kong has a history of more than 38 years, it has a well-established general education department that offers more than 230 elective subjects. Surprisingly, only two subjects, namely, “Ethical Issues of Contemporary Society” and “Law, Ethics and Society”, are offered to students that fully discuss ethics and ethics issues. Due to the lack of a general education syllabus, subjects in other disciplines, such as philosophy, culture or history, may not have the word “ethics” in their title but may nevertheless include discussions of ethical issues concerning their respective areas. The same probably applies to the situation in SHTM at HKPOLYU as well. These subjects will not be considered in this study in an absolute sense as a single subject dedicated fully to the teaching of ethics. It is concluded that the chances of SHM students a receiving proper ethics education are equally as dismal within their three-year course of study as those of their counterparts in SHTM at HKPOLYU.
Table 6: Subjects in BBA programmes in SHM at CUHK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUHK Core/Compulsory Subjects</th>
<th>Electives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Management of Hospitality Business</td>
<td>• Human Resources Planning and Staffing for Hospitality Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic Quantitative Methods for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry</td>
<td>• Hospitality Real Estate Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Basic Economics for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry</td>
<td>• Hospitality Sales Force Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introductory Accounting I</td>
<td>• Financial Management and Cost Control for Hospitality Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Introductory Accounting II</td>
<td>• Seminar in Global Hospitality Management and Property Markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial Management</td>
<td>• Franchising and Multi-unit Management in the Hospitality Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Human Resources Management</td>
<td>• Property Investment and Feasibility Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality Facilities Planning, Development and Management</td>
<td>• Services Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality Strategic Management</td>
<td>• Training and Development for the Hospitality and Tourism Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Information System and E-commerce</td>
<td>• International Hospitality Business and Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Marketing Management</td>
<td>• Real Estate Valuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Management of Lodging Facilities</td>
<td>• Information Technology for Service Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality Organization Behaviour</td>
<td>• Convention and Meeting Planning Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hospitality Real Estate</td>
<td>• Entrepreneurship in the Hospitality Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Business and Hospitality Law</td>
<td>• Marketing Research for Service Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Travel and Tourism Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Service and Hospitality Quality Management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Food and Beverage Management</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

2.14.3 Department of Hotel, Service and Tourism Study (HoSTS) – Institute of Vocational Education

The Department of Hotel, Service and Tourism Study (HoSTS) has a relatively simple non-credit based course structure compared to both the SHTM at HKPOLYU and the SHM at CUHK. Its two awards, the higher diploma in Hotel and Catering Management and the higher diploma in Travel and Tourism Management, require students to complete 22 and 24 core subjects respectively, with neither electives nor general education subjects offered. The subjects listed in Table 7 show that there is no hotel/tourism ethics subject in the entire programme curriculum.
Developing an Ethics Curriculum for the Hong Kong Hospitality Industry

Table 7: Subjects in higher diploma programmes in HoSTS at IVE - Chai Wan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IVE – Chai Wan</th>
<th>HD in Hotel and Catering</th>
<th>HD in Travel and Tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• English and Communication I, II, III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Putonghua I, II, Business Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food Production</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food and Beverage Service</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information Systems and Operations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accommodation Operations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accounting and Finance Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food and Beverage Operations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personnel and Training Operations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management Studies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rooms Division Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sales and Marketing Operations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Financial Management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Food and Beverage Management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Human Resources Management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management for the Service Industry</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rooms Division Management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sales and Marketing Management</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• English and Communication I, II, III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Putonghua I, II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Business Environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Information Systems and Operations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tourism Operations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hospitality for the Tourism Industry</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Destination Studies and Tourism Guiding Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Air Transportation and Reservation Procedures</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Accounting and Finance Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personnel and Training Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sales and Marketing Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Destination Studies and Cultural Dimensions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Travel Agency Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Air Tariffs and Ticketing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Financial Management</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Human Resources Management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Management for the Service Industry</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Sales and Marketing Management</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tourism Events and Facilities Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Planning and Development for Sustainable Tourism</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To conclude the review of the programme structures of the three major hospitality and tourism programmes in Hong Kong, this researcher surmises that there is a severe lack of interest in providing ethics education to hospitality and tourism students. In light of the discussion above of the failure of the hospitality industry’s professional bodies to monitor standards and ethics in the industry, the need for a hospitality ethics curriculum is indisputable. After all, how can hospitality managers and workers be expected to operate in a professional and ethical manner that will protect the goodwill of the industry when both industry and educational bodies are shunning their responsibilities?
2.15 **Summary and conclusion**

In light of the review of the literature on curriculum development and hospitality ethics, it is noted that research into hospitality ethics education is fragmented with only a few studies having been conducted, certainly when compared with research into general business ethics and other areas of hospitality management, such as service quality, marketing and consumer behaviours, yield management and destination development.

Furthermore, the limited research into hospitality ethics was mostly carried out in the US (Whitney, 1990; Enghagen & Hott, 1992; Hall, 1992; Damitio & Schmidgall, 1993; Stevens & Fleckenstein, 1999; Vallen & Casado, 2000). The studies by Yeung (2000, 2001) and Yeung and Pine (2003) are probably among the very few studies that have examined hospitality ethics issues in the Asia Pacific region. Therefore, in view of the lack of research on hospitality ethics education, in particular in the Asia Pacific context, this study has the potential to contribute new perspectives and insights to the existing body of knowledge.

However, despite a general scarcity of research in many areas of hospitality ethics education, such as concerning its aims, course content, teaching methods and evaluation, this study will be confined to a few areas only. It will narrow its focus to 1) the investigation of current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong, 2) the assessment of the need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong and 3) the identification of barriers to the implementation of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. This narrowing of focus will help the researcher to solicit insights at greater depth from his respondents than would otherwise be possible. After this review of the literature relating to the problem statement and the objectives of the study, the next chapter will introduce the methodology used in this study.
Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As stated in previous chapters, the main goal of this study is to examine the issues that need to be considered in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry. Specifically, the objectives are to (1) investigate what are the current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong; (2) assess the need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes offered in Hong Kong; and (3) identify the barriers to the implementation of the teaching of ethics in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. This chapter describes the methodology that has been used to achieve these objectives. The term "methodology" refers to the way in which a researcher approaches the problems specified for study and seeks answers (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984).

The chapter discusses the following issues:

- research paradigm
- use of qualitative and quantitative research
- research design
- scope of the study
- sampling methods
- interviewing techniques
- types of interview questions
- data analysis
- coding and categorization methods
- issues in using qualitative research methods
- limitations of the study

3.2 Research paradigm

Many recent writers in education distinguish at least two fundamental paradigms of research (Keeves, 1988). The first paradigm, positivism, scientifically seeks the facts or
causes of social phenomena without taking into account the subjective states of individuals. Positivism searches for causes through quantitative methods such as questionnaires, inventories and demography, all of which produce data amenable to statistical analysis. In other words, positivism emphasizes empirical, quantifiable observations that lend themselves to analysis by means of mathematical tools (Walker & Evers, 1990).

The second paradigm, adopted by this study, is the interpretative paradigm. It is committed to understanding the complex world of life experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 1994). The interpretative paradigm begins with individuals and sets out to understand their interpretations of the world around them. All interpretative inquirers watch, listen, ask, record and examine. Since the task of the interpretivist is to capture the process of interpretation and to see things from other people's point of view (Cohen & Manion, 1994), this cannot be done without a thorough knowledge of the backgrounds of the participants and the contexts in which they exist. Thus, it is the researcher who constructs the "reality", which is why such studies are called "interpretative" (Eichelberger, 1989). The interpretative paradigm accords with the nature of what this study seeks to achieve, i.e., to understand how some people interpret a complex phenomenon in the hospitality industry from their own perspective.

The following comparison of qualitative and quantitative research methods provides further reasons for preferring the interpretative paradigm to the positivist for this study.

3.3 Use of qualitative and quantitative research

Quantitative methods have traditionally been a core approach to research, usually through "survey research". Burns and Bush (2000) define survey research as research involving the use of structured questions where the response options have been predetermined and a large number of respondents are involved. This method usually deals with a sizeable representative sample of the population and a formalized procedure for gathering data to reduce bias and increase "rigour". It asserts that the phenomenon under consideration is empirically verifiable and observable by both the researcher and the community. According to Mason and Bramble (1997), quantitative research uses measurements and statistical
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models familiar to many natural and physical scientists and involves quantification of the phenomena under study, as in the physical sciences.

However, both qualitative and quantitative research have philosophical foundations, characteristics and techniques that make them ideally suited for the exploration of some questions but inadequate for others. This study decided not to adopt quantitative methods mainly due to one of its major pitfalls. As Walle (1997) points out, the biggest trap of this method arises in situations where it applies scientific rigour in an intellectual vacuum and prevents a meaningful consideration of the social context of the behaviour studied. The philosophy underlying the quantitative method tends to leave out ideas of freedom, choice and moral responsibility. It fails to take into account people's unique ability to interpret their experiences and construct their own meanings (Burns, 1994). Since the primary aim of this study requires the exploration of the inner feelings, insights and thoughts of various hospitality stakeholders concerning a complex phenomenon in the industry, the use of qualitative methods is deemed to be more appropriate since it is focused on the "why" questions instead of the "what" questions. By contrast, the qualitative method helps the researcher to gather fresh and different opinions, and provides details of phenomena that are difficult to capture with quantitative methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Most importantly, the use of qualitative methods provides the researcher with the ability to probe deeply to uncover subtle and complex issues (Johns & Lee-Ross, 1998). Conversely, to use quantitative methods in this study would limit the areas of inquiry and lead to the possibility of oversimplifying reality by only examining phenomena as an exercise of rigorous data gathering.

Sometimes the choice of topic itself dictates the choice of research method(s) (Clark, Riley, Wilkie and Wood, 1998). This is true in the case of this study. The characteristics of the current research problem clearly lend themselves more to qualitative types of research because the study attempts to uncover the nature of people's experiences and perceptions of a phenomenon. The complexity of the issues concerned requires that the researcher be able to ask questions freely. Qualitative research methods can be applied to various disciplines, fields and subject matters. They are multi-method in focus, involving an
interpretative, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study objects in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the experiences of the people that are studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative analysis can add totally new dimensions to an issue or question under study and often serves to broaden the researcher's views (Clark, Riley, Wilkie and Wood, 1998). As this research is exploratory, with no prior study conducted to determine the real scope of the problem concerned and the course of action to be taken, qualitative research is believed to be apposite here. Qualitative research is deemed useful when previous research into the phenomena under study is scant (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It can provide a basis for further research, for example, to define certain concepts and to formulate hypotheses. The purpose of qualitative research is sometimes to provide information and background for developing further quantitative research (Lewis et al., 1995).

The purpose of qualitative studies is often to explore the full range of views held by informants and to develop the range of issues that need to be addressed (Ritchie & Goelder, 1994) in a search for meaning, understanding and insights into a given phenomenon. Qualitative research permits the researcher to study selected issues, cases or events in depth through direct quotation and careful description of situations, events, people, interactions and observed behaviours (Patton, 1987). The purpose of qualitative research generally is not to generalize, as in a quantitative study, and generalization is also not the intention of this study. To recapitulate, this study has employed qualitative methods because, as Marshall and Rossman (1999) suggest, its use is recommended for research that cannot be done experimentally for practical or ethical reasons, research that investigates in-depth complexities and processes, and research for which relevant variables have yet to be identified.

3.4 Research design

Because of the exploratory nature of the research topic, this study has adopted a qualitative, inductive and descriptive approach. This is believed to be the most appropriate approach
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given the characteristics of the study. The study adopted a cross-sectional design that involved once-only data collection from a number of respondents. In qualitative research, there are three kinds of data collection methods: (1) in-depth, open-ended interview; (2) direct observation; and (3) written documents, including open-ended written items on questionnaires, personal diaries, and programme records.

The method of direct observation was found unsuitable because this study required the investigation of the less observable characteristics of people, such as values, goals, attitudes and preferences. The study also rejected the use of written documents due to the severe scarcity of primary and secondary data on the phenomenon under study. Of the three data collection methods listed above, this study chose the first type, that is, in-depth and open-ended interview. This was considered to be the most effective method for this study. As Chacko and Nebel (1991) state, the in-depth and open-ended interview enables the researcher to obtain data directly from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge concerning the issue under discussion.

Besides being in-depth and open-ended, the interviews were conducted face-to-face on an individual basis because interaction in a group setting, such as in the form of a focus group, was not considered desirable due to the sensitivity of the research topic. Untrue answers might be gathered in a group setting as respondents would be cautious in their reply and the words used. The interviews usually lasted about one and a half hours. Each respondent was subsequently contacted once or twice by telephone in order to solicit more thoughts and opinions as well as to clarify any issues if necessary. As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) describe it, qualitative interviewing is flexible and dynamic. It is non-directive, unstructured, non-standardized and open-ended interviewing geared towards understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations, as expressed in their own words.

By adopting this method, the researcher has been a part of the “research tool” as well. This role entailed not merely obtaining answers, but learning what questions to ask and how to ask them. As a qualitative research approach, open-ended interviewing has much in
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common with participant observation. Like observers, the researcher tried to establish rapport with the informants. Non-directive questions were asked early in the interview and the researcher learned what was important to the informants before focusing the research questions. This helped to capture the respondents’ feelings and perceptions, and allowed them to express what they wanted and not what the researcher wanted.

As Best and Kahn (1986) state, with a skilful interviewer the interview is often superior to other data-gathering methods. One obvious reason is that people are usually more willing to talk than to write. Certain types of confidential information may be obtained that an individual may be reluctant to put in writing. Other advantages include being able to follow through with clarifying questions; to evaluate the sincerity and insight of interviewees; to check the truthfulness of responses; and to stimulate the respondent’s insight into his or her own experiences.

The use of interviews is also strongly supported by LeCompte et al. (1992), who reiterate that interviews are superior to less obtrusive measures like questionnaires because the researcher guides the revelation of information through elicitation and personal interaction. Thus the investigation is more likely to obtain data addressing the questions asked in the study.

Considering the various advantages and benefits that interviews can bring, the researcher felt strongly that they were more appropriate for this study.

3.5 Scope of study

As stated above, this study seeks 1) to investigate current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong, 2) to assess the need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong and 3) to identify the barriers to the implementation of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. The interviews with hospitality stakeholders and the analysis of the interview data gathered form the few essential steps needed in the curriculum development process that sometimes equate to needs assessment and situation analysis. In this regard, Kanji and Tambi (1999) state that
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curriculum development may affect students, teaching staff, parents, funding bodies, employers and others. Yet, given the limited time, funding and resources available, this study was only able to conduct in-depth interviews with three types of individuals who were identified as key stakeholders and thus as suitable informants. They were hospitality industry practitioners, hospitality educators and hospitality students in higher education in Hong Kong. The reasoning behind their choice as respondents is that these three types of hospitality industry participant seem to be the most important of all.

To argue for the choice of these three groups, the work by Marsh (1997) and Conaway and Fernandez (2000) is cited, who stress the importance of industry involvement as educators seldom take into account the views and perspectives of the industry when developing curriculum structures and teaching methods. They point to the fact that educators do not have all the knowledge and skills needed to prepare their students for their work environment and therefore industry players must take up a key role in curriculum design. It is vital to involve people from industry to provide feedback in relation to what educators perceive to be the needs, knowledge and skills that a curriculum should address and the things a student should know. As Kaufman and English (1981) put it, the simple truth is that what the schools do and what the schools accomplish are of concern to those who depend on the schools. External referents such as industry practitioners and taxpayers should be the starting place for functional and useful educational planning, design, implementation and evaluation. It will be easier for graduates to become integrated into industry if they are able to exhibit the behaviours and attitudes expected of them.

In the curriculum design process it is also crucial to understand students’ perceptions and needs. Dultz (1999) agrees that the learning profile of students is important in the curriculum design process. A learning profile is a list of students’ learning needs, interests and inclinations produced mainly by students, curriculum designers, teachers and parents. Dultz emphasizes that a collective approach can achieve far more satisfactory results. With the students’ participation, curriculum designers can have better and clearer ideas to determine areas that reflect their aspiration, enhance their self-development and so tailor the curriculum to what students need. Having interviewed the hospitality students in this
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study, the researcher was able to understand the students' perceptions of and orientations towards ethics, and thus their awareness of the research issues. Therefore, if curriculum planners are serious about empowerment in education, students must be involved and be encouraged to voice their concerns, opinions and plans as learners. Educators have the obligation to consult the consumers of their services, the students (Allen, 1995; Marsh, 1997).

Third, educators are considered one of the key stakeholders in this study as they play a central role in developing a curriculum (Elliott, 1998). It is believed that there can be no curriculum development without the professional involvement of teachers. In addition, curriculum improvement will stand or fall by the actions of individual educators (Holt, 1987; Walker, 1988). If change strategies attempt to manipulate educators against their will, they will almost inevitably fail. However, if educators are drawn in from the beginning of a planning process, it is more likely that a newly-developed curriculum will be accepted. Print (1993) elaborates that educators have increasingly acted in four curriculum decision-making roles: as implementers, adapters, developers and researchers.

Finally, Pratt (1994) suggests that the implementation of curriculum change must be facilitated by establishing a climate of trust among the various interested groups. The process must ensure that change meets recognized needs, parties are consulted, clear goals are established, support systems are developed, and in-service training and needed resources are provided.

The hotel industry practitioners included in this study were staff of member hotels of the Hong Kong Hotels Association. Non-member hotels were excluded because they are usually small hourly hotels, hostels or motels. The participants in the group of hospitality educators and students were drawn from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Details of the SHTM are given above in Chapter 1.
Apart from the three types of stakeholder discussed, some key informants from the hospitality industry and from education were also identified for interviews. Key informants are defined as individuals who possess special knowledge, experience, information, status or communication skills and are willing to share their insights with the researcher (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Gilchrist & Williams, 1995). The methodology of having key informants is very important in a study where archival material is scarce. Other researchers have also suggested that informants be selected not for what they represent but for their knowledge about the issue at hand and their willingness to communicate. The key informants in this study included the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Hotels Association, the General Manager of Industry Training and Human Resources of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, the Chairman of the Training and Education Committee of the Hong Kong Hotels Association, the former Head of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the Chairperson of the SHTM Students Association.

3.6 Sampling methods

Despite the best efforts and intentions of a researcher he or she cannot study everyone, everywhere or doing everything (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Indeed, the choice of participants places limits on the conclusions any study can draw, and how confident the researcher and others feel about the results, and how useful its results might be. Sampling is a crucial step for setting up a platform for later analysis.

Qualitative samples tend to be selected rather than random (Kuzel, 1992; Morse, 1994). Thus this study adopted a non-probabilistic, systematic sampling method. Despite a sample not being representative of the larger population, it is perfectly adequate if the study does not generalize from its findings beyond the sample (Bailey, 1994), as in this study. For the hospitality industry practitioners a “snowball sampling” method was used. In the first stage of interviewing, two key informants with the requisite characteristics, such as having prominent industry status, immense knowledge of the hospitality industry and a strong network involving the hospitality education institutes, were identified and interviewed. For this purpose, Mr James Lu, the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Hotels Association, and Mr Gilbert Cheung, the General Manager of Industry Training and Human Resources
of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, were chosen. They later identified others who qualified as respondents. The second stage of interviewing involved interviewing those persons who had been mentioned to the researcher as possible respondents, who in turn suggested more potential participants in the third stage, and so on. Some authors have referred to snowball sampling as “chain referral sampling” (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Through this sampling method, the study interviewed 10 people who were working in the hospitality industry at various levels, including in key positions such as General Manager, Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, Executive Housekeeper and Security Manager. It was intended that the respondents cover the various major departments in a hotel.

For the group of hospitality educators the study interviewed six academic staff from the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. The respondents comprised teaching staff from various teaching areas of hotel operations, such as Food and Beverage, Rooms Division Management, Sales and Marketing, Accounting and Finance, and Human Resources. This sampling method could be considered as one that is “purposefully stratified”.

Concerning the group of hospitality students, the study had to take into account that there are three specializations in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management, namely, Hotel Management, Catering Management and Tourism Management. This study interviewed a total of six degree students who were majoring in hotel management. Except for the Chairperson of the Student Association, the snowball sampling method was adopted to recruit student respondents.

The number of interviewees for each type of stakeholder changed as the study progressed. The study kept interviewing until it had reached a “theoretical saturation” point where additional interviews did not yield additional insights. Glaser and Strauss (1967) refer to this procedure as “theoretical sampling”, whereby researchers consciously select additional cases to be studied according to the potential for developing new insights or expanding and refining those already gained. It is said that such research should maximize variation in the additional cases selected in order to improve the reliability of theoretical insights.
3.7 Interviewing techniques

The hallmark of qualitative interviewing is learning about what is important in the minds of informants, namely, their meanings, perspectives and definitions, and how they view, categorize and experience the world (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). In order to achieve this, the researcher asked some general questions prior to starting the interviews to avoid pushing his agenda too early in the interview. The researcher refrained from asking direct questions initially to avoid limiting the respondents to what he saw as the important issues since this would have made it difficult, if not impossible, to get at how they really saw things.

In structuring the interviews, the researcher constructed a situation that resembled those in which people naturally talk to each other about important things. The researcher tried to develop an open and honest relationship with the respondents so that the interviews were relaxed and conversational. As Taylor and Bogdan (1984) describe it, the key to collecting data is the relationship that develops over time between interviewer and informant. During the interviews, probing techniques were largely used to obtain details and clarification of the interviewees' experiences and the meanings they attached to those experiences. To facilitate the free flow of ideas and information, interviews were conducted in Chinese if the respondents' native language was Chinese. All interviews were tape-recorded.

3.8 Research and interview questions

Although the interviews were designed along the lines of natural interaction and a free flow of information at the beginning of the interview, the interviewer maintained an in-depth, open-ended but semi-structured approach to ensure that the direction of the interviews would not greatly deviate from the stated objectives to be accomplished.

A semi-structured interview is based on some structure and planning on the part of the interviewer but at the same time allowing flexibility in the questions to be asked of the interviewees (Fisher et al., 1996). Since the primary objective of this study was to investigate the perceptions of current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong by key stakeholders in the hospitality industry and in hospitality education as well as the need for and barriers to the implementation of an hospitality ethics curriculum, the
interviews attempted to gather first-hand information to answer the research questions, be they main, specific or subsidiary questions. Apart from the research questions listed below, the researcher originally had included one more subsidiary research question under Specific Research Question 2 but this was deleted later. The subsidiary research question was to assess the ethical standards of hospitality students and graduates. This question was assumed to help determine the need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes. However, the industry practitioners could not identify any colleagues or subordinates who were hospitality school graduates. Furthermore, the educators were also unable to comment on the issue because they had not been paying attention to the ethical behaviour of their students. The final set of research questions therefore was as stated above in Section 1.9, which is repeated here for ease of reference:

Main Research Question:

- What considerations apply in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum for the Hong Kong hospitality industry as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Specific Research Question 1:

- What are the current issues concerning ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

1.1 How do the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students perceive the issue of ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?

1.2 What are the common ethical issues that the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students perceive in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?

1.3 What are the mechanisms currently adopted by hotels in Hong Kong to maintain ethical standards in their organizations as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Specific Research Question 2:
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- Is there a need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

2.1 What are the views of the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students on solving the ethical problems in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?

2.2 What are the values of the people in Hong Kong nowadays as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

2.3 What are the factors affecting the ethical beliefs and values of people as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

2.4 What is the degree of need and importance for the implementation of an ethics curriculum in a hospitality programme in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students?

Specific Research Question 3:

- What are the barriers to the implementation of ethics teaching in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong as perceived by the hospitality educators?

Subsidiary Research Questions:

3.1 What is the degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum in their hospitality programme as perceived by the hospitality educators and students?

3.2 What are the barriers that hinder the teaching of ethics in their hospitality programme as perceived by the hospitality educators?

In order to provide answers to the above research questions, whether main, specific or subsidiary, the researcher lead the interviews by asking the following semi-structured interview questions:

1. How is the hotel industry in Hong Kong nowadays?

2. What are the problems that the hotel industry in Hong Kong is facing currently?

3. What are your views on the ethical issues in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?
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4. What are the ethical issues in the hotel industry in Hong Kong?
5. What are the ethical issues that are more common in Hong Kong?
6. Are ethical problems serious or not serious in Hong Kong? Why?
7. What are the current mechanisms that the hotel industry in Hong Kong is adopting to maintain work ethics?
8. What do you think about these mechanisms?
9. What are additional methods that can further enhance the work ethics and professionalism of hotel employees?
10. What do you think about the ethical standards of hospitality graduates and students nowadays?
11. What are the criteria to be successful hospitality managers?
12. What are your views on hospitality institutes in higher education providing ethics education to students?
13. How do you describe the values of people in Hong Kong nowadays?
14. What are the factors that influence the values of individuals in Hong Kong?
15. Which factor is more important than the others in term of influence?
16. What is the degree of inclusion of ethics teaching in the hospitality programmes?
17. What do you think about the current provision of ethics education in hospitality programmes in Hong Kong?
18. What is the degree of inclusion of ethics teaching in the subjects that you teach?
19. What are the barriers to implement ethics teaching in your programme?
20. Which barrier is more critical than the others? Why?
21. What is the degree of inclusion of ethics teaching in the primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong?

Of the above interview questions, Questions 1 to 15 were asked of the three groups of respondents. Questions 16 and 17 were asked of the educators and students only since the industry practitioners lack knowledge relevant to these questions. Questions 18 to 20 were asked of the educators only since both industry practitioners and students lack knowledge about curriculum administration and design in the relevant programmes. Question 21 is
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asked of the students only because both industry practitioners and educators lack knowledge of the current curriculum in primary and secondary schools.

3.9 Analysis of the data

Data analysis is the process of examining, categorizing, tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence (Yin, 1994). Instead of using deductive analysis to test hypotheses, this study has adopted an inductive approach to data analysis. It is suitable when some specific problem, question or issue is the focus of research, such as in this study. Data are collected and analysed to develop a descriptive model that encompasses all cases of the phenomena being investigated. The procedure is used extensively in open-ended interviewing (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). In other words, this type of analysis will first gather the data and then study them inductively, thereby being in a position to collect and study unanticipated outcomes, develop an understanding of the data and draw generalizations from them (Borg & Gall, 1989).

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is said to have no one standard approach to analysing data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In this study, the rule followed in the analysis of data was that ideas were refined and revised in the light of the information gathered. It is a research method that emphasizes processes and meanings. It seeks to explain how social experience is created and how it is given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A key point of the data analysis in this study is that it was alternated with data collection. Qualitative research is a mixture of the rational, exploitative and intuitive, where the skills and experience of the researcher play an important role in the analysis of data (Grauri et al., 1995).

In analysing the data, the researcher started by transcribing all the tape-recorded interviews. After sorting out the field notes and transcribing a series of conversations verbatim, the researcher proceeded to think about explaining and evaluating the data. When doing so, the researcher basically followed some of the steps discussed by Taylor and Bogdan (1984) for analysing interview data.
First, the researcher thoroughly familiarized himself with the interview materials before attempting to develop any kind of systematic analysis. The processes of listening to tapes, reading and re-reading the transcripts gave the researcher a sense of their coherence as a whole. A researcher should know his data inside out before attempting to engage in analysis.

Second, the researcher moved backwards and forwards between description and explanation, amidst the raw data contained in the field notes and transcripts, then back to analyse, synthesize, and formulate what had been found.

Third, the researcher considered the very general units of meaning that were revealed to be the broad themes and issues that recurred frequently in the interviews. It was important to search through the data for emerging themes or patterns. As Spradley (1980) says, some patterns will stand out in the data while other patterns will not be apparent.

Fourth, the researcher isolated the general units of meaning found in the interviews and then held them up to see whether they threw light on the research topic. Next the researcher explored in greater depth the major themes that had emerged from the data and the ways in which these related to the research topic in particular.

In doing so, the researcher has tried to free himself from all presuppositions about the phenomena in order to see what they were made up of. This method of phenomenological reduction refers to suspending one's belief in the world and abandoning all prejudgments and preconceptions of phenomena so that nothing may be taken as given. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that researchers should remain open-minded and not reject evidence when it appears. Finally, the researcher followed up interviews with phone calls for clarification and further analysed the data to develop checks, and tried to come up with reasonable conclusions based on the majority of the data.
3.10 Coding and categorizing

Just naming or classifying what is collected is usually not enough; in qualitative research, codes have to be used for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study. Codes are usually attached to chunks of varying size—words, phrases, sentences or whole paragraphs, connected or unconnected to a specific setting (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In other words, coding is a systematic way of developing and refining interpretations of the data. The coding process involves bringing together and analysing all the data bearing on themes, ideas, concepts, interpretations and propositions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). What are initially vague ideas and hunches are refined, expanded, discarded or fully developed during this stage of the analysis. Therefore, in view of the importance for a study to have a good system of coding and analysing its data, this study decided to adopt an open coding approach to help understand the patterns, recurrences of themes and plausible explanations found in the data collected. As Kaplan (1964) remarks, the bedrock of inquiry is the researcher's quest for “repeatable regularities”. Some of the codes used in this study are “perception/prac”, “perception/edc” and “perception/stud”; these indicate that given chunks of data, usually paragraphs, are related to the general perceptions of the ethical issues in the hotel industry in Hong Kong held by the practitioners, educators and students respectively. Other examples include “iss/prac”, “iss/edu” and “iss/stud”; these represent the common ethical issues discussed by the practitioners, educators and students. These codes were placed in the right-hand margin of chunks of data, usually paragraphs.

By adopting an open coding system, this study was able to list every theme, concept, interpretation, typology and proposition identified or developed during the initial analysis. Some of the themes identified under the heading “common ethical issues in the hotel industry in Hong Kong” include “discrimination”, “bribery”, “fraud” and “abuse of guanxi”. When writing down the ideas, the researcher tried to be as specific as possible so it would become apparent what kind of data would fit into each theme.

As categories of meaning emerged, the researcher searched for those that had internal convergence and external divergence (Guba, 1978), that is, categories that were internally
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consistent but distinct from one another. For example, some of the categories identified are "ethical problems are common and serious", "ethical problems are common but not serious", "degree of inclusion is high" and "degree of inclusion is low". Here the researcher did not search for the exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories of the statistician, but instead sought to identify the salient, grounded categories of meaning held by the participants. When the major coding categories had been identified, the researcher went over the list once more to identify those categories that overlapped with others and could be combined.

Basically, in this study all field notes and transcripts were coded by placing a word corresponding to each category in the margin. Both positive and negative incidents related to a given category were coded. As the coding of the data continued, the researcher refined the coding scheme by adding, collapsing, expanding and redefining the categories. The fundamental rule of coding in this study was to make the codes fit the data and not vice versa. Sorting the data into the coding categories was a non-interpretative and mechanical operation (Drass, 1980). To illustrate the coding system, the following two paragraphs are views expressed by two different respondents, with codes placed in the right-hand margin of the chunks of data. The first paragraph is a transcription of views expressed by Ray Pine as an example of ethical issues in the hotel industry in Hong Kong. The code "iss/edu/prostitution/bribery" denotes that it is an ethical issue discussed by hospitality educators. The issue relates to prostitution, which comes under the ethical theme "bribery". The second paragraph is a transcription of views expressed by Alda Wong concerning the value system of people in Hong Kong. The code "value/students/social status conscious" is assigned to show that social status consciousness is a value of people in Hong Kong described by hospitality students.

Prostitutes are seen in some hotels and you know where to go. But it is not limited to Hong Kong. You see it more in hotels in other countries where you find prostitutes everywhere. I have to assume that there must be some sorts of collusion between the front office and housekeeping that allow these people to come in. Otherwise, they would not be able to get access to the hotels. There are not much security between the public areas and the guest...
room floors. But again, I don't know if it is a mass problem in Hong Kong.
(Ray Pine)

People will evaluate someone based on the money they have, the car they drive and the title of their jobs. People look down on others who are poor or not well-educated. For example, there is a news recently in the newspaper that a man who is poor committed suicide. It is interesting to see if that person who dies is a professional, a doctor or a lawyer, people who feel pity for them but not the poor man. People in Hong Kong have that class distinction. (Alda Wong)

3.11 Issues of qualitative research

Despite both qualitative and quantitative research methods having their strengths, many studies (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Hall & Jenkins, 1995; Sarantakos, 1998) criticize qualitative research as having problems of subjectivity, representativeness and generalization, and as lacking validity, reliability and rigour. However, some of these accusations are quite unjust or can easily be countered.

3.11.1 Problem of subjectivity

All research is selective and to an extent, subjective. It is the essence of qualitative research to examine what the world experiences and the important realities of the people researched are as they are perceived by them (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Perception is subjective by nature. In qualitative research, subjectivity is unavoidable and in fact should not be avoided. All social study requires the researcher to have a personal position, a platform from which to critically evaluate the phenomenon under scrutiny.

In effect, subjectivity is also found in quantitative research, for example, in questionnaire surveys. Many survey questions are "biased" because the words used and choices of answers made available to respondents are subjectively pre-determined and boundary-defined by the researchers. Furthermore, respondents may subjectively interpret the
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questions, categories and language used in the questionnaire (Mays & Pope, 1995). Subjectivity therefore is found in both qualitative and quantitative research.

3.11.2 Lack of rigour
Many qualitative studies are criticized for lacking rigour. However, lack of rigour is usually found when a researcher neglects to give adequate descriptions of his assumptions and methods, particularly with regard to data analysis. Rigour is especially important in the data collection and analysis stages (Mays and Pope, 1995). To ensure rigour, this study has employed a stringent strategy of systematic and self-conscious research design, data collection, interpretation and communication.

3.11.3 Problem of “trustworthiness” or validity and reliability
According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), traditional research defines internal validity as the extent to which a researcher’s observations and measurements are true descriptions of a particular reality. In qualitative research, the term “trustworthiness” is sometimes used to refer to validity and reliability and is thought to be more appropriate terminology. The term trustworthiness signifies a different set of assumptions about research purposes than the term validity. This study continues to use trustworthiness as equivalent to validity and reliability.

To ensure trustworthiness, the researcher has tried to maintain an “audit trail” by keeping meticulous records of interviews and by documenting the process of analysis in detail. The researcher has kept all records regarding the invitation letters, emails or telephone calls to the key informants or referrals for interviews, the dates of their replies, and any subsequent telephone calls or emails made before the actual interviews took place. In addition, details of the dates, times and venues of all interviews, the environment in which the interviews took place, the duration of the interviews, and any disrupting events occurring during the interviews, such as telephone calls or somebody walking in, were noted. Most important of all, all interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed to enhance the reliability of the data analysis.
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Regarding the issue of validity, it is in fact a strength of a qualitative study since it aims to explore a problem or describe a setting, a process, a social group or a pattern of interaction (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is said that an in-depth description showing the complexities of variables and interactions will be so embedded with data derived from the setting that it cannot help but be valid. Within the parameters of a given setting, population and theoretical framework, the research will thus be valid.

The term “triangulation” refers to a combination of methods or sources of data in a single study (Denzin, 1978; Patton, 1987). It is one way of guarding against researcher bias and to check out accounts from different informants. Thus this study has adopted an approach of triangulation to data collection in which evidence is deliberately sought from different stakeholders of the hospitality industry and hospitality education. This is a type of triangulation that brings more than one source of data to bear on a single issue. It is said that data from different sources can be used to corroborate, elaborate or illuminate the research in question (Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Pollitt et al., 1990).

Whilst qualitative interviewers try to develop an open and honest relationship with respondents, the current researcher has tried to identify exaggerations and distortions in their stories. People may hide important facts about themselves in everyday life and lie a bit and cheat a bit, and researchers have the responsibility of imposing crosschecks on informants’ stories. The informants’ statements should be examined for consistency between different accounts of the same event or experience (Weppner, 1977). Approaching the issue of trustworthiness from the other end so to speak, the researcher asked the respondents to read his draft reports as a check on the trustworthiness of the results. Drafts and findings were fed back to the participants to see if they regarded the interpretations as a reasonable account of their experience. This is called “member checking”. In this sense, the informants act as judges, evaluating the major findings of a study (Denzin, 1978). This is one of the most common techniques to ensure trustworthiness in qualitative research (McKeganey & Bloor, 1981).
3.11.4 Problem of representativeness and generalizability
To confront the allegation of lack of representativeness, one has to understand that statistical representativeness is not a prime requirement in qualitative research since the objective is to understand social processes (Mason, 1996). The sampling in a qualitative study may be perfectly adequate as long as the sampling method is systematic with the aim of identifying specific groups of people who either possess characteristics or live in circumstances that are relevant to the social phenomenon being studied, as in the case of this study.

The researcher deliberately chose the three types of informant and selected key informants with access to important sources of knowledge. The participants in this study, that is, the hospitality practitioners, educators and students, enabled the researcher to explore a particular aspect of behaviour relevant to the research. This is acceptable when a study has no desire to generalize its findings beyond the respondents (Bailey, 1994). Whether or not the sample is big enough to be statistically representative of a total population is not a major concern. Though not statistically representative, such a sample is theoretically informed and relevant to the research questions. The sample in this study also minimized possible bias arising from selecting a sample on the basis of convenience.

Furthermore, despite it being purposeful and non-probabilistic, the theoretical sampling approach used in this study, as mentioned above in Section 3.6, is highly acceptable in qualitative research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). According to Bertaux (1981), a research study can take in samples until it reaches the theory-saturation point. This is the point at which the researcher has a picture of what is going on and he can generate an appropriate explanation for the data, which is when the data begins to stop telling the researcher anything new about the social process under scrutiny.

3.12 Limitation of the study
Although the methodology adopted in this study is carefully and systematically designed, it is not without its limitations.
First, owing to the time-consuming nature of non-directive, in-depth interviews, this study is relatively small; in light of this, the study will not generalize the findings beyond the respondents. However, readers are invited to make generalization for themselves by comparing the situation described in the research with their own situations.

Second, since most interviews were conducted in Chinese and subsequently translated and transcribed into English, there are limitations due to translation. The accuracy and the use of words might not perfectly reflect the exact meanings of the respondents despite the transcriptions being provided to respondents for the purpose of validity checking and verification.

Third, due to the extreme sensitivity of the topic issue, the respondents might not have totally disclosed their true feelings and opinions despite all interviews having been conducted on an individual basis. Fourth, idiosyncratic errors, memory failure, inaccurate recall and distortions by the respondents might have jeopardized the validity and reliability of the result. Fifth, the severe lack of primary data such as direct evidence of unethical behaviour and past studies on the research topic have made it difficult for the researcher to conceptualize a solid theoretical framework for this study. Finally, the use of written documents for the purpose of triangulation was not feasible in this study.
Chapter 4: Analysis of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the analysis of the interview data, beginning with a profile of the respondents, followed by a report of the major themes and concepts identified in the data given in response to the nine subsidiary research questions listed under the three specific research questions (see Section 1.7). These themes and concepts provide considerable insights into the nature and complexity of the ethics issue in the hotel industry in Hong Kong.

4.2 Profile of respondents

To collect the primary data, the study interviewed a total of ten industry practitioners, six hospitality educators and six hospitality students. The figures include key informants. The particulars of the three groups of respondents are given below.

4.2.1 Hospitality industry practitioners

To find hospitality industry practitioners as respondents, the snowball sampling method was adopted. However, to enlist the participation of the first respondent, James Lu, the executive director of the Hong Kong Hotels Association, an unsolicited letter was sent to him, asking if he would be interested in being interviewed for this study. In the subsequent interview, Mr Lu was then asked to refer the researcher to another industry practitioner whom he considered appropriate. The snowball referral stopped when the research reached “theoretical saturation”. Collectively speaking, the ten industry practitioners interviewed represent a strong team of hoteliers in Hong Kong. A majority have over fifteen years of hotel work experience and are currently holding key positions in their respective organizations. Their views and perceptions provide valuable insights into the issue of ethics in the hotel industry. Individually, each respondent represents one major department in a hotel, such as human resources, housekeeping, food and beverage, security, finance and purchasing. This ensured that a wide range of views were solicited.
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- James Lu (JL) is the executive director of the Hong Kong Hotels Association (HKHA). Before joining the HKHA in 1996, he worked for the Hong Kong Tourism Board (previously called the Hong Kong Tourists Association) as its deputy director for ten years. He is one of the key informants in this study.

- Gilbert Cheung (GC) is presently the general manager of industry training and human resources of the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB). He is identified as one of the key informants because of his enormous experience in the industry, including in the hotel sector. He has worked for the Hyatt International Corporation (HIC) for eleven years in different countries, including Hawaii, Guam and China. After leaving the HIC in 1994, Mr Cheung was appointed as the training and recruitment manager for the Peninsula Hotels Group for eight years. He is currently undertaking doctorate degree studies with the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

- Angelina Lee (AL) is the director of human resources for the Hyatt Regency Hong Kong. She has been working in the hotel industry for nearly twenty-three years. Currently, she is the chairperson of the training and education committee of the Hong Kong Hotels Association. She is also one of the key informants in this study.

- Dan Lee (DL) is the general manager of the Newton Hotel Hong Kong and also a certified hotel administrator of the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

- Surlina Yin (SY), the director of human resources of the Century Hotel Hong Kong, has twelve years of hotel work experience. Before joining the Century Hotel Hong Kong, she held the same title with the Century Park Hotel Bangkok. She is an MBA graduate of Griffith University and a part-time lecturer on the undergraduate programme in hospitality management that is jointly offered by the School of Professional and Continuing Education of the Hong Kong University and the University of Strathclyde.
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- Paul Wong (PW) is the security manager of the Eaton Hotel Hong Kong. With a total of eighteen years of hotel work experience, he first joined the security department of the Sheraton Hong Kong Hotel and Towers in 1983.

- Clive Cheng (CC) has been the executive housekeeper of the Harbour Plaza Hong Kong since 1992 when the hotel was first opened. His career in the housekeeping department started in 1985 when he was employed by the Hilton Hotel Hong Kong as a room attendant.

- Hubert Hui (HH) joined the South China Hotel Hong Kong as the manager of food and beverage in 1999. He has twenty years of hotel work experience.

- Raymond Yeung (RY) is the administrative controller of the Metropark Hotel Hong Kong. He has approximately twenty years of hotel experience, specializing in accounting and control.

- Ida Yiu (IY) has been working as the senior purchasing executive of the Park Hotel Hong Kong since 1996.

4.2.2 Hospitality educators
The snowball sampling method was also adopted to find hospitality educators as respondents. Yet, the first interviewee (also a key informant), Ray Pine, was purposely identified because of his previous role as the Head of the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Subsequently, he was asked to refer the researcher to another academic staff member for the purpose of being interviewed. The second respondent had to come from another teaching area. As seen from the personal particulars below, the range of teaching areas include strategic management, food and beverage, marketing and sales, human resources, information technology and housekeeping. All of the respondents also had strong industry work experience prior to joining academia. The respondents represent different levels of seniority, ranging from professor to assistant professor, senior lecturer and lecturer. This ensured that a wide spectrum of views and
experience is represented in the study. Referrals were no longer asked for when the study reached “theoretical saturation”.

- Ray Pine (RP) started his academic career in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University in 1987. He is a member of the World Tourism Organization Education Council and the Tourism Strategy Group of the Tourism Commission, an arm of The Hong Kong SAR Government. Prior to this, he worked in the hospital catering sector in England. Since the current Head of School is newly appointed from US and thus not familiar with the situation in Hong Kong, Ray Pine, as the former Head of School, was considered more appropriate as a key informant in this study.

- Norman Au (NA), an assistant professor in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, has been teaching information system management for hotel and tourism since 1993. Before joining academia, Mr Au worked in the information technology departments of the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, Gardner Merchant Catering Limited and the Hilton Hotel London. He is currently a part-time PhD student.

- Mei Ng (MN) has been a lecturer in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University since 1992. She mainly teaches courses related to food and beverage operations and is currently the associate programme leader of the higher diploma and degree programmes. Before joining the university, Ms Ng accumulated tremendous food and beverage work experience in different countries, such as Malaysia, Australia and the UK. Some of the companies that she used to work for include the Park Hyatt Canberra, the Park Royal Sydney, the Repulse Bay Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.

- Billie Chow (BC) has been working in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University as a lecturer since 1993. She has diverse teaching responsibilities that include housekeeping, food and
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beverage and tourism operations. She holds a masters degree in human resources management from Macquarie University in Sydney and is currently a PhD candidate. Ms Chow worked for the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong and Bass Brewery International of England before joining academia.

- Paul Leung (PL) joined the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University as an assistant professor in 1994. He is a certified hospitality educator of the American Hotel and Lodging Association. Prior to joining the university, Mr Leung worked in a marketing firm for ten years.

- Simon Wong (SW) is a senior lecturer in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He used to work as the human resources manager for the Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, the Peninsula Hotel Hong Kong and Adidas Sports Limited.

4.2.3 Hospitality students

Only year two and final-year students in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University were chosen as respondents. Again, the snowball sampling method was adopted. First-year students were purposely excluded because they are not familiar with the programme structure and have only taken very few subjects. Despite the School of Hotel and Tourism Management offering three streams of study, namely, hotel, catering and tourism, only students of the hotel stream were suitable since the study confined itself to the hotel industry in Hong Kong. Referrals were no longer sought when the study reached “theoretical saturation”. Since more than 90% of the students in the programme are female, there was only one male student among the six student respondents. Since all respondents had studied for at least one year and had completed their first industry training, it was assumed that they had sufficient knowledge to comment on the programme structure, subject syllabuses and industry practices.

- Alda Wong (AW) is a student in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, majoring in hotel management. She is the
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chairperson of the student association in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management and was therefore identified as one of the key informants in this study.

- Donna Wong (DW), is a final year student in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University with a major in hotel management. She has undergone a ten-week industrial training programme with the JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong and the Century Hotel Hong Kong respectively. Before enrolling at the university, Ms Wong had studied at the Institute of Vocational Education for one year.

- Chung Ka Bo (CKB) is a final-year student in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. He has undergone a twenty-week industrial training programme with the Kowloon Shangri-la Hotel Hong Kong and the Kentucky Fried Chicken Corporation. He was captain of the university swimming team and the nominee for the Professor Chau Wai-yin Memorial Scholarship.

- Janet Yu (JY) is a final-year hotel student in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She has undergone a three-month industrial training programme with the Sheraton Hotel and Towers Hong Kong. She was one of the winners of the Kai Chon Tong Scholarship.

- Heidi Wong (HW) is a second-year student in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She worked for the Hyatt Regency Hotel as an intern for three months in 2002. She is currently undergoing her second industrial training programme in the Sheraton Hotels and Towers Hong Kong.

- Joanna Leung (JL) is also a second-year student in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, majoring in hotel
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management. She had her first year of industrial training in the Grand Stanford Hotel and is currently in her second training programme in the Metropark Hotel.

4.3 How do the informants perceive the issue of ethics in the Hong Kong hotel industry?

To understand how the three types of stakeholder view the current issue of ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong (Specific Research Question 1), they were asked to express their general perceptions of this issue. A review of the responses shows that the perceptions could be generally categorized as falling into two points of view, namely, “ethical problems are common and serious in the industry” and “ethical problems are common but not serious in the industry”. As shown in Table 8, the two views are quite evenly distributed among the three groups of respondents and a general consensus cannot be reached. However, most key informants, including JL, GC and AW, tend to believe that ethical problems are both common and serious. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 1.1, Specific Research Question 1.)

Table 8: General perceptions of ethical problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceptions</th>
<th>Hospitality practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality educators</th>
<th>Hospitality students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Ethical problems are common and serious in the industry</td>
<td>GC, SY, JL, HH, IY</td>
<td>PL, BC, SW</td>
<td>AW, DW, CKB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethical problems are common but not serious in the industry</td>
<td>DL, AL, CC, RY</td>
<td>RP, NA, MN</td>
<td>JY, JL, HW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who perceived ethical problems to be common and serious in the industry mainly attributed the phenomenon to the unique characteristics of the hotel industry, such as its high labour intensity, access to guests’ personal information, ample opportunities to handle cash and the direct contacts between guests and employees. Those industry practitioners and educators who had been working in the hotel industry for many years claimed that apart from cases of theft, issues such as discrimination, bribery and the abuse of *quanxi* (relationship) were particularly common and serious. To represent the two diverse views, comments from each of the three types of respondent are presented below.

James Lu held the following view:
I would say ethical problems are very common in the hotel industry in Hong Kong. We have a long history that employees have been engaging in different kinds of unethical practices such as accepting bribes to give rooms, selling guests’ information to outsiders and taking part in credit card frauds etc. Despite there are better controls and more procedures to follow nowadays, the problems are still serious. With the recent poor economic environment, I am even more worried about it than before.

Surlina Yin also firmly perceived that ethical problems are both common and serious in the industry. She showed no hesitation when making the following comment:

Ethics is a very common and serious problem in the industry. I have no doubt about it. I have seen and encountered many ethical issues myself. There is a lack of training and reinforcement on professional ethics by management. When you have hundreds of people with different backgrounds being confined in the same premises, you are bound to have many ethical issues. Furthermore, since the hotel industry is a versatile and multicultural business, we have recruited managers from all around the world such as Germany, US, France and Mainland China. A lot of times, they bring together bad cultural habits such as discrimination, bribery and sexual harassment.

Billow Chow shared a similar view:

Ethical problems are common in the industry. I have worked in the housekeeping and food and beverages departments before and I used to see and hear a lot about it. The hotel is a complicated and sophisticated environment where many people are crossing each other everyday and problems are bound to happen. Also, many transactions involve cash and it creates a lot of problems. The problem has always been serious in the industry.
Gilbert Cheung believes that ethical problems are not only common and serious in the hotel industry but also in many other industries. He does not think Hong Kong has high ethical standards in general.

_We have ethical problems all over Hong Kong and they are not limited to the hotel industry. They are equally common and serious in other industries such as banking, property sales and the disciplinary force. Hong Kong as a whole does not have high ethical standards._

One of the student respondents, Donna Wong, who had just completed her three-month internship in the industry, made the following remark:

_After my three-month observation, I would say ethical issues are quite common and serious in the industry especially in terms of human relations. When I was trained in various departments, people kept telling me how others got their promotion easily by shoe shining their boss and how others were stabbed in the back by another. I also heard about theft cases happening in the restaurants and the housekeeping department. It gave me the feeling that the hotel is an extremely complicated place to work in. I am actually a bit worried whether I will be able to survive when I join the industry one day._

Despite the above respondents and some others believing that ethical problems are common and serious, there are other respondents who hold a slightly different view. They acknowledged that it is common for there to be problems with ethical issues, but they would not regard them as being serious. They principally based their claim on the triviality of unethical cases in the industry. Most cases of theft or fraud, they claimed, usually involved only small amounts of money. Angelina Lee took the following stance:

_There are bound to be ethical problems in view of the large number of people working and staying in a hotel. They are common but not serious. Despite you hearing and handling it from time to time, they are usually of less serious nature. It is only once in awhile that we have big cases that are reported in newspapers. If you compare the kind of unethical cases that we_
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*have to cases such as the Enron and the World Communication, they are really minor.*

Based on his extensive travels to different parts of the world, Ray Pine did not consider the problem in Hong Kong to be that serious:

*I believe that there are many ethical problems in hotels in Hong Kong but they are not that serious if you compare Hong Kong to other countries in the Asia Pacific region such as Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and Mainland China. Corruption, bribery and abuse of power are very serious there. I remember once I stayed in a hotel in Mainland China, I found a HK$1,000 note missing from the safe kept in the front desk. I highly suspected that it was the front office clerk who took it. Hong Kong has a mature legal system and the ICAC helps Hong Kong a lot in terms of fighting against corruption and bribery.*

Finally, Heidi Wong is one of the three student respondents who believed that ethical problems are not serious. She based her claim on the fact that the problems are not often in the news:

*From what I experienced and saw in my industrial training, I do believe that ethical issues such as stealing, favouritism and discrimination are very common due to the complicated relationship among people. However, they are usually handled internally because of their triviality. So far, I have not seen much big news in the newspaper. Therefore, I would not consider the problem to be that serious in the industry.*

In summary, the three groups of respondents were of the view that ethical problems are common in the hotel industry in Hong Kong. The only differences between them lies in degree of seriousness perceived by them, as shown in Figure 7:
4.4 What are the common ethical issues the informants perceive in the Hong Kong hotel industry?

Since there was a consensus that ethical issues are common in the hotel industry in Hong Kong, respondents were subsequently asked to name the common ethical issues perceived by them. The information gathered was designed to reveal the degree of complexity of the problems. Among the three groups of respondents, the industry practitioners provided the most information, followed by the educators. The student respondents demonstrated the least knowledge of these issues, probably due to their limited exposure to the industry. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 1.2, Specific Research Question 1.)

Despite a variety of ethical issues being identified, many can be grouped under eight recurring themes. However, in order to make this finding being more meaningful, the researcher has contacted the respondents further and asked them to rank the eight themes of ethical problems in descending order from most common to least common. Basically, the practitioners were contacted on the phone while the educators and students were contacted in person. After collecting everyone’s view, the researcher was able to prioritize the themes based on a general consensus. However, it should be reminded that the rankings should by no mean be taken as a full consensus among all respondents.

The eight themes, ranked in descending order from most common to least common, are: (1) theft; (2) unfair treatment of employees; (3) discrimination; (4) abuse of guanxi (relationship); (5) abuse of authority/power; (6) fraud; (7) bribery; and lastly (8) sexual
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harassment (see Table 9). Each of these themes will be further discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

Table 9: Common ethical issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Theft</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unfair treatment of employees</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discrimination</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abuse of guanxi (relationship)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abuse of authority/power</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fraud</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bribery</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sexual harassment</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stealing of guests’ properties in rooms</td>
<td>RY, CC, PW, DL, JL, AL, GC, IY</td>
<td>RP, PL, MN, SW, BC, NA</td>
<td>AW, DW, JY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff members steal/pocket tips that are to be shared in central pool</td>
<td>RY, PW, HH, IY,</td>
<td>BC, MN, SW</td>
<td>HW, CKB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stealing of company property by staff</td>
<td>PW, JL, SL, DL, AL, CC, GC, SY</td>
<td>BC, RP, MN</td>
<td>AW, JY, JL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stealing of cash from cash flow or safe</td>
<td>RY, PW, DL, CC, SY, AL</td>
<td>SW, PL, BC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.1 Theft

The theft issue is rated as the most common ethical problem in the study. It is most frequently cited by all three groups of respondents. As shown in Table 10, the first three issues received almost equal attention from the respondents. The issues mainly concern the theft of property belonging to guests and hotels by staff members. The last issue, "stealing of cash from cash flow or safe", was not brought up by any student respondents – they probably did not know that it could happen in a hotel.

Table 10: Theft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Stealing of guests’ properties in rooms</td>
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</tr>
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<td>SW, PL, BC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Unguarded guest property in hotel rooms and the frequent handling of cash by staff make theft a problem that managers have to tackle on a regular basis. Surlina Yin stated her views:

*The problem of employees stealing guests’ or hotels’ property has been there for decades. I have heard about it ever since I joined the industry. The major problem lies in the numerous opportunities of cash flowing through hands to hands. I just terminated two room attendants for stealing money in the guest rooms.*

Clive Cheng also admitted that theft of guests’ property from hotel rooms occurs often. But he also explained another possibility:

*Apart from room attendants, don’t be amazed if you learn that it is the assistant managers who do it. They are the ones who have the master key to all guest rooms. I had a case before in which an assistant manager was caught. Anyway, many staff can actually access to guest rooms. However, you have to be smart because not all guests are honest. Sometimes they are genuine complaints but sometimes not. They report it as a theft case in the hotel so that they may claim insurance for it.*

Concierge staff are also involved in many cases of theft in hotels. Paul Wong explained:

*Bellboys searching guests’ luggage are common. You may walk into a few bellboys searching the guests’ luggage in the backstairs or the storage area. It usually happens when the guests have checked out and have left the baggage with the hotel for a few hours. Sometimes, the manager and supervisors also are parts of the gang.*

Dan Lee, as general manager of a hotel, seemed to try to underplay the theft situation in Hong Kong. He commented that the theft of guests’ property can be found in hotels anywhere. He disagreed that the situation is particularly serious in Hong Kong. He quoted an example of something that happened when he was working overseas:
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There is stealing of guests' properties in rooms. But I don't think it is particularly serious here. When I was working in the Philippines as the general manager, there were always cases in which guests reported having their belongings stolen in rooms. In the Philippines, stealing is more serious than in Hong Kong.

In the hotel industry in Hong Kong, the jargon *da mow* means taking home or consuming food from the kitchen or leftovers without the company's knowledge. It is probably the most common form of stealing. Mei Ng made the following comment:

Taking or eating food from the kitchen or leftovers is so common in hotels that even the managers and supervisors do that as well. I would call this 'unintentional stealing'. It is so widely done by everyone that no one would even question whether it is right or wrong in the first place.

Similar to the above, room attendants and cleaners are often found to have used or taken home hotel items such as small bottles of shampoo, soiled linen, toilet rolls and towels. Angelina Lee, in her spot check of staff lockers, often finds those items inside the lockers. She explained:

Despite we mentioning this in our orientation programme and verbally warning the staff from time to time, we still find many staff using hotel shampoo, towel or utensils. Now, we have asked the security officer in the staff entrance to check all bags of the staff leaving the hotel.

Another common form of theft is the stealing of tips by employees. Tips in restaurants are supposed to be shared by everyone who works in the same restaurant. When a guest leaves some cash as tips, they should be put into the tips box placed next to the cashier register. Normally, the manager and supervisors are entitled to a larger share of the tips in accordance with their rank. Therefore, junior staff may pocket the money instead. Mei Ng gave details of the situation:

In the food and beverage outlets, cash tipping is very common and staff can pocket it easily if they want to. For example, if they see a $20 or $50 dollar
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*note left on the table or in the bill folder as tips, they can put it into their pockets immediately on the way to the cashier or to the kitchen. Of course, they will not bother to do it if the amount is small.*

The last major issue of theft is the stealing of money by the front office cashiers and the general cashier. These positions are provided with a certain amount of cash every day as part of their job. For example, a general cashier may have at any time $500,000 in cash to distribute to the front office cashiers and the food and beverage cashiers for daily transactions. At the end of the day, all the cash paid by guests in settling various charges will be handed over to the general cashier before it is taken to the bank. Thus, there is always a risk associated with such fluid transactions. Raymond Yeung remarks:

*It is always difficult to have a good control of it. The only thing that we can do is to have more unscheduled cross checks of the front office and general cashiers. I had a case about 10 years ago in which the general cashier was found to have taken away HK$7 million from the safe. He was later imprisoned for seven years.*

4.4.2 Unfair treatment of employees

The second most commonly recurring theme identified is unfair treatment of employees. This mostly relates to the unethical treatment of employees by senior management. The four issues falling into this category that are commonly mentioned by the respondents include “compensation and benefit are not commensurate with work”, “cutback of opportunities for training”, “unreasonably long working hours and undue overtime work without payment or time off in lieu” and “redundancy of employees completely based on the sole interest of the company”. As shown in Table 10, practitioners and educators held very similar views. The students, however, did not comment much on these aspects. They probably did not realize that unfair treatment of employees is a form of unethical practice in a business context.
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Table 11: Unfair treatment of employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Compensation and benefits are not commensurate with work</td>
<td>JL, IY, HH, RP, SW, CKB, JL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cutback of opportunities for training</td>
<td>DL, JL, GC, SW, NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unreasonably long working hours and undue overtime work without payment or time off in lieu</td>
<td>HH, IY, PW, SL, BC, RP, PL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Redundancy of employees completely based on the sole interest of the company</td>
<td>GC, CC, JL, SY, HH, RP, PL, SW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some respondents commented that in the wake of the Asian currency devaluation in late 1997, closing down, redundancies and lay-offs have become commonplace in the hotel industry in Hong Kong. In some cases, the tradition of giving out a year-end bonus, which could be as high as three months’ salary in boom times, was abolished. Instead, many employees have to work an extra four to five hours a day without any form of compensation.

Even James Lu criticized the inhumane treatment of staff by the hotel operators in Hong Kong. He showed genuine empathy for those workers:

Hotel operators in Hong Kong are very cost conscious and profit oriented. In economic bad times, their very first response will be to reduce the number of staff to reduce the operational costs. They are very short-sighted and don’t realize the importance human resource plays in the long-term success of their organizations. The lay off, in particular the middle managers, has been very demoralizing to everyone. They have simply erased all the contribution of the staff to the company in the past years. This is rather unfair and the industry will lose out in the long run.

Despite his earlier comment that ethical problems are not serious in the hotel industry, Ray Pine also deeply commiserated with the frustration of hotel employees in recent years. Hotel operators have been complaining that hotel school graduates do not join the industry.
or stay in it for long. He questioned whether the operators had been good employers in the first instance. A heavy workload and recent cutbacks in salary have made the hotels an unpleasant industry to work in. He foresaw that one day, when the economy recovers and job opportunities are available elsewhere, hotel employees will not be hesitant to leave the industry:

Look at the Ritz Carlton. I think they are the best hotel employer in Hong Kong. They have not laid off any staff despite the economic turmoil and they still continue to give them training. I am sure they will do fine even when the economy goes up and when there are more opportunities out there. The people with whom I talked to in Ritz Carlton were all proud to be a part of the winning team. They are highly committed to the hotel.

4.4.3 Discrimination
Discrimination is considered the third most widespread ethical issue in the industry. The views and examples provided basically centred on issues concerning the unequal opportunities given to women, middle-aged workers and those who are not physically attractive. Thus, these three central issues, “hiring practices and promotion based on appearance and looks”, “glass ceiling for female executives” and “limited opportunities for middle-aged workers in front-of-house positions” are grouped under the category of “discrimination”. As shown in Table 12, even the student respondents acknowledged the existence of these three discrimination issues in the industry, indicating that the issues are generally known to most people.

Most respondents consider the hotel industry in Hong Kong discriminatory by tradition. It is an industry in which young people with charming and presentable appearance will have more job and promotional opportunities, especially in front-of-house sections. In appointing people, appearance and looks usually come first as hiring criteria instead of the applicants’ knowledge and skills. This problem is worse in international hotel chains.
### Table 12: Discrimination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hiring practices and promotion based on appearance and looks</td>
<td>GC, JL, HH, IY, AL, RY, SY</td>
<td>SW, BC, RP, MN, PL</td>
<td>HW, JL, AW, DW, CKB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glass ceiling for female executives</td>
<td>JL, IY, SY, AL, GC, PW</td>
<td>MN, PL, BC, SW, NA</td>
<td>JY, DW, AW, CKB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Limited opportunities for middle-aged workers in front-of-house positions</td>
<td>JL, AL, SY, IY, GC, PW, HH</td>
<td>RP, MN, BC, SW, NA</td>
<td>CKB, AW, HW, JL, JY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Simon Wong made the following claim:

*If you go to The Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, The Shangri-la or The Regent, you will only find good looking guys and pretty girls working there. So, if you don’t look that great in appearance, they will not consider you for any front office positions. In one of the hotels that I previously worked in, they would only employ those bar waitresses who are at least 5’4” tall.*

Discrimination on the grounds of age is also common. When Angelina Lee was asked to comment on the age criteria by which she evaluates an applicant for a front-line position, she firmly stated that a 40-year old person would not be suitable for the jobs. The front-line staff should all look energetic, young and pleasant.

Many respondents also claimed that there are more male managers than female managers. Gilbert Cheung comments:

*In a hotel, do you see any female restaurant managers? The answer is no. You will not find any in the coffee shop, the Chinese restaurant or the Italian restaurant. You will also find more male general managers, front office managers, executive housekeepers and food and beverage managers. There is a glass ceiling for female staff in many departments. Of course there are female executives in positions such as human resources manager.*
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or director of sales and marketing, however, the number of male managers outweighs the number of female managers to a large extent.

The researcher was impressed by the frankness of James Lu when he was asked to comment on the discrimination issues. He showed no intention to modify his statement to protect the image of the industry:

With regard to discrimination, you cannot find another industry that is as serious as the hotel industry. There are two major types of discrimination in this industry. First, it is the discrimination by looks and appearance. For a good looking man, you will see his promotion to be much faster than others. The hotel business is like a show business. It is a pleasing industry. The Four Seasons and The Regents hotels always stress that their general managers are all good looking and have the charisma of movie stars. When you have that value implanted in the upper management, it filters down to the middle managers as well. You don't find this phenomenon in other industries. You don't have to be good looking to be a manager there.

The second discrimination issue concerns unequal treatment of men and women. For certain departments or positions, women are disadvantaged and opportunities are always limited. For example, in banquet sales and front office, up to a certain level, female employees are handicapped because the work requires the staff to work overnight or to entertain clients in the evenings. Senior management usually assumes that female employees are less suitable to this type of work because of family commitments. Besides, many guests still prefer to deal with male managers, whom they perceive to be more likely to be the decision makers.

4.4.4 Abuse of guanxi (relationship)
The hotel industry in Hong Kong, which operates in an environment that is itself embedded in a strong traditional Chinese culture, abuse of guanxi was also perceived to be widespread. The abuse of guanxi often involves the promotion of employees based on family relationship or the appointment of applicants based on personal connections. These practices contravene the ethical values of fairness and equality in job opportunities.
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Table 13: Abuse of *guanxi* (relationship)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Promotion of employees based on relationship</td>
<td>SY, JL, DL, HH, IY</td>
<td>SW, PL, RP, BC</td>
<td>JY, CKB,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appointment of applicants based on personal connections</td>
<td>GC, SY, JL, DL, CC, HH</td>
<td>SW, RP, MN</td>
<td>HW, JL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Surlina Yin made a strong remark:

*You need to have good guanxi with your superiors in order to secure your promotion easily in this industry. I have this personal friend who used to be the chief steward of the Regal Kowloon Hotel. A couple of years ago, he left the company and joined the Marriott Hotel as its chief steward. I think this is alright. But strangely, he was promoted to the position of manager of The Chinese Restaurant after he joined the company for two years. I was a bit surprised because this position requires extensive experience of Chinese cuisine which my friend does not have. He told me afterwards that he got the position because he has been keeping a close relationship with the directors of food and beverage and human resources by playing mahjong game with them.*

With regard to the appointment of applicants based on personal connections, Gilbert Cheung admitted that the problem is quite widespread:

*It is common in many departments such as the accounts department, the food and beverage department and the Chinese kitchen. In most cases, it is the department head who refers someone to the human resources manager for an interview. In order to maintain a harmonious relation with the department head, the referral who may not be the best candidate is usually appointed.*

Hubert Hui, who had been trying to change jobs the year before, showed how disgruntled he was with the industry:
You just can't understand how despairing I am. Despite sending out so many application letters, you just don't get any response. You have to know someone with the connection there. It is particularly true if you are looking for middle management positions.

4.4.5 Abuse of power/authority

The respondents identified abuse of power/authority as the fifth most common form of an ethical problem. There are two issues included in this category, namely, “provide free services or products to friends/relatives without company's knowledge” and “abuse of power to demand special service”.

Table 14: Abuse of power/authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide free services or products to friends/relatives without company’s knowledge</td>
<td>RY, AL, CC, HH, PW</td>
<td>BC, NA, MN, PL</td>
<td>CKB, JL, DW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abuse of power to demand for special service</td>
<td>SY, HH, DL, CC</td>
<td>MN, SW, RP</td>
<td>CKB, DW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the hotel industry, most senior executives, such as front office managers, food and beverage managers, human resources managers and sales executives, are entitled to entertain business associates on the company's account. Regrettably, many of them have abused this privilege by putting charges on the company's ledger when they are indeed treating their families, relatives or friends. Raymond Yeung made the following remarks:

A sales manager of my hotel was found to have signed entertainment cheques a couple of times when she was actually inviting her family and friends over for dinner gatherings. Entertainment cheques are not supposed to be used that way. They are for business meetings with clients.

Aside from the managers, it is also common that restaurant employees provide their friends and relatives with complimentary food and drinks without the company's knowledge. Hubert Hui shared his experience:
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For the captains, waiters or bartenders, they sometimes give free drinks and desserts to their friends. This is especially common when they see their manager doing the same.

4.4.6 Fraud

Many respondents consistently raised examples of fraudulent actions in hotels. These examples essentially involve four issues, including "disclosure of guests’ credit card information", "substitution of cash payment by guests in restaurants with food & beverage coupons", "fraudulent acts by cashiers in currency exchange" and "not recording cash payment by guests". The first issue, "disclosure of guests’ credit card information", is the most widely known to all three groups of respondents.

Table 15: Fraud

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disclosure of guests’ credit cards information</td>
<td>PW, JL, DL, SY, RY, HH, IY, AL</td>
<td>RP, PL, NA, SW, MN</td>
<td>AW, CKB, JL, HW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution of cash payment by guests in restaurants with food &amp; beverage coupons</td>
<td>PW, RY, CC, HH</td>
<td>MN, BC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraudulent acts by cashiers in currency exchange</td>
<td>PW, JL, DL, RY, AL, HH</td>
<td>SW, BC, PL, MN</td>
<td>JY, AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recording cash payment by guests</td>
<td>PW, RY, DL</td>
<td>BC, SW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The disclosure of guests’ credit card information is also said to be particularly widespread in the front office department. Paul Wong comments:

The exchange of guests’ credit card information in return for money usually involves the front desk supervisors or agents. It used to be worth HK$300 - $400 for one credit card and it has at one time gone up to HK$1,000 per card. Many guests only discover their credit cards have been forged months after they return home.
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The second type of fraud is more frequently found in the coffee shops or restaurants in hotels. It primarily involves tour groups and individual guests who have breakfast in the restaurants. Mei Ng explains:

There is a real case happened in the coffee shop of a deluxe hotel a few years ago. The restaurant waiters were found to have continually purloined the cash paid by individual guests at breakfast time. It was noted later that there were two ways that they could cheat about it. The first one is simply not to open an account for the guest so that there will be no transaction record with the restaurant cashier. When asked for a bill by the guest, the waiter may present a forged one. The second way is more complicated in which when some tour group members come together to take their buffet breakfast in the morning with breakfast coupons, the waiter may open an account with, for example, three headcounts less. In this way, after collecting the breakfast coupons from all the guests, he will have three spare coupons to replace later the cash payment by any three individual guests.

The third type of fraud occurs in the currency exchange section of a hotel. The problem stems from the fact that the exchange rates offered by hotels are normally much lower than those by the banks. This creates situations in which the front office cashiers can take advantage when they handle the exchange of currency for guests. Raymond Yeung explained how it could be done:

When the front office cashiers exchange currency for the guests, they will pay the guests with their own money and complete the transaction without logging it into the hotel record. Then, they will exchange the currency in the bank afterwards. This way, they can benefit themselves with the difference in exchange rate between the hotel and the bank. For example, the exchange rate for US dollars in banks is normally around 7.8 and the rate in hotels is somewhat around 7.3. Therefore, for every US$1,000, it would mean a HK$500 in difference.
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This type of common fraud also involves the front office cashiers. It predominantly relates to tour group guests who pay their incidental charges by cash upon check-out. The incidental charges may include charges for mini-bar use, local and long distance calls, in-house movies and meals in restaurants. Dan Lee related how a fraud case could develop under these circumstances:

*It usually happens to the Japanese and Mainland Chinese tour group guests who do not understand much English and are not familiar with the hotel procedure. While the rooms are to be paid by the travel agents, these guests normally prefer to pay their incidental charges by cash upon check-out. In many of these cases, the cashiers will pocket the money and do not record the cash payment. In turn, they would report these cases as check-out rooms with outstanding charges not being settled. Since most of these cases involve only small amount of money, the charges are usually written off by the hotels.*

4.4.7 Bribery

Another common ethical theme identified is "bribery". Despite different examples of bribery in hotels being cited by the respondents, most of these fall into one of the three major types of bribery listed in Table 16.

**Table 16: Bribery**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Under-table commission/kickback is given to staff members of front office and sales and marketing</td>
<td>PW, SY, DL, RY</td>
<td>PL, RP, SW</td>
<td>JY, CKB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff members obtain monetary/non-monetary benefits from vendors and suppliers</td>
<td>IY, HH, PW, CC, RY</td>
<td>PL, BC, MN</td>
<td>AW, JL, HW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff members receive monetary/non-monetary reciprocation for allowing prostitutes to engage in activities in hotels</td>
<td>PW, CC, GC</td>
<td>SW, NA, RP</td>
<td>CKB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many respondents indicated that bribery was particularly acute in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the industry was experiencing a golden period. During those years, most hotels were able to achieve a high annual occupancy of around 90%, implying tight room supply and high room rates in the peak seasons. When many travel agents and guests were desperate for rooms, the front office and sales and marketing staff members became major targets of bribery. Dan Lee explained:

*The problem of receiving bribes by front office personnel has been an unspoken fact for years. As you aware, it is the front office manager or supervisors who handle all on-day reservations and walk-in guests, thus under-table commission or cash rebate from travel agents, or even walk-in guests are very common when there is a full-house situation and a room shortage in town.*

Another type of bribery that was consistently brought up in the interviews is vendors and suppliers providing cash and gifts in reciprocation for favourite treatment. Each year a hotel has to purchase thousands of types of goods and products just to maintain its daily operations. Such reciprocation is not only confined to the purchasing department, it occurs in other departments as well, such as engineering, food and beverage, kitchen and even senior management. Ida Yiu, who works in the purchasing department, shared a personal experience:

*To be honest, I, myself, have actually received once a big red envelope (in Chinese New Year, it is a custom to give red envelopes with money inside to others as gifts) from a vendor. I was surprised when I saw the amount of money inside....Even today when I think about it, I am still a bit worried and scared.... I shouldn’t have taken it...... I know there are also cases where food and beverage managers and kitchen chefs who are responsible for advising or placing orders for chinaware, silverware, meat or vegetables are invited by suppliers for lunch in which under-table money is given.*
Paul Wong confirmed the possibility that the security department of a hotel may have connections with triads. By allowing prostitutes access to the premises, the department receives monetary incentives in return. He gave an account of this:

Even the security department receives bribes, too. I have heard cases where the security manager and officers receive money from the triad societies to allow their prostitutes to go up to the guest rooms. The money is shared by everyone in the department. Some years ago, a security manager was arrested by the ICAC for that kind of reason.

4.4.8 Sexual harassment
The last common type of ethical issue considered is "sexual harassment". Cases usually have to do with a guest sexually harassing an employee or an employee sexually harassing a co-worker.

Table 17: Sexual harassment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethical issues</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• A guest sexually harasses an employee</td>
<td>DL, CC, JL, GC, AL</td>
<td>MN, SW, BC</td>
<td>HW, CKB, JL, JY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• An employee sexually harasses a co-worker</td>
<td>SY, CC, JL, GC, AL, DL</td>
<td>RP, PL</td>
<td>HW, JL, JY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning the first type of sexual harassment at work, Clive Cheung remarks:

Sexual harassment cases mostly happen in the bar and the lounge where guests could have a few drinks. Sometimes the harassment takes place when the maid is cleaning the guest rooms or a half-naked guest opens the door for a female server.

Apart from sexual harassment involving a guest and an employee, it may also involve a superior or a co-worker. Surlina Yin quoted a case that she came across once:

In an exit interview, a female restaurant staff member complained to me against The Vice President of Operation for sexually harassing her a few
times. I have indeed seen it once with my own eyes. I saw him slapping the bottom of this staff member with a menu when having dinner in the restaurant. She felt embarrassed. The VP had asked her to go out a few times.

In summary, eight types of ethical problem have been identified. They are found to be diverse in nature and may involve staff members right from top management down to operative level. Figure 8 portrays the relationship between the core concern “ethical issues in hotel” and the eight recurring themes. Branching out from each theme are its relevant common ethical issues. For example, fraud cases in hotels usually involve guests’ credit cards and F&B coupons, currency exchange, performance reports and mini-bar charges.
Figure 8: Common ethical issues in the hotel industry in Hong Kong
4.5 What are the mechanisms Hong Kong hotels currently adopt to maintain ethical standards in their organizations as perceived by the informants?

After ascertaining the ethical issues common to the hotel industry in Hong Kong, the next step was to examine the methods that hotels currently adopt to maintain ethical standards in their organizations. This was to gain an idea of the efforts that hotels are making to deal with the problem of unethical behaviour. In the discussion of this issue, the hospitality practitioners as well as those educators with prior industry work experience were the primary informants. The student respondents basically grasped the ideas in their industrial training. As shown in Table 18, the feedback is quite consistent among the three groups of respondents. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 1.3, Specific Research Question 1.)

Table 18: Mechanisms adopted to maintain ethical standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanisms</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioner</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Orientation programme</td>
<td>SY, RY, AL, PW, JL, DL</td>
<td>RP, SW, MN, BC</td>
<td>DW, CKB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Talk/seminar</td>
<td>JL, DL, AL, GC, RY</td>
<td>RP, SW, PL, BC, MN</td>
<td>CKB, JL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reference check</td>
<td>PW, SY, AL, JL, IY, GC, RY</td>
<td>SW, MN, BC, NA</td>
<td>AW, DW, JY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Employee handbook</td>
<td>SY, AL, CC, PW, DL, RY, JL</td>
<td>RP, SW, MN, NA</td>
<td>AD, HW, JY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four methods were repeatedly brought up by the respondents, including (1) briefing in orientation programmes, (2) talk/seminar presented by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), (3) reference check upon appointment and (4) use of employee handbook. However, some respondents expressed reservations about the effectiveness of these methods.

First, the industry practitioners consistently referred to the orientation programme for new employees as the most common occasion on which rules and regulations governing employee behaviour at work were discussed. It is an industry practice that every new hire will attend a one-day or two-day orientation programme in the first week of work. Among
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the respondents, Angelina Lee explained the programme content in her hotel as well as her view of its effectiveness:

In our one-day orientation programme, the basic information that we cover includes the introduction of the company background, history, employee benefits, safety procedures as well as rules and regulations. We would spend about 30 minutes to explain the various major rules and regulations that every employee has to observe. We’ll ask them to read the employee handbook at home afterwards. Of course, you can’t expect it to be very useful.

Paul Wong expressed a similar view. He described the shortfalls of incorporating the discussion of employee ethics in the orientation programme by using his hotel as an example:

In the orientation programme, I am responsible for a one-hour session in which I will brief the new comers on the kinds of crimes that commonly occur within the hotel premises such as theft and robbery cases. I will also remind the staff of the proper ways to handle cash and guests' property. Because of the limited time and more importantly, the lack of expertise, we will not touch on ethical issues like discrimination and sexual harassment. Anyway, I think the orientation programme itself is already overloading the staff with too much information in one day. They will not be able to absorb it all. One final problem is that, due to the shortage of manpower, many department heads are just reluctant to release the new staff to attend the programme. Many of them end up not attending at all.

The second commonly used attempt to improve ethical standards in a hotel organizations is the presentation on fighting corruption by the ICAC. Most respondents indicated that almost every hotel in Hong Kong has invited the ICAC to conduct workshops and seminars for its employees. Raymond Yeung gave a more detailed description:

We invite the people from the Community Relations Department of the ICAC to come in once every two years to give a seminar to our staff. They usually
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cover content like the legislation on corruption in Hong Kong, the corporate system control, ethical decision making at work and managing staff integrity. The seminar lasts for a half-day and we mainly assign managers and supervisors from various departments to attend.

Dan Lee also emphasized the use of the ICAC. He regarded it as a viable means as the services provided are free of charge. He remarks:

*We have been inviting the ICAC to give talks to our employees for many years. Since we cannot afford to provide much basic training to our staff nowadays because of the budget cuts, the use of external sources such as the ICAC have thus become an efficient and effective way to continually improve the quality of our employees.*

The third method is the use of reference checks. In the selection process for employment, a reference check is typically carried out as the last procedure before the confirmation of an offer of employment. Previous employers of a job applicant will be contacted to confirm that the reasons given for leaving are genuine. Hotels will vigilantly verify any misconduct or behavioural problems related to an applicant. Paul Wong recalled the practice of reference checking in his hotel:

*If the applicant has previously worked in other hotels, their human resources managers will be contacted. If the applicant has previously worked in other industries, then we may send our request through correspondence. Our main purpose is to ensure the applicant was not terminated for any disciplinary reasons. In the old days, we even have our connections with the police force. We will check if an applicant applying for a sensitive position such as room attendant and security officer has any criminal records. Now, we don’t do it anymore because of the privacy ordinance.*

The last resort is the use of the employee handbook, which stipulates the rules and regulations that employees have to observe. Surlina Yin commented on its effectiveness:
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I think most hotels rely on the employee handbook to ensure that all staff adhere to the behavioural requirements of the company. It stipulates the various kinds of disciplinary offences and their consequences. But I wonder how many staff really take a good look at it. This method is rather passive and not proactive enough.

To conclude, the three groups of respondents identified four major mechanisms that hotels in Hong Kong currently use to maintain the ethical standards of their organization. However, they expressed reservations about the effectiveness of these methods.

4.6 What are the views of the informants on solving the ethical problems in the Hong Kong hotel industry?

Having presented evidence of how complex the phenomenon of ethics is in the hotel industry, it is appropriate next to consider the need for an ethics curriculum for the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong (Specific Research Question 2). The respondents were therefore asked to suggest ways to solve the ethical problems in the industry, in addition to the four methods identified in Section 4.5. In summary, they suggested four strategies, two short-term, one medium-term and one long-term. These are “internal control system”, “industry code of conduct”, “workshops and seminars” and lastly “ethics education”. As indicated in Table 19, the three groups of respondents showed a fairly high consensus towards ethics education as a long-term strategy. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 2.1, Specific Research Question 2.)

Table 19: Approaches to enhancing ethical standards in the Hong Kong hotel industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Hospitality Practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
<th>Hospitality Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Internal control system (short-term)</td>
<td>RY, DL, IY, CC</td>
<td>NA, BC</td>
<td>JY, JL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Industry code of conduct (short-term)</td>
<td>JL, DL, GC, SY</td>
<td>SW, PL, BC</td>
<td>HW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Workshops and seminars (medium-term)</td>
<td>JL, GC, AL</td>
<td>RP</td>
<td>DW, AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethics education (long-term)</td>
<td>JL, DL, AL, GC, PW, HH</td>
<td>RP, PL, MN, BC, SW</td>
<td>AW, CKB, HW, JL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To have an immediate effect on maintaining good ethical standards in hotel organizations, the respondents pointed to the need for a good internal control system. Some agreed that hotels in Hong Kong either lack a proper control system or are poor in its execution. Raymond Yeung remarks:

*I personally think that the briefing in orientation programme and the use of employee handbook are far from effective. Thus, hotels should establish clear and straight policies and procedures which guide employees’ behaviour at work. This is particularly important to departments which deal with money and guests’ properties such as the front office and accounts departments. We need to impose more checks and balances there. If they are executed well, we can minimize the chances for stealing, abuse of power, bribery and discrimination etc., For long term success, I guess we need to educate our people about what is right and wrong.*

Ida Yiu also commented on the need to implement stringent policies and procedures:

*There are many loopholes especially in those two or three stars hotels. Policies and guidelines are always loose and not well executed. I know our head chef always has lunches and dinners with some suppliers and vendors. I suspect there are things going on. Chinese people like to cut corners. The long-term strategy should be to provide continuous training and education on professional ethics.*

The respondents also identified the introduction of an industry code of conduct as an immediate step. Simon Wong states:

*The rules and regulations for each hotel can be different and so we should have a code of conduct for the entire industry. It is necessary to adopt one set of code so that people know the standards of behaviour required. The code should be compiled immediately under the leadership of The Hong Kong Hotels Association.*

Gilbert Cheung also proposed the need to implement a code of conduct:
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A code of conduct is important because it conveys to people that the industry cares about it and that maintaining a high ethical standard is a priority. I don’t think the Hong Kong Hotels Association is doing much about it. It should act more than just a PR coordinator.

Some respondents also suggested the better use of external sources. Government bodies such as the Labour Department could be invited to discuss fair practices of employment. The Equal Opportunity Commission and the Hong Kong Police Force would be most suitable to discuss discrimination and crime in hotels respectively. Ray Pine expressed his personal view on this:

Hotels can make better use of the free services of external sources such as the Labour Department and the Equal Employment Commission. They are more than willing to provide educational services at no costs to any organizations. The reinforcement of employee ethics is a long journey. There is no single programme or a quick fix solution. Rules and regulations may be a short-term solution, but for longer term success, you need to educate the people about the right attitude and values.

Surlina Yin also showed her support:

In view of the tight budget today, government bodies are indeed good choices to help enhance the professional ethics in the organization. What’s more important is that they are the professionals. Hotels themselves do not have that expertise and knowledge.

The last resort, which most respondents believed to be the long-term solution, is the incorporation of ethics teaching into young people’s education. Some industry practitioners pointed out that ethics should be taught right through the entire education system. James Lu expressed the following view:

For long-term success, we must educate our people. We should seriously look into our hospitality programmes to see how we can enhance the ethical awareness of our students. Graduates from hotel schools are our managers
of tomorrow, their quality will affect the standards of our industry in the long run. But I think the education in Hong Kong in general, lacks the emphasis on the moral development of the students.

Billie Chow also believed that ethics education is the long-term solution to enhancing the ethical standards of the industry:

*For long-term success, we should strengthen our ethics education so that people realize certain things are morally wrong and should not be done. It may take years before we can see the actual results but we should start looking at it.*

In summary, in addition to the current methods adopted, respondents suggested four other approaches to enhance the ethical standards of the employees. These include the setting up of a good internal control system (short-term strategy); the implementation of an industry code of conduct (short-term strategy); the better use of external resources to conduct workshops and seminars on a regular basis (medium-term strategy); and, finally, the incorporation of an ethics curriculum (long-term strategy).

4.7 What are the values of the people in Hong Kong nowadays as perceived by the informants?

It is important to assess the value system of people in Hong Kong as perceived by the respondents. It is hypothesized that the ethical standards of a society have a close link with the value system that its people hold. The analysis will help us assess the need for an ethics curriculum for Hong Kong as a whole or the hospitality programmes in particular. The three groups of respondents showed a fairly high degree of consensus in describing the people in Hong Kong with regard to the first three items (see table 20). The last item, "situation oriented" was only brought up by some of the industry practitioners. People in Hong Kong are generally perceived as being materialistic/pragmatic, social status conscious and good at making fast money. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 2.2, Specific Research Question 2.)
Most respondents considered Hong Kong people to be materialistic and pragmatic first and foremost. James Lu remarks:

*With the rapid growth of the manufacturing industries such as textiles in the early 1970’s, materialistic rewards have become the major motivation to the people in Hong Kong. They seek for social stability and material affluence. This situation became particularly acute after 1984 when the British Government agreed to return Hong Kong to China. During those years, everyone was so uncertain about their future in Hong Kong that they wanted to grasp every opportunity to make more money so that they could move to other countries when necessary. Since then, people became pragmatic and they would equate money with whatever they do.*

Most respondents also expressed the view that parents in Hong Kong place a high expectation on their children to become professionals because it is believed to be the only way to gain status in society. People in Hong Kong largely judge others by their wealth and success in their chosen career. Surlina Yin comments:

*Hong Kong people are very status and class conscious. People will make friends with you if you have money, a good job, a nice car and live in a big apartment. People will serve you according to what you wear. When I was in Australia, people don’t really care about that.*

Alda Wong shared her view:
Nowadays, even the students are very brand-name conscious because that's a sign of social status. They would work two or three part-time jobs just to get enough money to buy expensive clothes and fashionable items. My French tutor told me that she did not understand why students in Hong Kong always ask about the pronunciation of some famous French brand names. Students of other countries are not interested in asking that sort of questions.

Some industry practitioners also perceived the people of Hong Kong to be situation-oriented. They will act on what they think is best for them in a given situation. Gilbert Cheung elaborated:

*When Hong Kong people are confronted with making a judgment on an event, they tend to put more emphasis on the context than on the action itself. For example, when they want to make a decision whether it is right or wrong to buy a counterfeit product, their decision might depend on the availability and price of the genuine product. If a genuine product is not available or its price is too high, they would feel that it is acceptable to buy the counterfeit product. On the other hand, if the genuine product is available in the market at a reasonable price, they would feel that it is wrong to commit such an act. They have double standards when making judgments.*

Lastly, the people of Hong Kong like to make fast money. Simon Wong expressed his disappointment in young people:

*In the 1960s and the 1970s, people worked very hard to earn a living and they believed taking a step-by-step approach was the best way to succeed. Just like my parents, they earned little by little and improved their quality of living bit by bit. Unfortunately, young people nowadays do not really want to spend time in building up their career. They only care about how they can make the most money within the shortest time. You see young people selling*
pirated CDs and drugs, buying mark six, gambling on horseracing or even engaging in prostitution. They are no longer contented to do a proper job.

Angelina Lee also remarks on the young generation:

*In the past, people were willing to start from the bottom and worked their way up slowly. They might have three or four children to raise and they would not mind working long hours. However, nowadays when I interviewed the young people, they don’t expect themselves to start from hands-on positions. When they don’t get what they want in the short time, they will quit the job and go to another industry.*

Based on the various responses, it is evident that the people of Hong Kong are generally perceived to be materialistic, pragmatic, social status conscious, situation oriented and good at making fast money. It is suspected that there is a relationship between these values and the ethical behaviour and standards of the society as a whole.

4.8 What are the factors affecting the ethical beliefs and values of people as perceived by the informants?

The next step is to examine the factors affecting the development of an individual’s ethical beliefs, as perceived by the respondents. This will help the study assess the need for an ethics education. Four major factors are identified, namely, “parents”, “friends/schoolmates”, “school/education” and “media”. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 2.3, Specific Research Question 2.)
Table 21: Factors affecting the ethical beliefs and values of people

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Hospitality practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality educators</th>
<th>Hospitality students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Parents</td>
<td>GC, DL, SY, PW, HH, RY, JL, CC</td>
<td>BC, NA, SW, MN, RP</td>
<td>AW, CKB, DW, JY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friends/schoolmates</td>
<td>DL, IY, HH</td>
<td>NA, SW</td>
<td>CKB, DW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School/education</td>
<td>AL, DL, JL, PW, SY, RY, CC</td>
<td>SW, BC, MN, PL, NA</td>
<td>CKB, DW, JY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media</td>
<td></td>
<td>BC</td>
<td>HW, JL, JY, AW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 21, parents were repeatedly mentioned as the most important factor. Most respondents were of the view that in early childhood parents start to tell their children stories and myths that convey beliefs and values, and of course demonstrate those beliefs and values in their own daily practices and rituals. Parents act as role models, exhibiting what behaviours are right and wrong. Alda Wong shared her experience:

> I believe my family influences me the most. I'm very close to my parents. Since I was small, they have been telling me things that I should do and things that I shouldn't do. It is through our daily life together and things that we do together that shape my values and beliefs. I guess my good friends from secondary school come next after my parents. We have spent seven years together and I think we do influence each others a lot. Luckily, all my friends are very good. School is important too but they have not been putting much emphasis on the moral development of the students. All they concern is getting good grades in public exam.

Gilbert Cheung also agreed that parents have the most influence. He explains:

> My parents have the most influence on shaping my ethical beliefs. When I was young, they already told me the importance to be honest, fair and truthful to others and that we should work hard to earn our living.
Despite a majority of respondents agreeing that parents are the most important factor, they acknowledged that not all parents instil proper ethical values in their children. Billie Chow expressed her disappointment with the young parents of today:

Most young parents nowadays tell their children of how to make quick money and how they will be judged one day by the wealth they have. These are the values they preach to their children rather than what social responsibilities are.

Many dual working parents nowadays do not have time to spend with their children. Therefore children are left unattended and schoolmates and social peers become a major influence. Chung Ka Bo explains:

Since most parents have to work, they will not be able to spend time with their children. Therefore, their influence sometimes is not as great as those peers in schools. You just can't underestimate the extent of influence they have on each other.

The small and congested living environment in Hong Kong also forces children to spend most of their time outdoors with their peer groups. This generates the social problem of street gangs, with children ending up abusing drugs and getting involved in various sorts of adolescent crimes. Norman Au remarks:

In Hong Kong, young people like to stay out because they feel squashed at home. They don't have their personal space there. Therefore, they prefer hanging out on the street. This leads to the social problem of street gangsters. They smoke and even take drugs together. They can have bad influence on each other.

The third factor affecting the ethical beliefs of an individual is education. Regrettably, there was a strong feeling among the respondents that the education system in Hong Kong has been neglecting the importance of ethics. It is criticized as too examination-oriented and overlooking the moral development of students. Simon Wong spoke about this:
I guess school is supposed to be very important in the moral development of the students. But I don’t think the education in Hong Kong is doing its part. It is too examination oriented. The schools don’t have time to teach them what social responsibilities, integrity, unselfishness, honesty and loyalty are.

Donna Wong also believes that education plays an important role in the ethical development of students. She made the following remark:

*Education is very important in the moral development of the students but I did not have any subjects on morals or ethics in my primary and secondary schools at all. The only thing that I had was some talks arranged by the school when I was in Form 6. Other than that, the school principal may touch on it a bit in the morning assembly.*

Janet Yu also made a similar comment:

*Apart from parents and friends, schools are also supposed to be an important factor. However, I don’t remember having anything relating to ethics in my primary and secondary school. The schools gave us a lot of tests and examinations to make sure that we studied hard and did well in the public examinations. I think the schools should concern more on the students’ ethical development.*

Angelina Lee agreed that the education system in Hong Kong overlooks the moral development of an individual. She explained the education values of the past:

*In the old days, students were taught about Confucius and the importance of personal integrity, such as being good to others, loyal to country and family, honest and humble. Unfortunately, the system nowadays is examination-driven and everything is measured by how many distinctions and credits your school achieves in public examinations. This has defeated the real purpose of education.*
All in all, the respondents deemed the education system, being examination-driven, as having failed in acting as the major vehicle in the development of an individual’s ethical beliefs.

Lastly, a number of hospitality students interestingly brought up the role of the media as a factor in the ethical development of an individual. They referred to magazines, comic books, newspapers, pop singers and movie stars. Heidi Wong spoke made this observation:

*Nowadays, pop singers indeed have a huge influence on teenagers in particular. Like my younger sister, she is crazy about the male singing group from Taiwan. She would buy all their posters, CDs, videos, etc., and do whatever the singers tell them to do. It’s OK if the singers are good role models. But there are cases where some pop idols are found to speak foul language, take soft drugs or behave badly in public. These would then have bad influences on the kids.*

Joanna Leung shared her view:

*The comic magazines and some movies have bad influences on our young people too. Just look at the comic magazines that we have in Hong Kong. They are all about brutal fighting, gangsters, triad society. There isn’t one that is good and healthy. Also in the last few years, we had too many movies that beautified triad society members and projected them as heroes with strong brotherhood. They were sending the wrong values and message to the young people.*

In summary, the three groups of respondents showed a high degree of consensus that parents play the most important role in affecting an individual’s ethical development. They also regard peers, schoolmates and education as other major factors. Moreover, they were generally agreed that the education system in Hong Kong is too examination-oriented and that it has severely neglected the ethical development of students.
4.9 What is the degree of need and importance for an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes in Hong Kong as perceived by the informants?

In spite of the important role education plays in an individual’s ethical development, a majority of the industry practitioners and students tended to believe that an ethics curriculum in an hospitality programme would only be significant if it acted as reinforcement. (The following discussion refers to Subsidiary Research Question 2.4, Specific Research Question 2.) In other words, they thought teaching ethics would only be meaningful if it were also taught at primary and secondary school levels. They believed that the ethical development of an individual is a long-term integrated process that begins in childhood through socialization involving families, friends and schools and when a child reaches adolescence, his or her beliefs and values are in essence firmly entrenched and difficult to change. These two groups, by and large, consider it too late if ethics is only taught in higher education.

Interestingly, the views of the industry practitioners and students differed on this issue from those of the educators. Most of the hospitality educators believed that even though ethics is not taught at primary and secondary school levels, it does not mean that higher education should give up the opportunity to instil proper values in its students. They alluded to the lack of any scientific study to support the hypothesis that the ethical development of an individual will stop at a certain age.

Table 22: Degree of importance of an ethics curriculum in a hospitality programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of Importance</th>
<th>Hospitality practitioners</th>
<th>Hospitality educators</th>
<th>Hospitality students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Not important</td>
<td>AL, DL, IY, CC, PW</td>
<td></td>
<td>JY, HW, CKB, AW, DW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Important</td>
<td>JL</td>
<td>SW, NA, MN, BC, RP</td>
<td>JL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those who indicated reservations, Angelina Lee made the following remark, which also well represented the views of others:

_I believe that family and early education are more important. The development starts when children are small. This is the most critical stage in which parents and teachers implant their ethical values in the children._
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The values become more or less fixed when they finish high school. Thus, an ethics curriculum in a hospitality programme alone will not help to shape a person into a better one unless it is a carry-through from primary and secondary schools. Higher education would then act as reinforcement of the values implanted earlier.

The following comments made by Dan Lee and Ida Yu also illustrate the general position of most industry practitioners:

You can have an ethics curriculum in a hospitality programme but I don't think it is of much use. When students are grown up, their minds are already set with what is right and wrong and so you can't really change their ethical values at that age (Dan Lee).

Early ethics education plays a very important role. Children are most receptive to things at that point of time. When they become adults, it will be too late to tell them what is right and wrong. Therefore, you can't really change their values when they reach university level (Ida Yu).

Alda Wong also showed reservations:

Having a curriculum in the programme does not really help much unless it is a continuation from primary and high schools.

James Lu was the only industry practitioner with a positive view:

Education is the final solution to everything but it is a long-term process. The quality of the people in a country depends on its education. I don't see why people's value system cannot be changed. It may be little but it doesn't mean they don't change at all. Since our government hasn't put much emphasis in our primary and secondary schools, it thus becomes even more imperative for the hospitality schools to do something about it.
Hospitality educators in general showed a more favourable attitude. Simon Wong is one of those educators who strongly supported the inclusion of ethics education:

"The reputation of the hospitality industry is already at stake that many people in Hong Kong do business in an unethical way. Since our students do not receive much ethical training in their early education, it is even more important for us to do something about it. I'm not sure how effective it is but at least some students may benefit from it."

Mei Ng disagreed that the ethical values of an individual cannot be changed after reaching eighteen or nineteen years of age:

"I would only agree that the change of belief may slow down at a certain age but it doesn't mean it's stagnant. People will keep evaluating their values which are continuously affected by other external factors; and university can be an important stage to many of them. So, we should stop thinking that because they don't have much ethics education before and therefore, we should not bother to do it now. By having an ethics curriculum in a hospitality programme, we are not only attempting to instil in them with the right values, but more importantly to expose them to the different types of ethical dilemmas that they may face in their future career."

Billie Chow expressed her support:

"I am totally in favour of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programme. I will perceive it as the final opportunity. We are not supposed to teach them knowledge and skills only, we have the responsibility to teach them other aspects as well. I can see our students not having much ethical awareness and they have no clues of what professional ethics is."

Joanna Leung was the only student respondent who wished to have an ethics curriculum in the programme:
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I hope that we can have more training on ethics in our programme. I really don’t have much knowledge on it and there isn’t much in our secondary schools as well. By telling us more about it, we can be better prepared for the challenges in the future. It can at least increase our awareness.

In conclusion, industry practitioners and students in general deemed it too late to teach ethics once students reach higher education. They only considered it effective if it were to carry through from their prior education. But since neither primary nor secondary schools in Hong Kong emphasize the ethical development of students, introducing ethics in higher education would therefore not help much. They believed that the ethical development of an individual ceases after adolescence. Most hospitality educators, on the other hand, regarded higher education as the final opportunity to shape their students’ ethical thinking and introduce the different types of ethical challenges that they may face in the industry. They deem it even more necessary to grasp that opportunity since both primary and secondary schools have not been giving much training in ethics to the students.

4.10 What is the degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum in their hospitality programme as perceived by the informant educators and students?

Subsequent to the understanding of the perceived importance of an ethics curriculum in a hospitality programme, respondents were asked to remark on the extent of inclusion of such a curriculum in their respective programmes. Taking into account the specificity of this question, the industry practitioners were purposely excluded. (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 3.1, Specific Research Question 3.)

As Table 23 shows, both educators and students unanimously indicated that the degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum was either low or extremely low in their respective programmes. It is commonly agreed that their programmes do not have any formal subject on hospitality ethics.
Only one out of the six educators interviewed had formally included a topic on ethics in his teaching. Other respondents, who do not include any ethics component in their syllabuses, stated that they would discuss it casually when a topic has ethical implications.

A normal subject of forty-two contact-hours in a fourteen-week semester is split into fourteen lessons of three hours each, i.e., it has one lesson per week. As explained, the major reason for the exclusion of a formal topic on ethics is the overwhelming amount of core knowledge to be covered. There is too much to be taught that already far exceeds the time available, and as a consequence, most lecturers will only address ethics topics when the time permits.

Simon Wong, who teaches “Human Resources Management”, explains:

There are usually too many topics that we have to cover in a subject that runs for a semester. Ethics, despite its importance, always becomes the second choice.

Norman Au is the only interviewee who formally includes a topic on ethics in his subject, “Information Systems Management in Hotel, Catering and Tourism”. As he described it, the amount of time that he spends on a discussion of ethics is relatively little when compared to other topics:

I have a topic on ethics that is formally put in my syllabus to the students. Normally, I will schedule that topic at the end of the semester. I usually spend about an hour on it. It is basically an overview of the importance of
developing good ethics in information systems. I will not go into details with the students because the time-table is very tight.

Ray Pine considered the degree of inclusion in hospitality programmes to be extremely low. He gave a brief but determined declaration on the issue:

As far as I know, there isn't any teaching of ethics in our programme at all. Even if there is, it would be very limited. Personally, I have not included any discussion of it in the subjects that I teach.

Mei Ng described her case:

In the subject that I teach, 98% of the topics are not related to ethics except one, i.e., food and beverage control. In that topic, I will briefly talk about the ethical issues in revenues management and sales control, e.g., the short sales issue in beverage inventory. Anyway, I only highlight these issues and not in details. It is about 15 minutes only. The inclusion of ethics is very minimal in our programme.

The interviews with the students produced very similar phrases. They in general indicated a hazy reminiscence of the teaching of ethics in their course of study. They also pointed to the absence of an individual subject on hospitality ethics. Most students could only recall very minimal discussions of it in any of their subjects. They described the discussions as random, brief and fragmented. Donna Wong remarked:

There is not any subject that has an ethics topic formally written in the syllabus. In some subjects, the lecturers may relate a point to the ethical consideration but it is usually spontaneous and brief. Most of the time, we do not pay attention to these parts.

Chung Ka Bo made a similar statement:

It is very minimal if you want me to quantify it. As I recall, there is no single subject on ethics in our school except the ones offered by the general education department. I didn't take those because they don't sound
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interesting to me. Informally, there are some discussions such as in the human resources and marketing classes. But they are very fragmented.

Janet Yu also made a comparable comment:

If you are talking about an entire subject, then we don't have. But sometimes teachers do mention it in class. They usually mention it as examples related to hotel or tourism and not really as a main topic to be discussed on, e.g., in the front office operations class, the lecturer tells you not to disclose guest information to outsiders. But we don't have a topic called "ethics in front office operations".

In conclusion, an evaluation of the feedback from the hospitality educators and students shows that the degree of ethics teaching is perceived to be minimal in their respective hospitality programme. It is clear that there is not a single subject on hospitality ethics, and only sporadically does a subject formally include a topic on ethics. However, there are some informal discussions on hospitality ethics, which are usually spontaneous and brief.

It should be noted that the actual amount of time spent on discussing ethics in the hospitality programmes, as revealed by the respondents, does not correspond to the perceived degree of importance as indicated by the educators. In Section 4.10 above, most educators were reported to have indicated that it is important to grasp that last opportunity to instil ethics in their students. However, this does not correspond to the minimal inclusion of a discussion of ethics that is perceived to be the current reality.

4.11 What are the barriers to the teaching of ethics in their hospitality programme as perceived by the educator informants?

The findings in response to the previous question indicate the limited inclusion of ethics teaching in the various hospitality programme. What are then the barriers that are perceived to hinder the integration of ethics into the curriculum? (The discussion below refers to Subsidiary Research Question 3.2, Specific Research Question 3.)
The respondents to this question are restricted to the hospitality educators. They are deemed to be the only appropriate group of respondents to comment on this issue since industry practitioners and students are generally uninformed of curriculum structure and design. Five common barriers were identified. In order to make this finding become more meaningful, the respondents were further contacted and asked to prioritize the five barriers in descending order of significance. The prioritization of the five barriers, as indicated in table 24, is (1) curriculum is too full; (2) lack of directive by school management and industry to teach ethics; (3) teachers' indifference to the teaching of ethics; (4) lack of teaching materials; and lastly (5) teachers' inability to teach ethics. Again, it should be reminded that the ranking is based on a general consensus rather than a full consensus among all respondents.

Table 24: Barriers to implementation of an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Hospitality Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum is too full</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>PL, MN, BC, RP, NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of directive by school management and industry to teach ethics</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>PL, RP, MN, NA, SW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' indifference to the teaching of ethics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>PL, RP, SW, BC</td>
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<td>Lack of teaching materials</td>
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<td>MN, SW, NA, BC</td>
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<td>Teacher's inability to teach ethics</td>
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<td>PL, SW, BC</td>
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4.11.1 Curriculum is too full

Many educators have cited the demanding nature of their curriculum as the most common reason for the exclusion of a subject on hospitality ethics in their programme. Respondents claimed that the huge body of core knowledge that must be taught to their students so crowds the curriculum that they are already falling behind in their teaching schedule. Paul Leung explained:

Our syllabuses are just too packed. Unlike the American system which is a four-year course, we have a very tight schedule to teach. I don't even have sufficient time to cover all my basic marketing topics. Unless we change the
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system from a three-year to a four-year study, otherwise, we will never have the time to cater for the need of ethics.

Mei Ng shared a similar thought:

Time is the major reason why you don’t find a subject on ethics in our programme. Our curriculum is just too crammed. It would be good if we can take away some language and general education subjects so that we can have more time for subjects of our own discipline. I believe courses on English and Chinese should not be taught in university level. Students have been learning these languages in their primary and secondary schools.

Billie Chow supported the contention that time constraint is probably the most common barrier:

Unlike some professional courses such as medicine and law that run for 4 or 5 years of study, our programme is only a three-year programme. It is designed in such a way that students have to take many common core subjects, language subjects and general education subjects. This leaves us only about half of the time, i.e., three semesters. We have to sacrifice hospitality ethics for the more important core topics. Time is really the major problem here.

In the following final quotation, Ray Pine explained the intensity of the curriculum. He explains the difficulty that most educators would encounter if they were to incorporate ethics into their curriculum.

In one semester, we only have 14 weeks. Each week, we only have 2 hours for a mass lecture. It means we only have 28 hours. Not to mention about ethics, I don’t even have enough time to cover all the basic concepts.
4.11.2 Lack of directive by school management and industry to teach ethics

The lack of any directive by school management and industry to implement a curriculum on ethics is perceived as the second most common barrier. Most educator respondents stated that there is a lack of emphasis on ethics education by school management, and that management never expresses the need to address the ethical development of students. Academic staff are thus not induced to teach ethics. As explained by the respondents, in the School of Hotel and Tourism Management at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, industry is involved in the development of their curriculum mainly through its role on the advisory committee. Industry professionals on the committee help plan and keep under review various aspects of the work of the school, including its curriculum design and future development. The advisory committee acts as an interface between industry and school, and meets usually twice a year.

Paul Leung commented:

*We have to look back to our history. In the old days when we were still a polytechnic, it was our tradition that we focused on the transferring of vocational and technical skills. The moral and ethical development of the students was something that was never there. Today, our president still only stresses the importance of how to ensure our graduates are technically strong and competitive. I don't see any of their concerns on the moral and integrity development of the students. I have never heard the president and the senior management people mention about it.*

Ray Pine explained the important role school management plays in curriculum design:

*In course development, the senior management plays a very important role in gearing the direction of the curriculum. If the management sees the need and says it's important to teach ethics, I'm sure everyone will somehow work it out despite the curriculum being quite full. But so far, we have never received any indication from the management that we need to look into students’ ethics.*
Mei Ng expressed her view of how the lack of emphasis on ethics by the advisory committee has contributed to the current minimal ethics teaching in her programme:

*In the last few advisory committee meetings that I attended, the industry executives have repeatedly raised the issue of the declining service standards in the industry. So, the programme has responded to it by adding in service management as a compulsory and core subject that every student must take. Since the industry people have never said anything about the industry ethics, we naturally did not think about it.*

Norman Au had a similar point of view:

*I would not say the school management deliberately ignores the teaching of ethics but I would say it has been overlooked. People really have not thought about it much. Therefore, the dearth of emphasis from the school management and industry is also one of the most major reasons for the non-existence of an ethics curriculum in our programme.*

4.11.3 Teachers’ indifference to the teaching of ethics

Most respondents also admitted that there is an indifference on the part of lecturers to the teaching of ethics. Lecturers tend to overlook the need to include ethics. Paul Leung told of his experience:

*In my subject, I never thought about the need to talk about ethics in marketing that much. My most concern is the concepts and skills that students must learn. We don’t really see the tangible benefits of talking about ethics to the students. The industry would not comment that our graduates are ethical but they would comment whether our graduates are professionally competent and technically sound.*

Ray Pine indicated that the curriculum is traditionally built around the functional areas of a hotel, and that this leads to ethics being overlooked as an important area:
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To teach about ethics is something that we have not thought about. If you are running a hotel, it is obvious that you have to do housekeeping, front office, food and beverage, human resources and marketing. They are absolutely clear and necessary. Since ethics is not a functional area, it never comes to our mind.

Billie Chow made a comparison with the situation in Singapore:

When I work out my syllabus, I never think about putting ethics in as one of my topics. It just does not strike me. In Hong Kong, ethics education never receives the attention it deserves. Unlike Singapore, the government over there always educates its people of the importance of being ethical through their education system and government policy. In Hong Kong, we just lack that environment.

4.11.4 Lack of teaching materials

Some respondents also identified the lack of teaching materials as one of the reasons for not including ethics in the hospitality programmes, but assigned this a lower degree of significance. Most textbooks and research articles on ethics are either too philosophical or not specific to the hospitality industry:

Mei Ng expressed her difficulty:

I have not seen a textbook on hospitality ethics and I find it very difficult to find articles on it as well. When I want to talk about some of the ethical issues related to the food and beverage area, I need to pull out information from different sources. I have noticed that there is not much.

Simon Wong also shared his experience in searching for materials on ethics to use in his subject:
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In my subject, I have thought about adding in some discussions on ethics. However, I could not find a single textbook on ethics and there are not many relevant and useful articles.

The following comment by Norman Au further illustrates that the relative lack of teaching materials on hospitality ethics is responsible, to a certain degree, for the minimal teaching of ethics in his subject, which is information system management in the hospitality industry:

Despite that I have a one-week lecture on ethics in my subject; I have to base it on textbooks of other general disciplines such as business. Materials on ethics in my area are basically none. I have spent a lot of effort just to compile the materials for one lecture, not to say an entire subject.

4.11.5 Teachers’ inability to teach ethics
In respect of the final factor, "teachers’ inability to teach ethics", two different perspectives emerged. Two respondents perceived that teaching ethics requires professional knowledge and training because of its philosophical nature. A true ethics education should be delivered by formally trained experts in ethics. Some, on the other hand, argued that teaching ethics does not necessarily require any formal training. Past experience, together with a logical mind, should allow lecturers to hold discussion with their students on ethical issues in their respective teaching areas.

Paul Leung was one of the two respondents who strongly supported the need for professional knowledge. He generally felt that the school currently lacked qualified staff to teach ethics:

We need to seek well trained educators because I don’t think any of our staff have received any formal ethical training before. Maybe we have studied one or two subjects in college but this is not good enough to teach ethics effectively. Ethics is very conceptual and theoretical.
Simon Wong believed that the lack of confidence and ability is one of the reasons for not discussing it in class:

*Indeed, ethics is something more complicated than what most people think. To decide on an action whether it is ethical or unethical always requires a careful analysis of the underlying principles and motives. One of the reasons why most of our teachers do not formally include ethics in their syllabus is probably that they don’t feel comfortable and confident.*

However, some informants had a different point of view. Mei Ng believed that every teacher should be capable of discussing ethics in their respective areas:

*I don’t think it requires special training to teach ethics. Every teacher should be able to discuss ethics in their respective subject with their experience and background. But they may need to read up the legal aspects before they discuss it with the students.*

Norman Au, who has an ethics component in his subject, also disagreed that teachers must have formal education in ethics before they can teach it:

*It is not necessary that our teachers must receive prior training in ethics before they can teach it in class. They should be experienced enough. Of course, the discussions are usually brief and superficial. It depends on what your objectives are. If you are only to highlight the issues, it should be good enough.*

It is apparent that there is a difference in view as to whether formal education and training are needed if someone wishes to discuss ethics with students. Nonetheless, since there is no consensus among the respondents, the inability of teachers to teach ethics is only considered a relatively less significant reason for the minimal inclusion of ethics teaching in the programme.

Following the presentation and analysis of findings, the next chapter will discuss the key findings in relation to both main and specific research questions.
Chapter 5: Discussion of Major Findings and Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of findings in the previous chapter indicates the different perspectives, insights and thoughts of the three groups of respondents towards the various aspects of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. The data are useful to understand the needs for such a curriculum and the barriers to its implementation. Technically, the analysis forms the first two initial steps of a revised model of the curriculum development process as stated in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1). The knowledge gained is important if a curriculum is to be introduced and implemented successfully at a later stage.

This chapter will now discuss those major findings in accordance with the main research question and the three specific research questions:

5.2 Current issues concerning ethics in the Hong Kong hotel industry

5.2.1 Ethical problems in the industry are common

The three groups of respondents unanimously agreed that ethical problems are common in the hotel industry in Hong Kong because of its unique characteristics, such as its labour-intensive nature, the numerous direct contacts between guests and employees and the access to guests' personal information. Most types of unethical behaviour can be found in day-to-day operations. This supports the argument put by Whitney (1990) that basically every issue in the hospitality industry has an ethical component. Ethical dilemmas are faced by employees in their everyday work. A similar statement is also made by Stevens and Fleckenstein (1999), who say that the industry always puts its employees and guests in awkward situations that are ethically ambiguous and questionable. This researcher strongly feels that the fact of its problems being so common is already sufficient to draw the attention of the various industry stakeholders to the issue.
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Another key finding of this study is that different respondents have different yardsticks to measure the degree of seriousness. For example, Dan Lee regards the every-day occurrence of money going missing from guest rooms as not serious because of the small amount of money usually involved. However, Surlina Yin perceives the disappearance of HK$100 or $200 on a regular basis to be both a common and a serious problem. It is now clear that some people find certain behaviours acceptable while others do not. Therefore the variation in perception among, for example, different department heads, means that they may respond differently on various ethical issues. This becomes confusing to those subordinates who look upon their supervisors as role models. Especially with the lack of an industry code of conduct, this simply suggests that ethics education is even more necessary as it would provide individuals with fundamental principles and guidelines to determine what are acceptable and what are unacceptable behaviours.

5.2.2 **Ethical problems in the industry are diverse and far-reaching**

Eight themes, each subsuming a range of common ethical issues, were identified by the three groups of respondents, demonstrating clearly the range and types of ethical problems that are commonly found in the hotel industry in Hong Kong. It is evident that the problems are many and may potentially involve all the different industry stakeholders, including hotel owners, senior management, department heads, supervisors, operative staff, suppliers, vendors and guests. The examples cited by the different groups of respondents confirm that ethical problems can be encountered literally in any department in any hotel at any time. The respondents listed the following eight themes, each subsuming a number of common ethical issues, in descending order, from most common to least common. They are (1) theft; (2) unfair treatment of employees; (3) discrimination; (4) abuse of guanxi (relationship); (5) abuse of authority/power; (6) fraud; (7) bribery; and lastly (8) sexual harassment.

The ranking of these eight themes in importance has added to our knowledge of the field. It is suspected that the particular prioritization may be unique to Hong Kong because of its specific economic, social and cultural background. For instance, the legal system of Hong Kong is relatively immature and not well developed in respect of its protection of labour. Its lack of ordinances prescribing minimum wages and its lack of laws against
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discrimination on the grounds of age and race has made the unfair treatment of employees
and other discrimination problems more common than in other developed countries. The
well-known Chinese culture of “face-giving” and “gift-giving” (Bond, 1996) also makes
the abuse of guanxi (relationship) and bribery more widespread in Chinese societies such
as Hong Kong. Thus, the identification and ranking of the issues should be useful in
developing and prioritizing ethics topics to be discussed in an ethics course in an
hospitality programme. If an ethical issue is judged to be common or important, it could
serve as a topic around which part of a course could be developed (Thomas et al., 1984).
Since teaching hours are always limited, course content has to be organized in such a way
that the students derive maximum benefit from it. For that reason the more common ethical
issues identified here should receive priority in the curriculum.

It should be remembered that the eight themes identified in this study are by no means an
exhaustive list of ethical problems that may be encountered in a hotel. They only represent
those issues that are commonly found. There are indeed other issues brought up in the
interviews that are less common, such as “truth-in-menu”, “disposal of hazardous waste”,
honesty in advertising” and “illegal copying of registered software”. Besides, the actual
number of cases of unethical behaviour may far exceed the number reported for two main
reasons. First, because many issues, such as unfair treatment of employees, abuse of guanxi
(relationship) and power, are always less obvious, they are difficult to quantify. Second, the
more obvious and thus quantifiable cases, such as theft, fraud and sexual harassment, are
usually handled and solved internally to safeguard the image and reputation of the hotels
concerned. The number of cases and their details are often not shared within the industry or
are publicly available for statistical purposes. Therefore this researcher strongly suspects
that the ethical problems in the industry are not only common, but far more complex and
serious than is apparent. In other words, the need for strategies and remedial actions to
combat the problems identified is great and pressing. If action is not taken, the ethical
problems identified will continue to erode the reputation of the industry.

5.2.3 Ineffective mechanisms currently used to maintain ethics at the workplace
Despite the alarming phenomena identified as common in the industry, this study has
revealed that the hotels have made only little effort to maintain ethical standards in their
organizations. Of the four methods used currently, the respondents strongly criticized, in particular, orientation programmes and employee handbooks as having serious shortcomings as methods for maintaining the ethical standards of a hotel organization.

A similar finding is made in the study by Or (1996), which examines the orientation programmes of five hotels in Hong Kong. This study identified two major shortcomings in general. First, Or points out that too much information is given out in the orientation programme so that it becomes intimidating to the employees. Or reports that an orientation programme, which typically takes up one day, normally includes a tour of the hotel premises, an introduction by senior management and department heads, an introduction of the company’s history and organization structure, training in first-aid and fire-fighting techniques, an explanation of employee benefits, work rules and regulations. Such an overwhelming number of activities leads Or to express strong reservations about the amount of information an employee can retain. Or’s views corroborate the view expressed by Paul Wong in this study, who complains that the hotel overloads newcomers with too much information in its one-day orientation programme.

The second shortcoming of such programmes according to Or (1996) is the weak support from department heads, who are often reluctant to release new recruits to attend an orientation programme. They consider orientation programmes futile and, as a result, insist on having the new recruits start work right on the first day. Because of the uncooperative attitude of department heads towards orientation programmes, many new staff members find themselves either attending the programme after a few weeks’ work or not attending one at all. This totally defeats the purpose of the orientation programme. According to Brown (1991), Powers (1992) and Abramson (1993), the main purpose of an orientation programme is to reduce the anxiety of newcomers. It is to create a sense of belonging and commitment by providing information about a company’s background and structure to its new employees, something that is best achieved in a relaxed atmosphere.

Therefore the present set-up of orientation programmes does not appear to be the right occasion to discuss important matters such as work ethics. It is currently insufficiently
realized by hotels that work ethics directly impacts on the reputation and success of their organization. As Garrett (1996) points out, ethical and unethical acts have great influence on individuals, firms, the business community and society as a whole. Therefore ethics should be given undivided attention and discussed in a well-structured and formalized setting. A commitment to maintain and enhance the ethical standards of an organization must involve the organization’s willingness to invest time, effort and resources. Simply incorporating a one-hour session on rules and regulations in the orientation programme will probably fail to convey to the employees the importance of work ethics.

Furthermore, the use of an employee handbook as a way of enhancing the ethical standards of employees also has two shortcomings. First, relying on employees to read the handbook is too passive a method to communicate information to them. In most cases, the new hires would read it once and put it away forever. Since information in the handbook is deemed to be all important to the employees, each section, including work rules and regulations, should be thoroughly explained and discussed with all new employees in a formal face-to-face session.

Second, a typical employee handbook only includes operational rules and regulations regarding issues such as smoking and sleeping at work, tardiness, use of foul language and stealing of guests’ property. However, hotels must realize that enhancing work ethics goes beyond mere compliance with work rules and regulations. For example, the study by Yeung and Pine (2003) identifies environmental protection, social conscience, employee integrity, social justice, consumer protection and business fraud as some of the important ethical considerations in the hospitality industry. It is apparent that operational work rules and regulations only account for a small part of the larger concept of professional ethics. Therefore the current practices of handling employee handbooks makes their effectiveness highly questionable. In summary, the findings of this study clearly reveal that hotels have failed to take appropriate measures to maintain and enhance the ethical standards of their industry. The ineffectiveness of the mechanisms currently used strongly suggests the need to look into more viable methods.
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To summarize the discussion of Specific Research Question 1, it is clear that the issue of ethics in the hotel industry in Hong Kong is complex, largely because of the unique characteristics of the industry. Coupled with the ineffective methods adopted by the industry to maintain standards of ethical behaviour, its ethical problems have become common, far-reaching and diverse in type. It is evident that all relevant industry stakeholders should pay immediate attention to the problems.

5.3 The need for an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes in Hong Kong

5.3.1 Solutions recommended by respondents
Apart from the four methods currently used by hotels, respondents suggested four other approaches to further enhance the ethical standards in the industry. As short-term strategies they recommended to establish a good internal control system (or review the current system if one is in place already) and to introduce an industry code of conduct. As medium-term strategy they advocated the better use of more external resources from the various government-related organizations. They believed that continual training would gradually raise the ethical standards of both employees and industry generally. Finally, for long-term success, most respondents strongly advised the inclusion of an ethics curriculum in the education system in Hong Kong. They perceived it as the ultimate solution to bring about and sustain an ethical environment in Hong Kong as a whole and the hotel industry in particular.

This researcher feels that these are all viable strategies to create an ethical work environment. A good internal control system is particularly important in the hotel industry because managers always delegate authority and empower their subordinates to deal with customers' needs. Sometimes when employees are given the power to make decisions, they may be tempted to make decisions that are in their own interest, i.e. they may act unethically. That ethical problems are common in the industry partly reflects the fact that its internal control systems are weak. However, as Robbins and Coulter (2001) put it, a good control system is necessary to ensure that activities are accomplished as planned, and to correct any significant deviations. That managers must establish a good internal control system is also stressed by Professor Lynn Sharp Paine of Harvard Business School, who
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considers the compliance with standards and procedures necessary to maintain a high ethical standard at work (*South China Morning Post*, May 3, 1994).

The fact that the industry does not have a code of conduct for its practitioners is perhaps one of the main reasons why the subject of ethics has not been able to arouse the attention of both practitioners and educators. The existence of a code of conduct is important because it would spell out the principal values and ethical rules the industry expects its practitioners to follow. In fact, the lack of a code of conduct is also common in hospitality sectors other than the hotel industry, as well as in other industries. A survey conducted by the ICAC in 1994 showed that of the 550 listed companies in Hong Kong, 182 or 33% had no code of conduct for their employees. This relatively high percentage reveals that Hong Kong in general overlooks the importance of professional ethics (*South China Morning Post*, May 30, 1994). The study by Ap and Wong (2001) on the professionalism of tour guiding in Hong Kong, also criticizes the lack of a code of conduct for the industry. In conclusion, they recommend the introduction of such a code for tour guides to ensure that a minimum level of work ethics is maintained. They argue that a code is necessary because it allows every staff member to understand clearly the kind of behaviour that their employers and the industry expect of them. Consequently, to achieve an immediate result, a code of conduct for the hotel industry is also highly recommended by this researcher. However, in order to make a code of ethics work, Robbins and Coulter (2001) suggest that ethical codes should not be developed and applied in isolation. Information about ethical expectations and reminders of an organization’s commitment to ethics should be continually conveyed to employees. Furthermore, all levels of management should support and continually reaffirm the importance of any code of ethics and consistently discipline those who break the code.

For long-term success, most respondents recommend the incorporation of an ethics curriculum in the education system in Hong Kong. The reasoning for this is similar to the argument by Reynolds (2000), namely, that the use of a code of conduct is less effective, with little permanent change to be expected in the ethical situation of companies, when it is introduced on its own. He suggests taking one step backward by educating people about
ethics before they enter the workforce. He regards formal ethics education as the most effective way to change people’s internal orientation. The study by Davis and Welton (1991) also advocates educating students to improve ethics in a society as a long-term strategy. Both studies regard a change of internal orientation as having more profound and long-lasting impacts on individuals than mere compliance with external rules and regulations.

Apart from establishing good internal control systems and introducing a code of ethics, the recommendation by the informants to introduce ethics education as a long-term strategy is strongly supported by this researcher. The researcher feels that all the short, medium and long-term strategies advocated by the informants are necessary, especially since there is no industry body comprised of respected professionals to raise and uphold ethical standards in the industry.

5.3.2 Values of Hong Kong people

It is hypothesized that the value system of a society has a close link with the ethical orientation of its individual members. Therefore, the three groups of respondents were asked to describe how they perceive the people in Hong Kong. Four major types of value were identified, namely, “materialistic/pragmatic”, “social status conscious”, “fast money oriented” and “situation oriented”. It is suspected that these values make people vulnerable to temptations which may lead them to engage in unethical behaviours, such as bribery, theft, abuse of guanxi (relationship), discrimination, abuse of power and fraud. This finding corroborates the conclusion drawn by Hofstede (1984), who identified Hong Kong culture as being large in power distance (social status conscious), masculine (pragmatic/materialistic, fast money oriented) and weak in uncertainty avoidance (situation oriented). These values are believed to have a strong correlation with making decisions which may lead to unethical behaviours (Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Ford & Richardson, 1994; Steers & Black, 1994).

Being a city that is social status conscious, Hong Kong correlates with lower ethical reasoning scores because it does not value equal relationships among people or emphasize social justice (Tsui & Windsor, 2001). The characteristic of being social status conscious
also implies a higher tolerance of hierarchies and autocratic leadership. Thus, as Young and Franke (2000) stress, the need for managers to set good ethical examples to their employees and enforce corporate ethical guidelines is also stronger. For this reason, good ethics education must be provided to employees. These observations and conclusions equally applies to the hospitality industry in Hong Kong.

The studies by Hofstede (1991), Vitell et al. (1993) and Chang and Ding (1995) have all pointed to the conclusion that individuals from masculine cultures are less likely to be influenced by formal codes of ethics. They are more apt to place their own self-interests above the interests of other stakeholders.

Finally, Hong Kong, being situation oriented, is negatively correlated with ethical behaviours. Its people will take advantage of a situation if they see it as beneficial to them. They are relatively "loose" in observing guidelines or principles. As Hofstede (1991) and Young and Franke (2000) report, individuals with low uncertainty avoidance believe that company rules do not have to be kept at all times and can be broken.

Based on the findings that Hong Kong people tend to be pragmatic, materialistic, situation oriented, fast money oriented and status conscious, it suggests a possible correlation with a negative ethical orientation. In other words, the unique culture of Hong Kong may incline its people to make unethical decisions. Therefore, if this problem is not addressed properly, Hong Kong will be putting its reputation at risk for a long time. The hospitality industry, which draws on the same pool of people for its labour force, will be subject to the same risk. In view of this, this study proposes the hospitality industry and the Hong Kong Government to devise strategies for creating and upholding high ethical standards in the industry and in society at large. These strategies should include short, medium and long-term strategies.

5.3.3 Factors affecting individuals' ethical development
This study has identified four major factors affecting the ethical development of an individual. It is agreed that parents in general are supposed to have the greatest impact on their children. However, because of the high cost of living in Hong Kong, there are more
and more housewives seeking full-time employment. It is possible that parents may overlook the proper upbringing of their children. Their roles at home may fall on the domestic helpers who are employed to take care of household matters as well as the children. The number of foreign domestic helpers reached a record high of 233,834 in 2002, possibly the highest number in the Asia Pacific region (http://www.info.gov.hk/info/entry-dom.htm). On the other hand, some of those parents who have time for their children may instil questionable values in them, such as placing great importance on money and social status. This is illustrated by how the people of Hong Kong are described in this study. Therefore, in light of this peculiar phenomenon, society should not totally rely on parents to provide proper moral education to their children. Instead, this responsibility may have to fall more on others. As Sheung Kwok-chu, Chairman of the Hong Kong Association of Discipline Masters of Secondary Schools, sees it, the role played by schools in the moral and holistic development of students is becoming increasingly important because of the issue of dual working parents (South China Morning Post, 1992).

The impact of peers and the media are also described by some respondents as two major factors contributing towards low moral standards. Respondents claim that street gangs, violent movies and comic books are having the most adverse effects. It is said that the undesirable influence of peers and the media are, to some extent, responsible for the deterioration in ethical standards and the social problems of the young generation today. Statistics from the Hong Kong Police Department indicate that the numbers for major crimes for 2002, such as violent crime, drug seizures, deception, theft and criminal damage, have shown a steady increase over the last few years (http://info.gov.hk/police). The statistics also show that there is a tendency for the average age of people committing such crimes to decrease. A survey of 22 secondary schools in Hong Kong by the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong (DAB) in August, 2003, revealed some alarming behaviours. More than 55% of the 832 student respondents in Forms three to five admitted to at least one instance of illegal behaviour in the past year. Some of the common offences committed included not paying full fare when travelling, vandalism, fighting, theft in school, shop-lifting, and possession of illegal drugs or weapons. More than 15% of the
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respondents confessed that, in order to make quick money, they had worked in places where sexual services were provided to customers (Apple Daily News, 2003).

All in all, it is now evident that some parents, peers and the media may have been affecting the ethical development of a given young individual in an unconstructive manner. Thus education, being identified as one of the four key factors, becomes even more crucial. Regrettably, the student respondents have clearly indicated that neither their primary nor secondary schools had included any teaching on ethics. Together with its minimal inclusion in higher education, this study has to hold the education system in Hong Kong responsible in part for the ethical problems in Hong Kong.

The argument of the respondents opposing an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes in tertiary education is similar to those found in some previous studies (Miller & Miller, 1976; Andrew, 1979; Thurow, 1987), which is that ethics are basically learned early in life through socialization and are well established before a student enters tertiary education. These studies see the teaching of ethics in places of higher education as being of little value. Starratt (1994) goes even further in arguing that ethics teaching does not belong in schools at all, but rather in homes and churches.

However, most educators deem the incorporation of ethics in a hospitality curriculum as important despite its current absence in both primary and secondary schools. They insist that it is probably the last chance to promote ethics and instil proper values in students. Their views are supported by the findings of Mathiasen (1998), in which staff encourage universities to play a proactive role in the moral development of students.

Furthermore, the educators in this study disagree with the proposition that ethical values cannot be changed after adolescence. This view is supported by the findings of Wade (1999) that hospitality students' attitudes and actions can be influenced by their learning experience in universities, and that the curriculum can be a positive force for change. These findings simply disprove the view of the industry practitioners and students. Although some studies have attempted to determine the relationship between the age and the moral
standards of an individual (Freedman & Bartholomew, 1991; Ruegger & King, 1992; Malinowski & Berger, 1996), they did not study the relationship between age and moral development longitudinally. The majority of studies only confirmed that older study participants had a higher moral level than younger ones. For instance, the study by Freedman & Bartholomew (1991) of 2,196 students in a business course at the University of Southern Mississippi reveals a significant difference between the group aged twenty-two to thirty versus the group aged twenty-one and under, with the older group demonstrating a higher level of ethical standards.

In spite of their negative view, it should be noted that the industry practitioners and students are not denying the importance of such a curriculum in an hospitality programme – they are only asserting that it has to be supported by both primary and secondary education. In other words, a review of ethics teaching should extend to all three levels of education in Hong Kong. Therefore, disregarding the differences between the views of industry practitioners and students on the one hand and those of the educators on the other, this study concludes that while an ethics curriculum in an hospitality programme is necessary, it is equally important to include it at both primary and secondary levels so as to maximize its effectiveness in cultivating and instilling strong ethics in students. This strong need is further supported and demonstrated by the peculiar social environment of Hong Kong, such as both parents working, street gangs of youths and the negative influence of the media, as well as the materialistic and pragmatic values of people in Hong Kong. These factors all tend to steer the society of Hong Kong towards a negative and unethical environment.

5.4 Barriers to the implementation of ethics teaching in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong

The responses given by most educator and student respondents showed a general consensus that the inclusion of an ethics curriculum in their respective programmes is low or extremely low. They all confirmed the lack of a subject on ethics in their specific programme. They also stated that although there were informal discussions on ethics in some subjects, these were perceived as minimal, spontaneous and fragmented. This
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compares poorly with the study by Enghagen (1990), in which 73% of the responding hospitality institutions in the US are shown to include ethics in their curricula. Despite 31% of these only including ethics as an elective, the results show a far higher degree of concern with ethics in American hospitality schools.

In view of such a low degree of inclusion of ethics as a subject in the curricula of hospitality schools in Hong Kong, it is imperative to identify the constraints operating in Hong Kong. As stated in the revised model of the curriculum development process, it is crucial for curriculum planners and educators to identify all key constraints on the implementation of a particular curriculum.

According to this study, five major barriers that hinder the inclusion of an ethics curriculum in the various programmes have been identified. They are, in descending order of significance, (1) curriculum is too full; (2) lack of a directive to teach ethics by school management and industry; (3) teachers’ indifference to the teaching of ethics; (4) lack of teaching materials and (5) teachers’ inability to teach ethics. These findings are similar to the findings by Enghagen (1990) in a study that examined the barriers to the implementation of ethics education in hospitality programmes in the United States. It identifies the timetable being too crowded with different subjects, lacking staff who are interested in teaching ethics, and who are qualified to teach it as the three major reasons for excluding ethics in their curriculum.

Most educators interviewed in this study highlight the fact that under the three-year study mode of the degree hospitality programmes in Hong Kong, the curriculum is just too crowded to include other subjects such as ethics. The core subjects in hospitality management plus the required language and general business subjects completely fill up the timetable. Similar findings are made in the study by Starratt (1994), namely, that secondary school teachers simply do not have the time to teach ethics as they are already falling behind in their primary job of teaching basic skills in language and science.
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This study has identified the lack of school management and industry directives to teach ethics as the second most significant reason for not including ethics in hospitality programmes. The educator respondents mainly criticized the senior management of the SHTM for emphasizing the teaching of vocational and technical skills while neglecting the moral development of students. They also commented that the industry executives have not used their role on the SHTM’s advisory committee to point out to school management the need consider the issue of ethics in the industry. All things considered, the respondents held school senior management and industry executives responsible for the lack of an ethics curriculum in its hospitality programme. This finding thus corroborates the findings of the study by Menzel (1997), in which the lack of support and directives from university management is found to be the major reason for the exclusion of ethics teaching.

Most of the educator respondents also held themselves accountable as the third most significant reason for the lack of ethics teaching. They admitted that without directives from school management they tended to concentrate on teaching technical skills and knowledge to their students. Their main concern was to ensure that their students were technically competent. They said that they had not been paying much attention to the ethical aspects of their students. An additional disincentive to introducing the teaching of ethics in their programmes for these academic educators – for whom the primary criterion for success in academia remains productivity in research – is their fear that if what they teach strays from “mainstream” subjects within their faculty, they will pay a price in career terms.

Apart from the lack of directive and interest, there is also a view that teaching ethics requires professional training and background. Some believe that formal education and training are required if one is to discuss ethics with students. Their concerns are similar to the views expressed in the studies by Crain and Carruth (1992) and Oddo (1997). The staff members in both studies expressed the view that they did not feel comfortable discussing ethical theories and issues in class because they were not trained ethicists. Teachers in secondary schools share the same worry. In a survey of 993 registered teachers from 432 secondary schools by the Department of Religion at the Chinese University of Hong Kong,
564 respondents said they did not feel they had been adequately trained to teach moral subjects (*Hong Kong Standard*, 1999). However, some educator respondents in this study argued that with the life experience of most teaching staff, they should have no difficulty relating ethics to the areas they teach.

The educator respondents in this study also pointed out the lack of textbooks and research articles on hospitality ethics as one of the reasons for not having included ethics in their curriculum. First of all, since textbooks on hospitality ethics are not commonly seen on the market and in the library, they will naturally overlook ethics as an important area that they should attend to. Second, despite having an interest in discussing ethics with their students, they said that they would easily give up when they found it too time-consuming to look for materials. Studies by Gunz and McCutcheon (1998) and Mintz (1990), which surveyed accounting academics, also found the lack of subject and teaching materials to be a major curriculum constraint.

A questionnaire survey of 41 hospitality and tourism teachers in two hospitality institutions in Hong Kong by Yeung (2000) indicates that the lack of emphasis by both schools' management on ethics is perceived to be the most important barrier. This is followed closely by the heavy emphasis placed on teaching and learning subjects of practical knowledge and skills. Other barriers, such as lack of teaching materials and lack of interest and skills by teaching staff, are only considered secondary barriers.

Reviewing the respondents' comments in this study and the findings of other studies, it seems clear that the barrier identified as the “curriculum being too packed” under the current three-year mode of study is the most critical factor. For that reason it depends on the duration of an hospitality programme as to whether an ethics curriculum can be successfully incorporated. Today, with the exception of some specialized disciplines such as medicine, all degree programmes at the eight universities in Hong Kong have adopted the English system of a three-year mode of study. As pointed out by the educator respondents in this study, they simply cannot incorporate an extra curriculum under the current system.
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However, an opportunity may have come to do so. In early 2003, Professor K. C. Li, Secretary for Education and Manpower, announced the government's plan to change the degree programmes at all universities from a three-year to a four-year mode of study (http://www.emb.gov.hk). This initiative stems from the need to ensure that there is sufficient time for the total development of students, including intellectual, physical, psychosocial, career, spiritual and moral. This is obviously a good chance for curriculum planners and educators if they wish to incorporate ethics into their curriculum. However, there are still heated arguments between secondary school principals and university presidents on an agreed time-frame for the implementation of such a change. The current five-year secondary and two-year post-secondary system (5+2) will be abolished and replaced by a three-year junior high and three-year senior high (3+3) system. Such a change will of course have a significant impact on the resources of secondary schools (Sing Tao Daily News, 2003).

Despite the change of system appearing to be favourable to the universities in Hong Kong, it costs the universities money to have undergraduate students for another year. However, the University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong has clearly stated that there will be no extra money from the government to fund the change in programmes from three years to four years. Instead, the UGC will continue to reduce its funding to the eight universities. The total funding to universities for 2003/04 and 2004/05 will be cut by 10% in each financial year (Hong Kong Economic Journal, 2003). Therefore the funding for any additional academic staff will be a major problem if the hospitality programmes decided to incorporate ethics into their curriculum.

The barriers to the inclusion of ethics teaching in the curriculum may be seen as existing at macro-levels (the education system, its culture and the hospitality industry) and micro-levels (school management, faculty members and teaching resources). However, the complexity of the barriers means that a difficult path lies ahead for both curriculum planners and educators who wish to implement an ethics curriculum. Therefore, the successful implementation of an ethics curriculum in an hospitality programme requires the
concerted efforts and total commitment from all parties concerned, including government, industry, school management, staff members and curriculum planners.

5.5 Issues to be considered in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum

Since this study mainly focuses on examining the first two steps of a revised model of the curriculum development process, the three specific research questions intended to provide an answer to the main research question in relation to those two steps only.

In assessing the need for an ethics curriculum for the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong, some important issues must be considered by the hospitality industry practitioners and educators. To begin with, it is imperative to grasp an understanding of the current state of ethics in the hospitality industry. Curriculum planners must examine the extent of the problems because without this knowledge they will have no grounds on which to base an assessment of the need for ethics training in the industry. It is also crucial that views are solicited from different groups of significant industry stakeholders. As in this study, key industry informants, such as the executive director of the Hong Kong Hotels Association and the general manager of human resources of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, industry practitioners from various major departments in hotels, hospitality educators and students will all need to be included. This will ensure that a wide range of perspectives and relevant insights are collected.

In reviewing the extent of the problems, it is important to identify the different types of ethical issues that exist in the industry because they indicate the complexity of the problems under scrutiny. The ethical problems identified reflect the specific economic and social environment of the society in which they occur. The implication of the analyses presented in this study is that the wider the range and the more diverse the nature of the ethical issues in a particular society, the more complex are the challenges that hotel employees face. Correspondingly, the need to provide ethics training for industry practitioners or prospective employees is also stronger.
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The next major issue to consider is the need for a review of the current methods adopted by industry practitioners to cope with the problems in the hotel industry. The effort made and the effectiveness of the methods chosen are key determinants of the need to implement ethics training. It is assumed that the smaller the effort the industry puts into current methods, and the less the effectiveness of these methods, the more important will be the need for ethics training in the industry.

Another issue to be considered when introducing ethics teaching into hospitality curricula is the availability of other possible options to raise the ethical standards of industry practitioners. Having only few options means the need to implement such a curriculum is high, and vice versa. Of the four approaches suggested by respondents in this study, an internal control system, an industry code of conduct and, workshops and seminars are considered to be short-term and medium-term strategies likely to produce relatively little permanent change in the internal ethical orientation of employees. Ethics education is the only option identified as a long-term solution to the problem. Knowing this is important in determining the need for an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong.

It is also imperative to understand the values of hotel employees. However, if it is not possible to carry out a study of the values of hotel employees, an alternative would be to examine the values of the people in a given society, that is, the people of Hong Kong, as was done in this study. Many studies have confirmed that there is a direct relationship between the values of a society and the ethical orientation of an individual. If the values of the people of Hong Kong, for example, were to promote a positive ethical orientation, this would imply a lower degree of need for ethics education. On the other hand, if their values were to promote a negative ethical orientation, the need for ethics training and education would naturally be more pressing. Therefore, it is important for curriculum planners of hospitality programmes in higher education to examine the values of their students so that the need for an ethics curriculum can be properly determined.

In view of the contention that the values of a society have a direct relationship to individuals’ ethical orientation, it is also crucial to consider the factors affecting their
values. As in this study, parents, friends, peers, schools and the media are all identified as having various degrees of influence. Among these, parents and friends are said to be playing a more significant role. It would therefore be reasonable to ask why education has less influence on the individuals. Does it mean that the inclusion of ethics teaching in the education system in Hong Kong is of limited value and that therefore its influence has not been as strong as that of parents and friends, for example?

Curriculum planners must also seek to understand the current lack of any ethics education in the various hospitality programmes. This is an important issue to be considered because it significantly affects the degree to which it is necessary to incorporate such a curriculum in these programmes. A low degree of inclusion, as has been shown in this study to be the current situation, means that the efforts made by university or school managements have been minimal. In view of the current complex and problematic state of ethics in the hotel industry, the need to incorporate an ethics curriculum to enhance the ethical standards of hospitality students becomes even greater. It would also be useful to know the extent of the inclusion of ethics education in both primary and secondary schools since this would tell curriculum planners how much ethics training students had received prior to enrolling in hospitality programmes. The higher the degree of inclusion of ethics teaching at primary and secondary levels, the lower the degree of need to incorporate such a curriculum in higher education.

Prior to developing and implementing an ethics curriculum, curriculum planners must also consider the views of hospitality industry practitioners, educators and students concerning such a curriculum in hospitality programmes. An understanding of their views is important because they are, respectively, the primary supporters, facilitators and recipients of such a curriculum. Their views on this issue could radically promote or hinder the introduction and implementation of such a curriculum. The rationales for and benefits of having such a curriculum must be explained to gain support from these parties. At the same time, all other possible barriers should also be identified. External constraints, such as the general neglect of ethics education in society and the values of society, and internal constraints, such as the lack of emphasis by school managements, the lack of teaching materials, a timetable that is
over-crowded already, the indifferent attitude of industry practitioners, the examination-oriented attitude of students and the lack of professional knowledge sufficient to teach ethics, are only some of the major barriers that have been identified in this study. Curriculum planners must identify the barriers to the implementation of such a curriculum. They must tackle each and every one of them if they wish to implement an ethics curriculum effectively and smoothly.

The last two issues to be taken into consideration when assessing the need for an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes are, first, the part played by professional associations in maintaining and monitoring work standards ethics, and second, the availability of a code of conduct for the industry.

Concerning the first issue, industries such as accounting, law and medicine, for example, have set up their respective associations in an attempt to govern the behaviour of their practitioners. These associations are empowered to expose and bring before a disciplinary tribunal any member who is alleged to have committed professional misconduct. On the other hand, most key hospitality associations, such as the Hong Kong Hotels Association and the Hong Kong Tourism Board, act more as marketing and public relation agents for the industry. They do not serve the purpose of monitoring their members' conduct and, if need be, disciplining them for professional misconduct. Without such a monitoring and disciplinary mechanism, the need for an ethics curriculum for the hospitality industry becomes even more vital.

Concerning the second issue, it is important to consider the availability of a code of conduct for the industry. For example, in Hong Kong the "Banking Code of Conduct" and the "Code of Conduct for Employees of Accountancy Practices" were specifically created to collectively govern the conduct of their respective members' businesses. The codes stipulate the standard of behaviour expected of all the practitioners of the respective industries. By contrast, the lack of a code of conduct for the hospitality industry, as identified in this study, becomes a critical determinant of the need for an ethics curriculum.
In summary, in determining the need for and identifying the constraints in developing and implementing an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong, curriculum planners must identify the discrepancy between the existing and the desired set of conditions, or between the existing and the desired curriculum, as described by Borg and Gall (1989). Therefore this study has identified the following major issues as ones to be considered: current ethics issues in the industry, types of ethical issues, methods adopted by industry to cope with ethical problems, effectiveness of these methods, availability of other methods, current ethical orientation of students, factors affecting students’ ethical orientation, current degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes, views of key stakeholders in ethics education, availability of a code of conduct and functions of professional associations.

5.6 Conclusion

Hong Kong’s economic success is built on a number of pillars, such as entrepreneurship, pursuit of free market policies, commitment to the rule of law, and a flexible and resilient business sector. Another factor of equivalent significance is the adherence to and the upholding of business ethics, which is critical to Hong Kong’s position as an international financial centre. Among its many different business sectors, the hotel industry is primarily a business of goodwill and reputation. One scandal of unethical practice is enough to seriously damage the image of the industry. As Payne and Dimanche (1996) say, ethics in business is no longer an option but an absolute requirement for success. Therefore, with the promising future of the tourism industry in Hong Kong, hoteliers must have the foresight to educate their employees at an early stage to ensure the continuing success of the industry.

The findings of this study make it clear that ethical problems in the hotel industry in Hong Kong are common, complex and diverse in nature. Problems may arise at any level, from members of staff at the top level, including general manager, directors and managers, down to supervisors and frontline employees, such as room attendants, waiters and receptionists. The misdeed of one may seem inconsequential, but the misdeeds of many in aggregation will erode the long-established fundamentals of success. As a result, the industry should be mindful that the temptations of making unethical judgments are faced by employees at all
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levels. The industry cannot be oblivious to unethical practices such as corruption, theft and discrimination.

In view of the above, hospitality industry leaders must form a close partnership with government bodies such as the ICAC and hospitality institutions to keep the industry ethical, stable and prosperous. All must realize that in the difficult financial situation of recent years, the hotel industry of Hong Kong cannot afford to bear unnecessary costs, loss of profit or goodwill as a result of malpractice, fraud or corruption. As Fox (2000) stresses, good managerial ethical standards are important and necessary in the hospitality industry since the costs of a poor ethical environment are high. Thus it would be disappointing to see apathy, negligence or even ignorance by hoteliers and educators tarnish the reputation of the industry.

According to the forecasts issued by the Hong Kong Tourism Board, a growth of 8.4% to 17.9 million arrivals is anticipated in 2003, following a record-breaking year in 2002 with 16.5 million arrivals. This will bring massive business opportunities and generate greater revenue for the economy of Hong Kong as a whole. However, hoteliers must realize that unlike traditional measures that have been purely financial in nature, the new performance yardstick today is more complex. They must not only turn in superior financial results, they must also demonstrate moral intelligence in their dealings with their employees, customers and various stakeholders. Therefore, while new facilities and tourist attractions have been introduced to reinforce the “hardware”, the Hong Kong Government, industry practitioners and educators must also invest in the “software” – quality of service, professionalism, integrity of the workforce and ethical leadership, which are the “winning edge”. Hospitality employees likewise must measure up to the expectations of tourists.

Although cultivating an ethical work environment is a long-term process and may involve investment in time, money and human resources, hoteliers and educators have to appreciate the importance of ethical practices that will win the trust and loyalty of both employees and guests. This is not only important in enhancing employees’ job satisfaction and in improving their retention rate, it is also crucial to keep the tourists coming in and coming
back. If tourists are greeted with honest and upright professional services, the chances of their returning to Hong Kong will be better.

To achieve short-term results, as indicated by the respondents in this study, a good internal control system and an industry code of conduct must be implemented. Hoteliers must make efforts to strengthen their internal systems of control since they enable the early detection of wrongdoings in their organizations. On the other hand, an industry code of conduct can make clear to every hotel employee what is acceptable behaviour in the industry. However, it needs to be well administered and rigorously enforced.

To achieve long-term success, maintaining good ethical behaviour goes beyond compliance with external rules and regulations. It must involve an internal change of the ethical orientation of hospitality employees and students. Therefore it is necessary to take one step back to educate the hospitality students, who are the future managers of the industry. They must be equipped with the knowledge and skills required to make sound ethical decisions in their future work. A majority of respondents expressed agreement that ethics education is the only long-term solution to sustain an ethical environment in the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. Hospitality executives and educators must start with their students and instil in them an understanding of the importance of ethical behaviour. Ethics education is more effective in preventing wrongdoing. Educating hospitality students in acceptable behaviour is, no doubt, the joint responsibility of many parties, including mainly government-related bodies, industry practitioners and educational institutions. In view of the fact that ethics education is literally absent from the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong, the need for such a curriculum is obvious and exceedingly strong.

With the analysis of the data gathered in this study, the first two steps in the revised model of the curriculum development process are now completed. The confirmation of the need for ethics education and the identification of constraints on introducing it provide a good reference point for government-related bodies, hospitality industry practitioners and hospitality educators to work effectively on the design and implementation of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. The promotion and incorporation
of ethics education will improve the quality of the industry's most important resource – its manpower. It is hoped that with a clearly defined and well-designed hospitality ethics education, hospitality graduates will be better equipped to make appropriate judgments in their career. An ethics curriculum is also crucial to the education institutes providing hospitality programmes because it will help enhance their image and their reputation for producing quality graduates with integrity and of high calibre. Most important of all, having an ethics curriculum in hospitality programmes will instil confidence and trust in industry executives that the graduates they recruit not only excel academically but that they have also received formal training in ethical values and behaviours.
Chapter 6: Recommendations and Suggestions for Future Research

6.1 Recommendations

In view of the complex and multifaceted phenomenon that ethics is in the hotel industry in Hong Kong, as shown in this study, industry practitioners, educational institutions with hospitality programmes and government-related bodies must put forward concerted efforts to remedy the current situation by cultivating and fostering an ethical environment in the industry. In this chapter, recommendations will be made for the benefit of these parties, in particular, the educational institutions providing hospitality programmes. There is strong agreement found in the views expressed by the respondents in this study that, among the different measures, ethics education is the only long-term solution to the problem of how to bring about and maintain ethical and honourable behaviour in the industry. As a further measure, the Education and Manpower Bureau of Hong Kong, together with the Education Commission, may review the teaching of ethics and morality in both primary and secondary schools. Currently, such a subject is not a mandatory component of the curriculum. In accordance with the findings of this study, this researcher would like to make the following recommendations.

1. With the lack of directive from the university and school management to teach ethics as indicated by the findings of this study, universities could stress the importance of the ethical and moral development of students by stating it in their mission statements. This would give a clear directive to the senior management of universities, to department heads and to staff to pursue the ethical and moral development of students as a goal.

2. As indicated by some of the respondents that the educational institutions providing hospitality programmes emphasize heavily on the vocational and technical training of the students and overlook the ethical development of the students, it would be beneficial if the institutions could set up a curriculum development committee to constantly monitor, and frequently overhaul and re-design the programme curriculum and syllabuses to ensure that they are up-to-date, comprehensive and
reflect the changing needs of the industry. The curriculum, and thus the education provided, can foster the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development of students.

3. Since the teacher's inability to teach ethics is identified as one of the barriers to the implementation of an ethics curriculum, therefore both the managements of universities and of the hospitality programmes can encourage and sponsor the attendance of academic staff at ethics training courses and seminars so that they will be better equipped and feel more comfortable about teaching ethics. Despite some respondents being of the view that the life experience of academic staff in itself is enough to qualify them to discuss ethics, gaining professional knowledge and expertise would definitely enhance the quality of their teaching, which in turn would benefit their students.

4. As the current degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum is deemed to be low in the hospitality programmes, industry executives can be invited, on a regular basis, as guest speakers to share their experience and views of the ethical issues in the hospitality industry in Hong Kong. Besides, a series of workshops on work ethics can be organized for those students who are about to undergo their industrial internships. Both initiatives would help them become aware of the possible ethical challenges that they may encounter during their placement in industry.

5. As the better use of workshops and seminars from external sources is suggested by the respondents to enhance ethical standards, more government departments and government-related organizations therefore can be invited to promote ethics to students and industry practitioners. These may include agencies such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Labour Department, the Intellectual Property Department, the Environmental Protection Department and the Narcotics Division of the Security Bureau.
6. As suggested by the respondents in this study, an industry code of conduct/ethics would be helpful for the industry practitioners. In addition, the hospitality programmes could include the code and address issues arising out of it in their curricula. A code of conduct could even be used to develop useful course materials. This would help alleviate the lack of teaching materials identified as one of the barriers to the implementation of an ethics curriculum in this study. Indeed, a sample code developed by the ICAC and copies of the codes of conduct of various companies and professional associations are available in the Hong Kong Ethics Development Centre for reference. Such ethics codes could provide a strong foundation for an effective corporate ethics programme as well as an ethics curriculum.

7. Due to the indifference of teachers to teach ethics, conferences, forums, symposiums and seminars on ethics for the hospitality industry can be periodically organized in Hong Kong. These would draw the issue of ethics in the industry to the attention of the teachers.

8. As criticized by industry practitioners and students alike, there is also an obvious lack of ethics education in both primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. This lack would undermine the effectiveness of an ethics curriculum in hospitality programme were one introduced. Therefore the Education Commission may consider setting up an independent curriculum team to coordinate the development and implementation of an ethics curriculum across the three levels of education in Hong Kong.

9. Since the current methods adopted by hotels to maintain ethical standards are described by some of the respondents as being not very effective, hotels may appoint an employee or committee to oversee the upholding of professional ethics in their organizations. Staff members can be sponsored to attend dedicated in-house or outside training courses on work ethics. The on-going provision of training in
ethics to current employees is considered by the respondents as a medium-term solution to the task of improving an ethical environment in the industry.

All in all, the Hong Kong hospitality industry faces many challenges ahead. In times of hardship it must hold fast to its strengths and be vigilant so as to be able to meet any threats or take advantage of opportunities. The reputation of the industry has been hard-earned, and it cannot afford to be complacent. Despite widespread pessimism about the general economic situation of Hong Kong, the future of the hospitality industry is still promising. Therefore maintaining and enhancing an ethical environment in the hospitality industry in Hong Kong is of paramount importance. However, this will require concerted efforts from all key parties in the industry, including industry practitioners, hospitality education institutions and government-related organizations.

Having identified in this study the important role potentially played by ethics education as a long-term strategy to solve the ethical problems of the hotel industry, all interested parties must work closely together to develop and implement an ethics curriculum for the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong. Coupled with the short- and medium-term strategies identified, such as an industry code of conduct, better internal control systems, ethics seminars and workshops, and the recommendations made above, it will not be long before we could see the ethical standards in the industry improve by a great extent.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

A search of the relevant literature found that research concerning the teaching of ethics, curriculum development, education and other issues in the hospitality industry is extremely sparse. Many other aspects, apart from those examined in this study, could be investigated, and some are suggested in this section. Studies of these aspects could provide a better understanding of the complex phenomenon called ethics in the hotel industry, as well as of issues concerning the design and implementation of an ethics curriculum in the hospitality programmes in Hong Kong.
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- This study examined the first two steps in a revised model of the curriculum development process by using qualitative research methods to gather a full range of participants' views and develop an understanding of the range of issues that needed to be addressed. A quantitative approach, such as a questionnaire survey, could be used to replicate this study, possibly with the additional method of triangulation. Key attributes identified in this study could be used in the design of questionnaires.

- Further research could focus on the remaining steps in the revised model of the curriculum development process, namely, the formulation of objectives, the determination of content and materials, the selection of teaching strategies, and evaluation. There is an obvious lack of research in these areas, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.

- Despite the hotel industry being an international business that can be managed on the basis of universal management principles, the unique culture and environment of Hong Kong affects the range, types and complexity of ethical issues in the industry. Thus, it would be worthwhile to replicate this study in other countries in order to be able to make comparisons with Hong Kong.

- Further research should be conducted into the ethical orientation and standards of hospitality employees and hospitality students in Hong Kong. This would help determine the gap between their actual ethical standards and desired ethical standards. This information would be useful in designing the content and focus of an ethics curriculum and of training programmes.

- It would also be useful to conduct research on the ethical orientation and standards of the people of Hong Kong. This would help determine the need to incorporate ethics education in the education system in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the degree of inclusion of an ethics curriculum at all levels of education in Hong Kong, that is, primary, secondary and tertiary education, needs to be established. Reliable data would help identify the need for such a curriculum and help educationists devise
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policies to monitor the development and implementation of ethics education at all levels.

- Finally, a longitudinal study should be conducted into any change of ethical orientation, awareness and standards of hospitality students before and after completing an ethics curriculum. This would help educators and curriculum planners determine the effectiveness of such a curriculum.
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