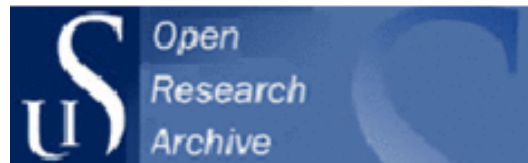




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“I hope it won’t happen to me!” Hospitality and tourism students’ fear of difficult moral situations as managers

- Einar Marnburg
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Abstract

In order to organize ethical education for future managers in the hospitality and tourism industry, an interesting study is to look into how students conceptualize the moral ordeals they think they will meet in their future management positions. Hospitality and Tourism students at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management, Stavanger University, were given a group assignment to write stories (narratives) about managers who were confronted with ethical dilemmas—a situation they could face as future managers.

In order to make an explorative study of the narratives, an analytical categorization model based on former research in business ethics was constructed. This model focuses on what types of ethical dilemmas are described, who is involved in the situation, situational factors, individual attributes, and who is to blame for the dilemma appearance. Most of the dilemmas described in the histories were general business ethical issues and the students focused mainly on problems between superiors and subordinates within the organizations. The analyses revealed that the students have a sound conception of how moral dilemmas were elicited and of social reactions within the organization. The students also showed a high degree of self-insight and were generally skeptical of top management's decisions or lack thereof. However, the analyses also revealed that the students’ implicit theories about management included harsh expectations from the organizations and that individualistic and lone managers had to bear all the problems on their shoulders. Possible implications of the findings are discussed in relation to professional practice, education and future research.

Keywords

- Business ethics;
 - Tourism;
 - Hospitality;
 - Management;
 - Implicit leadership theories;
 - Education;
 - Professional practice
-

1. Introduction

What moral ordeals do future managers in the hospitality and tourism industry expect to be confronted with? When these ordeals arise, are they due to sloppiness, lack of competence, mismanagement, temptations that belong to the industry's operational nature, or what? Moreover, who or what creates moral dilemmas in the industry? Do the individual managers have themselves to blame?

Teaching in Ethics is meaningless if it only results in the graduates' ability to reason theoretically and make "nice talk" (Marnburg, 2003). As some writers have pointed out (e.g. Daniel, Elliott Howard, & DuFrene, 1997; Yeung & Pine, 2003), teaching in Ethics has to be linked to what the students perceive as *the* reality, i.e. dilemmas they expect to face in a management position.

Research into implicit leadership theories (see, e.g. Engle & Lord, 1997) has revealed that people have cognitive structures that conceptualize what prototypes of good and bad leadership performance are. The implicit leadership theories will most likely also include dimensions of, e.g. moral prudence, strength and integrity, but also how good leaders prevent and evade morally difficult situations, and how they perform when they, as leaders, have to handle unavoidable situations. Previous research confirms that students have images of moral issues in the industry, they clearly differentiate between branches in the industry (Ross, 2003), and that the differences in perceptions of ethical issues between university/college students and practitioners in the industry are of minor explainable character (Lundberg, 1994; McCleary & Vosburgh, 1990; Whitney, 1989). However, our insight into the students' implicit theories is very limited. In addition to knowledge about which issues students perceive in the industry, we also need to know more about the social contexts surrounding ethical dilemmas, e.g. how they arrive at the manager's desk and how their occurrence is explained.

The objective of this study was to gain an insight and establish an understanding for how students as potential managers in the hospitality and tourism industry conceptualize managers' situations with regard to ethical dilemmas. Contextual research approaches like this is not reported in the field of Hospitality and Tourism research. Findings and implications will contribute to understanding of students and young managers when organizing ethics courses, as well as organizing their first jobs as managers in the industries.

In an explorative study, 126 undergraduate students (75 from the Hospitality Management program and 51 from the Tourism Management program) at The Norwegian School of Hotel Management, Stavanger University, were given the assignment of writing a case story under the title "I hope it won't happen to me! A manager's worst case story from the tourism or hospitality industry".

2. Theoretical framework

The need for understanding and improving the ethical foundation in education and/or industrial practice has been expressed by professionals (e.g. Nation's Restaurant News, 2003), academic associations (e.g. Allan, 1992), academics who are concerned about education (Casado, Miller, & Vallen, 1994; Hegarty, 1990; Lundberg, 1994; Whitney, 1989; Yeung &

Pine, 2003), and academics who question and discuss the ethical foundation of ethics in tourism (e.g. Fleckenstein & Huebsch, 1999; Holden, 2003; Hultsman, 1995; Ryan, 2002).

Research in business ethics, as in tourism, has most often focused on the reasoning, attitudes or values and decision-making behavior of individuals and/or groups. However, before it is possible to reason, choose values and act morally conscious, one has to recognize that there is a moral issue (Rest, 1979). The ability to define moral dilemmas, which include the ability to use different perspectives, is perhaps the most important issue in business ethics (see, e.g. Morris, 2004), because without any formulated problem, there is really nothing to consider. In the Scandinavian approach to business ethics, this fact has been strongly stressed, and dialogic methods have been launched in order to increase knowledge, insight and understanding toward stakeholders (Bogetoft & Pruzan, 1997; Jensen, Pruzan, & Thyssen, 1990; Pruzan, 2004).

The moral ordeals that managers may encounter in their job are often complicated, complex and difficult to describe. They surface at any given moment, but often have a history—a history with several steps of action where several actors are involved, some present now, others not. In order to understand actual ethical dilemmas and their contextual basis, empirical research in hospitality and tourism ethics should take a new step and look at the behavior behind formal decision processes and students' espoused issue perceptions, attitudes, values, etc. Contextual factors seem to have great impact on behavior followed by a recognized dilemma (cf. Kelley & Elm, 2003).

2.1. Perceiving ethics in organizations

Studying students' morality has been popular in Business Ethics. In this study, however, it is not the students' behavioral aspects that are in focus, but what they think is going on in the work environments that they themselves will enter. When students are asked to identify with practical management in business firms, this implies role taking. Some interesting studies (Jones, 1990; Kaynama, King, & Smith, 1996) report that students' decision behavior was significantly different when they were asked to take the role as business managers compared to responding when they did not take any role. This may imply that students, when asked to take management's perspective, employed their implicit leadership theories (Lord & Maher, 1993), which are their personal roadmaps into the challenges and daily lives of managers.

When interpreting and understanding managers' performances and values that they claim to follow in their work environment, some reported studies have given guidance. First, in the business ethics research, it was empirically documented that managers feel expectations (from the organization) toward behavior that is not in harmony with their personal standards and values (Posner & Schmidt, 1987). Later studies confirm this fact (see, e.g. Pruzan, 2004). An exciting study from Australia (Soutar, McNeil, & Molster, 1994), however, points out a reasonable and important explanation: The work environment does not actually *claim* that managers lie, break the law, cheat their subordinates, etc., but managers *feel* they occasionally have to participate in such behavior—it is an implicit part of the work environment. Students aspiring to become managers in the tourism industry will probably also feel this way, i.e. a manager does what managers have to do. Research into moral intensity, e.g. how intense a moral issue is considered to be, indicates that contextual variables are important (Kelley & Elm, 2003). For example, illegal tax evasion is perhaps not considered with the same intensity if one compared parts of the restaurant industry with banking or insurance, for instance.

2.2. The tourism industry

The tourism industry is very heterogeneous when company size, investment size, number of employees in each company, organizational form, etc. are taken into account. The difference in type of business when considering an airplane company and an independent restaurant with a single owner is enormous. It seems therefore very relevant to question, like Fleckenstein and Huebsch (1999), the “meaningfulness” of common ethics for the tourism industry. In addition to this, the international nature of tourism will also encompass all kinds of national cultures. Comparative research in general business has reported significant differences in how national cultures perceive ethical issues (see, e.g. Cherry, Lee, & Chien, 2003; Christie, Kwan, Stoeberl, & Baumhart, 2003). Such national cultural differences also seem apparent when it comes to organizational cultures (see, e.g. Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996) and people's perception of leadership (see, e.g. Brodbeck et al., 2000).

With regard to organizational cultures, research in general business ethics has reported significant differences between and within industries (Elm & Nichols, 1993; Victor & Cullen, 1988), using a so-called ethical climate scale. The work of Victor and Cullen (1988) implies that the unlikeness in “collective” ethical thinking is different in manufacturing and service organizations. In studies of tourism branches, such differences are observed by Fennell and Malloy (1999), who found differences in expressed values (ethical economy, social and ecological) between actors in ecotourism and other tourism businesses. Upchurch (1998) reports differences in ethical referent between small bed and breakfast operators and full-scale service operators. She explains the difference due to the variations in organization size, where especially middle managers in larger organizations use organizational norms as referent—norms that hardly exist in small businesses. As mentioned before, ethical differences are not unknown to students (Ross, 2003), and it is not unreasonable to suspect that graduates take ethical differences within the tourism industry into consideration when planning their careers. Research in career choice (Argyle, 1989) indicates that this is true, because it is recognized a association between personal values and choice of career.

2.3. Ethics, age and experience

In general business research, it is a well-established fact that people's attitudes, behavior and in part, in their reasoning, change by the years as they grow older (see, e.g. Marnburg, 2001), and this is confirmed to some degree in tourism (Bartholomew, Freedman, & Freeman, 1990). When Elm and Nichols (1993) studied the ethical climate in several organizations, they found a significant difference in how younger and older employees perceived the climate in their companies. The youngest perceived in a conventional way (i.e. instrumentality, care), the older in a more post-conventional way (i.e. by referring to more general ethical principles). If this is true, students' description of ethical dilemmas will probably be biased toward instrumental issues (rationality, efficiency in managements' doings) and caring issues (be loyal to friends, take care of good employees, do not misuse people's confidence, etc.). Another study reports on value orientation of students ($N=705$) and practitioners ($N=241$) (McCleary & Vosburgh, 1990). Most differences could be explained, according to the researchers, by age and life situation (e.g. most students do not have a family and are therefore not orientated toward family values). However, the main difference seems to be that students emphasize values like “love” and “true friendship” significantly more than the practitioners do.

However, it is important to bear in mind that times and people change. Recent research indicates that students' attitudes toward ethical issues in business change over the years (Emerson & Conroy, 2004). Emerson and Conroy (2004) report that students' attitudes toward seven of the 15 issues have become less accepting after repeating a survey from 1985 in 2001.

2.4. Structuring ethical dilemmas

A popular branch of ethical research in Hospitality and Tourism focuses on what ethical issues confront the industry by asking students and practitioners (Enghagen & Hott, 1992; Lundberg, 1994; Schmidgall, 1992; Stevens, 1999; Weaver, Choi, & Kaufman, 1997; Yeung & Pine, 2003). An important observation in several studies is that students and practitioners perceive the same issues with only minor differences. A serious methodological problem with most of these investigations is that they get the answers they ask for. Weaver et al. (1997) demonstrated this when referring to the "wording effect" by replicating the study of Enghagen and Hott (1992) twice, with a minor wording change in one of the replications and found significant differences in the most important issues.

In business practice, ethical issues and dilemmas often consist of conflicts between different sets of norms and values. One way to look into this is to cluster sets of norms and values into different structures, like Gustafsson (1988), who suggested four structures as follows:

Reliability ethics cover the ethics that regulate behavior in relation to promises, expectations and obligations—e.g. to tell the truth, to keep your promises, to follow the law, etc. This form of ethics provides for general situations and for more specific details (e.g. you should keep promises, but not in all situations). Relevant reliability issues identified as most important by hospitality researchers are: "employee lying" (Stevens, 1999); "false advertising" (Enghagen & Hott, 1992); "employee theft" (Enghagen & Hott, 1992; Stevens, 1999; Weaver et al., 1997); "sidestepping legal regulations" (Lundberg, 1994); "giving bribes" (Lundberg, 1994); "acceptance of bribes by employees" (Yeung & Pine, 2003); "cheating to achieve personal goals and success in business" (Lundberg, 1994).

Human ethics include the values of humanity, integrity and equality among people. They will shape expectations as to how the company relates to its employees and external stakeholders (i.e. suppliers, contractors, customers, etc.). Relevant Human ethics issues identified as most important by hospitality researchers are: "mistreating others" (e.g. guests, fellow employees) (Stevens, 1999); "sexual harassment" (Weaver et al., 1997; Yeung & Pine, 2003); "conditions of employment", "employee discrimination" and "vendor honesty" (Enghagen & Hott, 1992).

Capability ethics are perhaps the most central ethics of business, demanding the organization and individuals to produce as much as possible of value (utility), and imposing industrious and economical behavior. The theoretical parallel to this form of ethics comes from both utilitarian ethical theory and Max Weber's "ethics of Protestantism". Relevant capability issues identified as most important by hospitality researchers are: "lack of work ethics", "recreational drug use" (Stevens, 1999) and "sanitarian conditions" (Enghagen & Hott, 1992).

Future ethics include all the worries and concerns for the environment and the welfare of future generations. Relevant Future ethics issues identified as most important by hospitality researchers are: “solid waste disposal” (Enghagen & Hott, 1992; Weaver et al., 1997); “aids in food service” (Enghagen & Hott, 1992); and “disposal of hazardous waste” (Yeung & Pine, 2003).

The referenced issues from empirical hospitality research are certainly not exhaustive, but give at least some hints about relevance. Comparing the issues mentioned under the four ethical structures above gives an impression that Reliability and Human ethics are most focused. Regarding Future ethics, it should also mention that the hospitality research into perceived important issues probably does not cover the most important Future ethic issue in tourism, namely, sustainable development of the industry and stakeholders’ relationships (see, e.g. Holden, 2003; Hultsman, 1995; Ryan, 2002).

2.5. Persons and situations as casual explanations

Theoretically, when ethical dilemmas appear, these can be attributed to the characteristics of a person or persons involved and/or environmental factors. This duality appears according to an interactionistic view in all attempts of modeling ethical behavior in business (Bommer, Glatto, Gravander, & Tuttle, 1987; Dubinsky & Loken, 1989; Ferrell & Gresham, 1985; Ferrell, Gresham, & Fraedrich, 1989; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Trevino, 1986).

Descriptive models of ethical behavior and decision-making provide suggestions about which attributes belong to the person(s) involved and the situations. As to the person(s) involved, the models suggest cognitive processes, information acquisition and possessing (Bommer et al., 1987); moral reasoning, ego strength, field dependence, locus of control (Trevino, 1986); the person's experience, intentions/personal goals (Bommer et al., 1987; Hunt & Vitell, 1986); the consequences’ importance for the stakeholders, desirability of consequences (Hunt & Vitell, 1986); perception of consequences, probability of consequences (Bommer et al., 1987; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991); moral level, motivation mechanism, position/status, self-concept, personality and demographics (Bommer et al., 1987). All in all, these models describe persons who, to various degrees, (a) have some personal cognitive and emotional attributes, (b) have a history (experience), (c) define themselves in a social context, and finally, (d) the expected outcome of actions involves the person him-/herself or other parties.

With regard to the situational variable, this is the environment that gives the individual opportunity to act morally or immorally. Hunt and Vitell (1986) divide the environment into cultural (perception of problems and deontological norms), industrial (perceived alternatives), organizational (perceived consequences), and personal environment. Bommer et al. (1987) focus on governmental system (laws, regulations and judicial system), corporate goals (policies, culture), professional (codes of conducts, licensing requirements, professional meetings) and personal environment (peer group, family). Trevino (1986) divides the environment into immediate job contexts (reinforcements, other pressure), organizational culture (normative structure, referent others, obedience to authority, responsibility for consequences) and characteristic of work (role taking, resolution of moral conflicts).

In general, the models point out which institutions and social environments have various degrees of effect on a person. The difference in the models can probably be explained by level of focus. However, five levels are identified: (a) societal level, (b) industrial level, (c) company level, (d) work level, and (e) personal level.

Except for Jones (1991), who focuses on the consequences (dimensions, probability and importance), the other referenced models are so wide ranging that they most likely cannot be employed in empirical research. On the other hand, these models can function as good guidance when research is designed.

3. Relationship and research questions

The objective of this study was to gain an insight and establish an understanding as to how students as potential managers in the hospitality and tourism industry conceptualize managers' situations with regard to ethical dilemmas. The following research questions were asked:

- (1) What kind of ethical dilemmas do the students choose to describe when asked to prepare a case history about a manager's ethical dilemma?
- (2) How do the students describe the history that establishes the dilemma: In what kind of businesses do the dilemmas occur, and who are involved?
- (3) When they describe the situation in which the dilemmas develop, which level of the environment was the most influential: General business issues, industrial issues, organizational issues, work issues or personal environmental issues?
- (4) When they describe a person or persons who elicited the dilemma, what kind of attributes do the students focus on, e.g. cognition, emotions, malpractice, unawareness, etc.?

In this study, the focus is on surfaced ethical dilemmas and the history behind them, and not how the dilemmas should be solved. This implies the need for an analytical tool that (a) defines who is involved and who owns the problem, (b) describes the dilemma and (c) addresses explanations for the occurrence—persons and situations. Based on the descriptive models discussed in the previous section (Bommer et al., 1987; Hunt & Vitell, 1986; Jones, 1991; Trevino, 1986), an analytical schema was constructed as in Fig. 1. A weakness with the referred descriptive models, however, is that they all assume that some active behavioral decision is taken by the person or persons involved. This is not always true in operating business organizations; serious ethical dilemmas also occur simply because those involved ignore them from the start, or, for one reason or another, do not take the necessary actions in relation to the problem. In such circumstances, it seems more appropriate to characterize professional behavior as “duty neglect” than search for other explanations. This is included in the model.

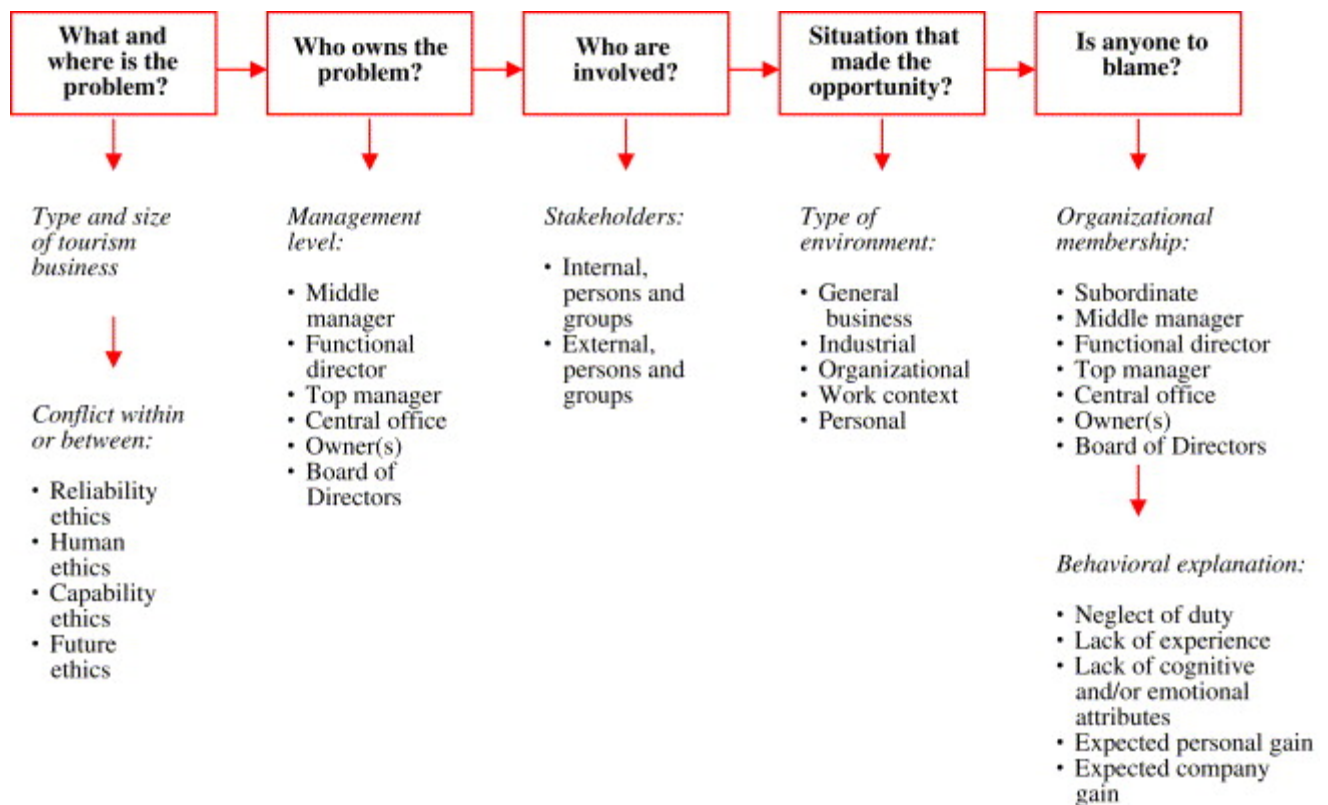


Fig. 1. Research model.

The research model in Fig. 1 provides an overview of the focus and progress of the analyses. The five boxes on the top of the figure indicate the main issues of the analyses. Under each of the top boxes, it is explained which sub-elements the analyses will consider.

4. Methodology

4.1. Method

The literature review demonstrated that knowledge about students' contextual conceptualization and comprehension of managers confronted with ethical dilemmas, is quite limited. The lack of scales and former research implies the use of explorative research where identification of phenomena is of more importance than generalization of findings. The employment of a narrative method (cf. Czarniawska-Joerges, 1998; Czarniawska-Joerges, 2004) was therefore chosen. This method has the advantage that the respondents present their thoughts and opinions in a context and are free to use their own vocabulary. In order to survey a large group of respondents, the most practical way to do this was to ask for a written history.

4.2. Setting and sample

As part of a compulsory course (in the fourth semester of a six-semester Bachelor program) in Business Ethics for the Tourism Industry, students were given a mid-term assignment consisting of composing a case story with the title "I hope it won't happen to me! A manager's worst case story from the tourism or hospitality industry". The students were instructed to base their histories on what they *believed* could happen in the "real world", based on experience, industrial insight or fantasy. They were also asked to write about managers to

whom they could identify themselves with (i.e. management positions they could see themselves in the future). In order to secure contextual and dynamic narratives, they were also told that the histories should include (a) an original state, (b) an action or event and (c) a consequent state of affairs (cf. Czarniawska-Joerges, 1998, p. 2)

The sample was 126 students (51 from the Tourism Management program and 75 from the Hospitality Management program), the Norwegian School of Hotel Management, Stavanger University. The students were grouped into teams of 3–4 members. Thirty-six case stories were composed in March 2004. The case stories written by the students illustrated an impressive wide range of ethical dilemmas and no two stories were similar.

4.3. Sample profile

Table 1 gives an overview of the respondents. It is quite usual that most of the students at the Hotel School have some practical experience before they enter the program. This is illustrated by the age distribution in Table 1. The youngest possible age at this stage of the study program (with normal school progression) is 21 years. Except for 12 students, all the others are older. The mean age is 24.9 years, where the men (25.5 years) are a bit older than the women (24.1 years). When it comes to working in the industry, two-thirds of the Tourism students do not have any (tourism) industrial experience. All the Hospitality students have relevant industrial experience (1 year or more part-time or 6 months or more full-time). As illustrated in Table 1, some of the respondents also have a craft certificate (as chefs, waiters, receptionists, etc.) and managerial experience. Generally, it must be correct to say that this sample represents some experience of the industry. However, the variation is large and the students' experiences are from lower operational positions in the tourism industry or other industries. Overall, this indicates that the respondents' perspectives are two-fold: On the one hand, their point of view is operational in lower subordinate positions. On the other hand, these students work hard at their study program seeking management positions in the tourism industry. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that they also identify themselves with top management.

Table 1.

Sample profile

	N/n	Program	
		Hotel management (n=75)	Tourism management (n=51)
Sex	126		
Women	97	56	41
Men	29	19	10
Age	126		
Up to 21 years	12	5	7
22–25 years	77	43	34
Over 26 years	37	27	10
Industrial work experience, part-time			

	N/n	Program	
		Hotel management (n=75)	Tourism management (n=51)
Part-time, more than 1 year	50	38	12
Industrial experience, full-time	66		
Full-time, 6 months to 1 year	24	21	3
Full-time, over 1 year up to 3 years	23	20	3
Full-time, more than 3 years	19	17	2
Craft certificate (City and Guilds certificate)	17	16	1
Other work experience	35		
6 months to 1 year	17	7	10
More than 1 year	18	10	8
Managerial experience over 1 year	23	16	7

4.4. Analysis, measures and validity

Analyzing narratives may be done in different ways (Riessman, 1993). In this study, the analytic objectives will be contextual structures (organizational types, environments), persons that interact (subordinates, managers, superiors, external persons), core of events (ethical dilemmas) and casualties (why an ethical dilemmas come to existence). These analytical elements should be included in the analytical model (see Fig. 1). The data reduction was based on interpretive categorization. In order to secure trustworthiness and valid result, the analysis was based on well-recognized and frequently referred-to models of ethical structuring and ethical behavior in business contexts. To ensure validity, example elements from the texts will be given when interpretations and categorizations are presented. However, the fact that categorizations and conclusions are based on the researchers understanding, more conclusive studies based on another sampling and formal statistics, would be a natural next step in this research direction.

5. Results and interpretation

In the presentation of the results, reference will be made to the five boxes in the analytic schema (Fig. 1).

5.1. What and where is the problem?

The respondents of this study are students with majors in Hospitality Management and Tourism Management. As to the Hospitality majors, it is natural that they chose a hotel, restaurant, reception, kitchen, etc. as the arena for their case. With regard to the Tourism majors, one should expect cases describing ethical dilemmas in tourism operations, advertising, price differentiating, destination development and disintegration, tour operators,

travel agencies, etc. It was therefore quite unexpected that 34 of the 36 cases were focusing on dilemmas in restaurants (14 cases) and hotels (20 cases). One of the two cases outside the hotels and restaurants was from a successful travel agency managed by two partners, where one of them discovered that the other was stealing money from the company. The other case was a typical tourism dilemma where an almost bankrupt hotel manager in a natural nature area gets tempted by entrepreneurs from the capital city to build a large resort in the area and destroy much of the nature.

An interesting aspect in the students' conception of ethical dilemmas is which stakeholders they focus on. Except for a few, the only stakeholders in the cases are subordinates, fellow managers and superiors (including owners). The few exceptions includes an offer to join a cartel, a complicated love affair with a colleague's wife, an international hotel manager who is forced to pay a bribe to foreign governmental representatives. The fact that almost all cases focus only on internal stakeholders in a classical leadership way—and not, e.g. relationships to customers, financial institutions, suppliers, etc. can be interpreted as a limitation in the students' conception of management roles, or less likely, that the students simply do not perceive ethical dilemmas with, e.g. customers as problematic (their assignment was to describe a worst-case scenario).

The students' practical experience from lower operational positions in the industry has obviously given them a fine “nose” for understanding social processes. The cases give an overall impression that the students were very sensitive to the staff reactions to open ethical conflicts. In most of the cases that address open conflicts, the potential or actual negative motivational effect on the staff is stressed, even when the staff members are not directly involved in the conflict. Others describe how staff act and take a stand on the conflict; sometimes they are of the same opinion, sometimes they divide into two or more groups that disagree. An example is the case where a room maid, described as attention seeking and sexually candid, accuses a trusted and serious middle manager of rape during a late night staff party. It becomes clear that they had sex together. The room maid tells everybody about what happened, but she hesitates to follow the hotel director's advice to file a police report. Part of the hotel staff takes a stand for the middle manager, others for the room maid.

5.2. Ethical structures

By the author's interpretation of the 36 cases the ethical norm and value conflicts of the dilemmas were categorized, according to Gustafsson's (1988) four ethical structures. Table 2 provides an overview. In 28 of the 36 cases, the dilemmas involved Capability ethics, and this type of ethics conflicts the most with Reliability ethics and Human ethics.

Table 2.

Conflicts within and between ethical structures addressed in the 36 cases

	Reliability ethics	Human ethics	Capability ethics	Future ethics
Reliability ethics	2	5		
Human ethics		1		
Capability ethics	13	12	2	1

Only two dilemmas involved Reliability ethics dilemmas that are not in conflict with other ethical structures. One of them addresses a situation where a manager and restaurant owner should or should not admit adultery with his partner's wife. The other, however, is a very interesting case: A middle manager has harassed his subordinates for years. The harassments were so intense, that several of the subordinates reported sick for shorter periods, while others left the company. The hotel management eventually dismissed the middle manager on grounds that they had to rationalize their operations. The middle manager went to court, accusing the company of harassment and dismissal without reason. The dilemma here is that the hotel management gave a convenient reason for the dismissal—they lied. Can they admit their lie and hope that their new version will be reliable, or what?

Reliability ethics and Human ethics conflict in five cases that describe dilemmas where managers have to choose about telling the truth (to his superior or the staff), or to protect individuals that have committed or have been involved in wrongdoings. The histories address sexual harassment, serving smuggled meat that may give the customers serious infections, subordinates' abuse of alcohol or petty thefts. In several of the histories, the dilemma is over betraying a good friend and/or a mentor that has earned the manager's trust and confidence.

Only one history addresses a Human ethics dilemma that is not in conflict with other ethical structures. Here, the authors raise the question about what policy hotels should have when handling applications for new positions from well-trained people with other ethnic and religious backgrounds than the "typical" Norwegians have. These dilemmas have not been as frequent in Norway (in comparison to, e.g. USA), so this is also an interesting case.

The dilemmas involving Capability ethics and Reliability ethics mostly address the choice between keeping one's promise or doing the most efficient thing, often because a new alternative or opportunity has appeared during the time after promises were made. The students' descriptions of the manager behaviors are very negative: The managers should know that new opportunities may arrive and therefore they should not give promises like this, or they should keep their promises. For example, a hotel owner promises to sell out a restaurant to the restaurant manager, but sells it to a wealthier person for a higher price; a restaurant manager has to dismiss several employees because of slow business and promises to hire them back when better times arrive, and then she hires somebody else instead. In these cases, the staff members play an important role by their negative reactions to the low Reliability ethics. One case deals with managers who are offered illegal agreements about participation in a cartel. Another two cases tell us about managers who get problems after having had love affairs with their subordinates. Another two histories address the dilemma of illegal spying on employees because of minor money thefts. One interesting case addresses a promise that

belongs to cultural traditions: A hotel has always used internal promotion when management positions became vacant, but suddenly, the Board of Directors breaks this tradition. A most interesting case, however, tells a history of a bar waiter who gets promoted and becomes bar manager. When she was a waiter, she had broken—together with the other waiters—the hotel rule and “clipped” all the drinks (which gives the individual a nice extra income). When she becomes a manager, she feels it is strongly necessary to reinforce the prohibition of “clipping” drinks. How can she tackle this delicate situation in relation to her superiors who do not know about the earlier practice, and her subordinates who do?

Dilemmas where Capability ethics and Human ethics are in conflict deal mostly with managers who have to choose between individuals in weak positions and efficiency. The individuals, all of whom are subordinates or fellow managers in the histories, often have a friendly relationship with the manager, the manager who has the dilemma has information that, if it came out, would make the situation even worse, e.g. knowledge about petty thefts, alcohol addiction or possibility of psychological breakdown. These situations are classic utilitarian problems: Sacrificing an individual in the name of the other's survival.

Only one case concerns the conflict between Future ethics and Capability ethics. Here, a hotel manager is tempted to destroy a beautiful nature area in order to get more business.

5.3. Who owns the problem?

As previously mentioned, the students focused on situations that reflect their experience and, most likely, those positions with which they identify or wish to enter after graduating. In their assignment, they were asked to define ownerships of the dilemmas to a manager. In one case history, this is not the case: In a hotel reception, one of the receptionists expects to be promoted, but instead, the hotel manager engages a younger and better-educated woman. The passed-by receptionist starts a harassment campaign against the new manager, who does not dare to inform her superiors because this would have meant that she could not cope with her position. The students raise the following question: What are the other receptionists who witness this harassment supposed to do?

From Table 3, one can observe that the highest positions that are identified are hotel managers (in 12 cases). Only four of the managers have no operational staff positions (functional director), and only one of these is on a main office level in a hotel chain. A somewhat peculiar side of this is that only five of the managers work for a hotel chain and one for a restaurant chain, considering that most jobs opportunities are in such companies. On the other hand, this point might not be significant because in most of the histories, no information is given concerning independence or not (because such information has no relevance to the ethical dilemmas that were focused).

Table 3.

Who owns the problem?

Counting (N=36)	Position	Place of work specification ^a
1	Hotel managers	Hotels
3	Hotel manager and owner	Hotel
5	Hotel manager	Hotel
1	F&B manager	Hotel
1	Restaurant manager	Hotel
1	Bar manager	Hotel
1	Employees in reception	Hotel
2	Personnel manager	Hotel
2	Reception manager	Hotel
2	Middle manager (not specified)	Hotel
3	Hotel manager	Hotel in chain
1	International business manager	Hotel in chain
1	Sales manager	Hotel in chain
8	Restaurant manager	Restaurant
2	Restaurant manager and owner	Restaurant
1	Restaurant manager	Restaurant in chain
1	Travel agency manager and owner	Travel agency

a

Many of the histories lack information about whether the business units are independent or a part of a chain operation (because this has no relevance in the story). In these cases, the businesses are classified as independent.

5.4. Who's involved?

“Involvement” refers to those people who are actors in the drama leading up to an ethical dilemma, including those who are *directly* affected by the problem. Horizontally (from the manager in focus’ position), fellow managers are involved in only four cases. One of the cases addresses a personal conflict between two fellow managers, and two of the cases concern confronting fellow managers with an immoral behavior. The most interesting case, however, is about a new hotel manager who feels obligated to deal with a bad employee. Several other hotel managers during the previous years before ignored the problem. The managers in focus’ horizontal external relationships appear in only five cases, addressing bribery, cartel involvement, suppliers of smuggled meat, adultery with the owner's wife and extortion. In the latter case, a journalist discovers illegal activity in a restaurant chain and offers (to the Board of Directors) not to reveal the facts if he gets a lump sum of money. It is somewhat amazing that only five of the 36 cases deal with external involvement.

All the other cases have different combinations of hierarchical involvement. These cases deal with classical middle manager and leadership dilemmas: Orders from above force the middle manager into an ethical dilemma when decisions about subordinates must be made, or problems among subordinates, individuals and groups.

5.5. What situation made the opportunity?

Defining whether a situation is of a general business nature, industrial, organizational, work contextual or personal is not an easy task. This is, e.g. because the definition is based on an understanding of the industrial culture, i.e. what is so special in an industry that a dilemma is not a general business issue and not an organizational cultural one? Categorization is done by first sorting out those dilemmas that are of organizational and personal character. Thereafter, differentiating the levels is done by asking the question: Could this dilemma occur in all or several other industries? If the answer is yes, it is a general business dilemma. If it is no, it is an industrial dilemma.

Dilemmas with their basis in general business issues were described in 16 of the 36 histories. These, of course, address a wide range of issues such as bribery, problems with promotions, family members working together, friendships with fellow managers or subordinates, love affairs, adultery, sexual harassment, broken promises from management, cartel participation, embezzlements, illegal spying on employees, illegal dismissals, organized crime, discrimination and racism. A combination of general business and tourism is focused in a case about resort development in a nature area.

Typical industrial dilemmas are addressed in eight of the cases. Issues focused on here include offering of smuggled meat, employees' petty money thefts, "cutting" drinks, people with alcohol problems, love and sexual relations formed in after-hour parties, prostitution activity in hotels, etc.

Combinations of dilemmas with both industrial and organizational basis were found in five histories. One is about a manager that breaks company rules, the other four cases deal with staff members that engage themselves in what they perceive as foolish management decisions.

Dilemmas having their origin in the organizational environment appear in six cases. Some of the dilemmas arise because the manager/management breaks their promises or makes decisions that are the opposite of what is expected according to company tradition. One case deals with a staff that is strongly protesting the dismissal of a manager, partly because they are not informed of the reasons for management's decision. Other histories address dilemmas about illegal and immoral behavior due to heavy pressure on operational departments. A case with a special history tells us about a reception manager who is ordered (from above) to dismiss a clever, but fat, receptionist.

Only one case history focused on personal environment as the situation leading to the dilemma. The grandson of a hotel director has a demanding wife, and spends more than he earns. The hotel director discovers his grandson's embezzlement.

All in all, approximately half the cases deal with general business issues, one-third with industrial issues, and the remainder (a fifth) with organizational environment issues.

5.6. Is anyone to blame?

In most of the cases, the relationship between the individual's performance and the dilemma was very clear, i.e. the “moral voice” of the authors was quite strong. In some few cases though, the interpretations did not give a clear-cut answer to “who was to blame”. [Table 4](#) provides an overview of the analytical categorizations. The column to the right indicates how “clearly” one specific person was blamed in the histories. The differentiations “Clear” and “Not so Clear” are based on the researcher's interpretive understanding of the histories. “Very clear” indicates no interpretative doubt, “not so clear” indicates interpretative doubt. In a few cases where two or more persons or groups elicited the dilemma together, the blames were directed to the person or group that has the largest formal responsibility in the company that staged the scene.

Table 4.

Who are to blame and behavioral explanations

Count	Who may be blamed?	Possible reason for behavior	How clear is the blame?
1	Board of Directors	Lack of experience	Not so clear
1	Board of Directors	Expectation of company gain	Not so clear
1	Board of Directors	Neglect of duty	Very clear
1	Board of Directors	Neglect of duty	Not so clear
2	Superior manager(s)	Lack of cognitive and emotional attributes	Not so clear
2	Superior manager(s)	Expectation of personal gain	Very clear
2	Superior manager(s)	Neglect of duty	Not so clear
1	Previous hotel managers	Neglect of duty	Very clear
3	Manager in focus	Lack of cognitive and emotional attributes	Very clear
3	Manager in focus	Lack of cognitive and emotional attributes	Not so clear
1	Manager in focus	Lack of emotional attributes	Not so clear
1	Manager in focus	Lack of experience	Very clear
1	Manager in focus	Lack of experience	Not so clear
1	Manager in focus	Lack of experience	Not so clear
2	Manager in focus	Expectation of personal gain	Very clear
2	Manager in focus	Expected personal and company gain	Not so clear
1	Manager in focus	Expectation of company gain	Not so clear
2	Fellow manager(s)	Expectation of personal gain	Very clear
1	The director's grandson	Expected personal gain	Very clear
2	Subordinate	Lack of emotional attributes	Not so clear

Count	Who may be blamed?	Possible reason for behavior	How clear is the blame?
	employee(s)		
2	Subordinate employee(s)	Expected company gain	Very clear
1	Subordinate employee(s)	Neglect of duty	Very clear
2	Subordinate employee(s)	Expected personal gain	Very clear

Nearly two-thirds of the cases “blame” the central character in the case, i.e. the manager who owns the problem. Superiors and subordinates are each to “blame” in one-sixth of the cases.

When employing the behavioral explanations on the managers in focus, presented in [Fig. 1](#), there is a kind of a pattern in the students’ descriptions: All behavioral explanations are used except for “neglect of duty”. In other words, the managers with whom they identify can be ignorant, foolish, unaware or greedy, but not lazy or careless, meant well at the start!

Dilemmas elicited by fellow managers occur in only two cases. In both these cases, a fellow manager is stealing from the company and the main characters in the stories have some sort of emotional binding to these persons.

When a superior's or Board of Director's performance is to blame, approximately half of the behavioral reasons are “neglect of duty”. The typical description of this is that they do not care what is going on in parts of the companies, or they avoid making necessary decisions. In most of the other cases where behavioral reasons are lack of experience or cognitive or emotional attributes, the superiors and Board Directors make poor decisions, when seen from an operational point of view: They do not have the necessary knowledge to make decisions about operational matters, and/or they do not see what social consequences their decisions may have.

With regard to the managers’ subordinates, all possible kinds of behavioral explanations are in use. Expectation of personal gain is the reason given for immoral behavior in three of the eight cases, all of which deal with different types of petty thefts. In two cases, however, the explanations are expectations of company gain. It is not possible to find a solid pattern in these cases.

6. Discussion

In this study, 36 ethical dilemma histories, written by undergraduate Hospitality and Tourism Management students, were examined. Thirty-four of the 36 cases focused on dilemmas in restaurants and hotels. The students focused primarily on internal stakeholders, including owners, and in some cases business partners as well. The students show an impressive ability to consider social interactions and changes in the company staff behavior due to the existence of ethical dilemmas.

Ethical structures in use in the cases are, in four of the five case histories, conflict between the Capability ethics and Reliability ethics/Human ethics. Future ethics is only addressed in one case about a resort development plan. The students were asked to describe a manager with whom they could identify—the manager who owned the problem. Two-thirds of the cases described middle managers and one-third hotel managers. Those who were directly involved in the dilemma histories were mainly described along hierarchical vertical lines (superiors and/or subordinates). Fellow managers were directly involved in only five cases. Situations that raised issues of general business environment were focused in 16 of the cases, eight were of typical industrial character, six were typical organizational and the rest were combinations of two environments. In the analyses of who to blame and explanations of their behavior, two-thirds of the histories blamed the manager in focus, one-sixth blamed a superior, and one-sixth placed the blame on subordinates. Superiors' behavior is often characterized as “neglect of duty” or lack of knowledge of operational matters that form a basis for poor decisions. The managers in focus—the ones with whom the students identify—are mostly hard working people with good intentions. With regard to the subordinates, no clear explanation pattern arises from the analyses. However, the staff members are generally described as an active part in the organizational life and their reactions are sensible and logical.

In the following, overall interpretations are provided based on the analysis and discussion of the findings and their possible implications in relation to professional practice, education and future research.

6.1. The manager as a lone rider

When the students describe their issue, the people involved and what is happening during a period of time, it is reasonable to regard their description of the manager who gets into trouble according to their implicit leadership theories (see, e.g. Engle & Lord, 1997), i.e. in what kind of social context and work environment the identified managers have to deal with difficult problem solving. One of the most striking impressions, after analyzing 36 histories, is how lonely these managers are. Not in a single history do the managers explain and discuss their ethical dilemmas with others, e.g. fellow managers, a superior, a trustworthy subordinate, a management meeting, a friend, a spouse, a union representative, a consultant, etc. An additional effect that enforces the individualism and loneliness is the fact that the students primarily choose to write about managers in small, independent business units where organizational norms have a limited function (cf. Upchurch, 1998) and where a lack of norms makes a decision even more difficult. The students' conceptualization of managers as individualists who take all the burdens on their shoulders is amazing.

6.2. Ethical issues: business is business—or is it?

The issues and ethical dilemmas chosen by the students all represent important industrial issues reported in earlier research (Enghagen & Hott, 1992; Lundberg, 1994; Schmidgall, 1992; Stevens, 1999; Weaver et al., 1997; Yeung & Pine, 2003), with two exceptions: First, the environmental damages due to solid or hazardous waste. The reason for this can probably be found in the fact that industry in Norway does not create a lot of waste (compared to the USA, for example), and the systems for sorting recyclable waste according to their source material are well developed. Second, the “low work morale”—emphasized by American human resource directors in the hotel sector (Stevens, 1999) was not recognized in any of the 36 histories, but rather the opposite.

The analysis where the 36 dilemmas were interpreted and categorized into ethical structures (Gustafsson, 1988) showed two principal patterns. First, typical tourism issues, such as ethical considerations in connection with destination development, marketing and governing relations (cf. Holden, 2003; Hultsman, 1995; Ryan, 2002), are only represented in one case. Taking into account that approximately half of the students are Tourism majors, this is a bit peculiar. On the other hand, it is probably easier to create a history about something happening in a small company than the more complex macro-perspectives of tourism in general.

The second pattern identified by the analysis of ethical structures in use shows that Capability ethics was involved in 29 of the 36 cases. In other words, economical or business considerations were at the core of over 80% of the ethical dilemmas! This could be interpreted in two opposite ways: First of all, “business is business” and business always comes first, independent of almost whatever the moral issue is. If this is the correct interpretation, the students are almost hysterically occupied with managerial economics. An alternative interpretation might point out the fact that the students perceive capability claims as a problem (cf. Posner & Schmidt, 1987), and via their case histories, they illustrate this opinion. In other words, the problem with business is that it is business.

However, regardless of how the core role of Capability ethics is interpreted, the important finding here is the students’ emphasis on business and the Capability ethics responsibilities in their role taking (cf. Jones, 1990; Kaynama et al., 1996). Two points are important here: First, in most of the cases, *no one* is claiming or forcing the managers to unconditionally pursue rationality, efficiency and profit—this is the same effect as reported by Soutar et al. (1994), i.e. that managers believe they have to pursue those values. In fact, reading the histories leads to an impression that many of the dilemmas described by the students would probably not have been a problem if they “slowed down” their espousal of efficiency a bit. It is certainly not good for anyone if managers in the industry have to serve values other than those they personally prefer. Pruzan (2004) notes that such managers become schizophrenic in their personal value systems. That is a heavy burden to bear, and certainly not a good life to live.

6.3. The instrumentality of friendships

Former research has identified that students/younger people appreciate values such as “love” and “true friendship” (McCleary & Vosburgh, 1990), and that their reasoning is oriented toward instrumentalism and care (Elm & Nichols, 1993). This is confirmed in several of the cases where friendship leads to job opportunities, and friendship at the job results in high loyalty and care. A characteristic of the descriptions is that the friendship is not described as only a friendship, but rather instrumentally: When a manager in focus has to show extra care and loyalty to a friend, this is not only due to the fact that a friend is a friend, but because he/she “owes” something to this person. In other words, it is an exchange of favors.

In addition, different kinds of love affairs are described in the cases. In the industry, people work closely together and party together after working hours. These affairs lead to all the normal problems: Giving someone more than a fair amount of attention and influence, hate and jealousy when the relationships come to an end, etc. When reading these histories, one gets an impression that the writers do not denounce the persons that become emotionally involved with others: This is a normal thing that happens, and it is truly a pity for those who get into moral trouble as a consequence of having feelings for another person.

6.4. The nose tip perspective

The analyses revealed that almost all ethical dilemmas that were described were of internal character in the organizations, i.e. typical hierarchical leadership issues. Only a handful of cases dealt with external stakeholders. This might be due to the fact that most cases focus on operational managers, but even these managers have to relate to customers and, e.g. the society's norms for nutrition, alcohol consumption, price differentiation, etc. The fact that almost all cases address internal issues gives reason to worry about the students' conceptualizations of managers' duties.

6.5. Social reactions and responsible staff

The cases give a picture of staff that are hardworking, and, with a few individual exceptions, always want what is best for the company they work for. Most characteristic for the histories is the active part the staff members play when ethical dilemmas occur. They take a stand to what is right and wrong, sometimes dividing in two groups with opposing views. The students stress the fact that this has a serious negative effect on the business if the staff members feel, e.g. that a person is not treated fairly. A staff that is mentally occupied with an ongoing conflict will not do a good job, and their bad mood will also affect the customer. The staff reactions to the ethical dilemmas are described as tolerant, rational and logical.

6.6. The managers in focus as self-infliction anti-heroes

When moral dilemmas occur, it is quite common for those involved to blame others or the special situations in which the problem developed. The students were given an assignment to create a history about a person (a manager) with whom they could identify. Most likely, one should expect that they would describe an unlucky person—a person that undeservedly comes into a situations where he or she, before realizing what is happening, gets involved in an ethical dilemma. These expectations did not come through! In approximately 50% of the cases, the blame could be given to the managers in focus. All kind of behavioral reasons were given for why the managers elicited the ethical dilemma, except one: The managers the students describe do not neglect their duties, but do foolish things due to lack of experience, cognitive or emotional abilities or greed. In other words, the managers with whom the students identify are hardworking heroes who involve themselves in foolishness—which results in “anti-heroes”.

In a way, the students confirm what academics have noted (e.g. [Casado et al., 1994](#)): They are not prepared to face the many difficult situations that can confront a manager. The case histories are therefore credible and honest descriptions about what the students fear. However, it makes quite an impression to read and observe the self-insight that the students prove to have. In all likelihood, they are not that unprepared after all.

6.7. Useless top management

In half of the cases where superiors are to blame for the occurrence of an ethical dilemma, this is due to “neglect of duty” (cf. [Table 4](#)). In most of the other cases, top management causes ethical problems due to poor decisions, decisions made due to lack of operational insight, etc.

The samples of this study are young people with some operational experience, and their operational perspective will, of course, affect their perception of top management. On the

other hand, most of these students presumably have ambitions of becoming a top manager during their career, so they should probably also have some understanding of top management's working conditions. It is therefore nothing less than surprising that the students perceive the jobs done by top management in such a negative way.

6.8. The expected moral ordeals of hospitality and tourism

Do managers face more moral ordeals in the hospitality and tourism industry than in other fields of business? Will young potential managers avoid this industry because of a morally hazardous character? To answer these questions, one has to compare the hospitality and tourism industry with other industries, which the present data does not allow. And, such a comparison has never been published. Thus, in order to answer these very important questions, a tentative answer has to be based on an interpretive understanding of the students' perception of the industry.

In the analyses, it was concluded that approximately half of the 36 ethical dilemmas were of general business nature; one-third were of industrial nature; and the remainder of specific organizational origins.

When management students who have chosen a special and specific industry for their career write about ethical dilemmas, one should expect them to focus on those dilemmas that are special and specific for that industry. Taking this into account, the number of industrial dilemmas described (one-third) is neither high nor low. It is natural that this industry, like other industries, has some special dilemmas. It is therefore the conclusion that the students do not perceive the moral difficulties in the hospitality and tourism industry as more frequent or more serious than what supposedly is the case in other industries.

7. Conclusions and implications

The main contribution from an explorative study such as the present is not to point out new facts about empirical structures and relations, but to gain insight into students' conceptualizations of how ethical dilemmas arrive at managers' desks. Those implications drawn from this study that are not previously reported will therefore have to be confirmed by more solid analytical designs. Nevertheless, in the following some conclusions will be drawn, and it will be pointed out some possible implications the findings may have for professional practice and education.

7.1. Professional implications

The students from this investigation seem to have a mature and critical conception of the moral ordeals managers can face in the industry. They have a sound social cognition of staff reactions to ethical dilemmas and are aware of the consequences of conflicts that are not coming to an end. They are also skeptical of top managements' decisions and lack of decisions when ethical dilemmas occur. However, the students perceive the managers' job as being very isolated, they are nearsighted when it comes to what dilemmas that they may have to face, they have limited confidence in top managements, and they perceive the value claims made by the organizations as "harsh" where capability ethical values are concerned. One obvious recommendation is that top managements have to take moral problems that arise in the operational sphere more seriously and speed up and secure the quality of their decisions. If

this were the case in the students' histories, approximately one-third of the dilemmas would have been non-existent!

Another clear message from this study is the need to reduce individualistic and nearsighted tendencies by giving fresh managers support and a social network where they, in a trustful way, can enter into dialogues about their ethical perspectives and moral dilemmas. A particularly important issue here is to discuss what values and norms the managers are supposed to follow. This is because it seems like the potential managers' implicit theory of how a manager has to behave is probably a lot more strict where capability values are concerned than what is actually expected from them.

7.2. Educational implication

The analyses indicated that the students had a good understanding of the social processes in an organization; they showed a high degree of self-insight and a sound skepticism toward top managements. However, the students have tendencies to perceive the managers' job within a closed system where they alone are supposed to solve all problems they might encounter. Our educational system also works this way: We teach the students a lot of techniques that are supposed to give them the necessary information, decision alternatives and evaluation of alternatives in order to make the right decision. And most of these techniques can be done by a manager alone. However, when it comes to ethics, these rational techniques are insufficient: Ethics is not only a question of making up one's mind and following one's conviction. It is also a question of listening to other persons' perspectives and opinions, and perhaps convincing others if you are sure about your own opinion. In other words, creating good ethics in practical management is a process of mutual understanding and respect among the stakeholders of the business (cf. Jensen et al., 1990). An education in ethics for future managers should therefore emphasize how business moral is developed in a social context, rather than teaching analytical methods for ethical evaluation. Knowledge about the stakeholders, how to maintain an enduring communication with them and how to reason for one's own and the companies' values and ethics will be most important. The good ethical manager is therefore not only a person with solid value orientation, knowledge and abilities for moral reasoning, but also a person with communicative skills who is able to gain insights into the stakeholders' perspectives, who can discuss difficult issues and provide sensible compromises.

What makes Ethics different from most other subjects in a curriculum is the fact that the students have very strong opinions (implicit theories) about ethics before they enter the university. This study has identified those opinions, but it has also revealed some important biases in the students' perception of how managers should confront and solve ethical dilemmas. A possible teaching model would therefore be to focus on and discuss the students' conceptualization of the managers' roles and thereafter expand their perspective by testing it in practical cases by introducing more stakeholders and training them in practical reasoning vis-à-vis the stakeholders.

7.3. Further research

This explorative study has revealed that there exist some clear patterns in how Hospitality and Tourism students in the sample conceptualize ethical dilemmas and how managers are confronted with them. This should be crucial information for both professionals and educators. In the future, there are at least two interesting research tasks. The first is

explorative investigations into the implicit theories of students and practitioners and the normative theories taught in university programs. Currently, we know little about these differences, and this lack of insight is probably the most important obstacle when organizing educational programs.

Secondly, the design of this study does not allow making generalizations about Hospitality and Tourism students' implicit theories. More conclusive research is therefore needed. However, this research should also look into comparative differences explained by, e.g. differences in students' perspectives or cultural backgrounds.

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