ETHICAL PROBLEM-SOLVING EXPECTATIONS AND ECO-TOUR COMPANY OPERATIONAL ISSUES: VIEWS OF POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES

GLENN F. ROSS
School of Business – Tourism
James Cook University, Cairns
Australia

Many travelers now reveal a growing interest in eco-tourism, with the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region showing an increase in the number and diversity of eco-tour operators. Relatively little, however, is known about the various ethical beliefs and ethical problem-solving response styles that potential employees bring to such a work context. This study has examined both competence and integrity ethical values, ethical influences and problem-solving responses in regard to an eco-tourism work place dilemma involving unethical operating procedures, leading to pollution of the environment. University business students from a major Australian tourist destination reported that competence ethical values to be important. Tourists were expected to rate integrity ethical values highly, as did respondents who rated tourists' integrity ethical values more highly than tourists' competency ethical values. Organizational mistrust was found to be a widespread expectation among many respondents. The implications of this research for university ethics education, for eco-tourism operations management and for future research within this domain are examined.

Eco-tour operations, ethical values and influences, work place trust and mistrust, tourism/hospitality management.

INTRODUCTION

Eco-tourism ethics has increasingly been portrayed as a domain of some importance (Holden, 2003; Holjevac, 2003; Weaver, 1993; Westra, 1998). Bramwell and Lane (2003) suggest that this is a business context in which economic downturns may cause severe adverse consequences for the natural environment. It has been represented in a variety of ways, including that of an experience, a product and also a holiday destination. It would also appear to share many titles, such as nature tourism, small-scale tourism, responsible tourism, sustainable tourism and wilderness tourism (Karwacki & Boyd, 1996; Wight, 1993). Within the various conceptualisations definitions and foci, an emphasis has been upon good practice in regard to environmental and social issues (A Practical Guide to Good Practice: Managing Environmental and Social Issues in the Accommodation Sector, 2003). Yet relatively little attention has been given to the role of staff, those operatives whose responsibility it often is to see that these high standards are maintained; more particularly, little is known regarding the role of individual ethical beliefs and their role in problem-solving among those who will likely seek to be tourism industry staff.

Weeden (2002) has made the point that, within the area of ethics and tourism, there is still considerable disagreement as to who is responsible. Tour operators, it is reported, take the view

Address correspondence to Glenn F. Ross. School of Business-Tourism, James Cook University, Cairns Campus. E-mail: glenn.ross@jcu.edu.au

that it is a responsibility primarily for governments; tourists, she suggests, often carry with them the belief that the dissemination of ethical knowledge ought to be an educational role taken up by tour operators; other stakeholders, it is suggested, regard tourists as having responsibility for their own attitudes, values and behaviours. Weeden, citing Payne and Dimanche (1996), suggests that tour operators who wish to practice ethical tourism have an obligation to address four areas: relationships with local communities, marketing standards, attitudes to the natural environment and the treatment of employees. Weeden makes the point that while a highly ethical stance by eco-tour company management can serve as a powerful motivator for staff to strive for excellence, the reality is often very different; the industry in this area has developed a relatively poor reputation as an employer, with the perception about in many communities of lower status jobs, relatively poor pay levels, unskilled staff and unsociable working hours, all of which leads to a relatively high staff turnover rate. Weeden suggests that tour operators may need to treat staff with a greater degree of equity if they wish to consider themselves as participating in ethical tourism. Thus, whilst perceptions regarding working conditions are known to be less than favourable for employees within this industry context, relatively little is understood in regard to the values, beliefs and problem-solving styles of those who are likely to seek employment in such as context; little is also known about the expectations and beliefs they bring regarding management, as is the degree of trust or mistrust that they would have in eco-tourism management to act ethically, particularly within a problem-solving context.

Ethical Decision-making

Coutu (2003) has suggested that, within any workplace, individuals are constantly encountering the need to make decisions in the context of uncertainty; moreover, each decision represents the persons' responses to a need, a problem or a developing crisis. Each decision is the outcome of a dynamic process that is shaped by a variety of personal and psychological forces. Rokeach (1973), Ball-Rokeach *et al*. (1989), Feather (1975), Maio (2002), and Schwartz (1996) all have suggested that personal ethical values are essential components of any work place decision-making process. Ethical values in this context are the motivators of personal conduct to which an individual refers when encountering a situation wherein a choice has to be made. Researchers such as Rokeach would suggest that ethical values are typically gained early in life, and are important, though often unexamined elements of an individual's reasoning process.

Ethics, it has long been argued, play a primary role in decision-making within a work context (Peterson & Gonzales, 2000; Schultz & Schultz, 2002). At the very establishment of any organizational or occupational objectives, it is suggested that value judgments are typically exercised in the selection of opportunities and the allocation of priorities; in the development of alternatives, and then in the choice of one in particular, the ethics of the employee will often determine the focus of possible behaviour; in the implementation of the decision made, ethical precepts will likely guide the means of implementation; finally, in any evaluation, ethical precepts are likely to manifest themselves in any corrective or follow-up action. Furnham (1997) and Schultz & Schultz (2002) would argue that it is by means of such processes that ethical values of various types clearly influence the workplace decision-making process; they are also said to be reflected in a decision-maker's behaviour before making a decision, in making the decision and then in putting the decision into effect.

Employees are not the only operatives to whom such processes apply. Management too exhibit a range of ethical values whenever they take part in the decision-making process (Gibson *et al*., 2000). This process may be seen clearly within the organization development domain. Organizational development can be regarded as a managerial technique for the implementation of systematic change within any organization; typically this involves applying powerful techniques, sometimes in a directive or even coercive manner, so as to achieve ends such as performance

improvements. The type and degree of ethical precepts espoused by management and also their change-agents become evident in the unfolding of power relationships among various participants within the organization undergoing modification. Ethically questionable practices such as coercion, misrepresentation and exploitation of the weaker members, usually lower level workers, are frequently cited as examples of unethical processes and behaviours that may emerge within organizational development programs. Management, conclude Gibson *et al.*, in these circumstances should carry a major responsibility for any widespread perceptions of unethical conduct and resultant mistrust among employees.

Furnham (1997) and Gibson *et al.* (2000) would hold that correction of such abuses within the process by management and their change agents may be achieved within an organizational culture that fosters a clear statement and incorporation of ethical behaviour. An organizational climate of this type would present senior management as advocating ethical behaviour as the norm; all individuals would be expected and assumed to conduct themselves in an ethical manner, even when such integrity would prove costly to the organization in economic and strategic terms. The management of an organization, particularly senior management, bears a particular responsibility to encourage and model ethical behaviour, so that such behaviour becomes an inalienable part of the organizational climate, and is regarded as such by employees.

Schultz and Schultz (2000) make the point that ethical values within a workplace setting have been understood by way of a variety of schemas, often as sets of categories by which codes of ethics could be examined, and their individual elements understood and compared. Raiborn and Payne (1990) have advanced a relatively straightforward yet cogent schema of ethical values in the workplace, consisting of principles such as competence and integrity. Competence is held to represent the individual who is capable, hardworking efficient and shows initiative. Integrity, by contrast, would involve those personal virtues about which Aristotle wrote (see Tredennick, 1976), and embraces notions such as honesty, genuineness, sociability, altruism and understanding. A number of subsequent commentators, such as Tucker *et al.* (1999) and Wiley (2000), have moreover found such dimensions useful in their classifications of workplace ethical values.

Within the tourism/hospitality industry context, ethical orientations as influences upon decision-making in the workplace have now begun to receive some research attention. One such contribution to this area is that offered by Whitney (1990). Whitney has advanced a conceptualization involving four major orientations, and has labeled them the individual orientation, the traditional or societal orientation, the legal orientation and the career orientation. In regard to the individual orientation, he suggests that the person's ethical philosophy is basically their own, even though it may include elements taken from the schemas and principles of others; it has been, he suggests, assimilated uniquely by the individual through both thought and life experiences. For the societal orientation, the individual's beliefs are believed to emanate largely from one's community, family or religious context; whilst the beliefs many now be internalised, they are other-centred in so far as relatively little critical reflection may be involved. The legal orientation Whitney suggests is' relatively simple and straightforward; a person here holds strongly to the notion that it is the law that guarantees or orders society, and that society defines ethics principally through the law. Whitney's career oriented person would comprehend personal ethical standards as being equivalent to and generated from the industry or organization within which they work; these are said to be self-chosen in so far as one's career is self-chosen. Such a person, it is suggested, may take great care to nurture and to prevent any damage to their career, and therefore adopt generally acceptable practices as touchstones of workplace ethical behaviour. Whitney, reporting on an exploration of this schema among managers in the hospitality industry, has identified distinct ethical orientation profiles, related to variables such as age, rank and size of the property managed.

Ethics and Tourism/Hospitality

A growing number of commentators, such as Vallen and Casado (2000), Enghagen and Hott (1992), Richter and Richter (1999), Ross (1998, 2003a, in press) and Stevens (2001) have all argued that ethical understandings of behaviour have an important application in tourism/hospitality, including the area of tertiary education and training. Stevens holds that the encouragement of an awareness of the importance of personal and professional ethical principles ought to be a prime goal of any tertiary education program. Vallen and Casado (2000) and Wheeler (1994) have also suggested that education programs in areas such as hospitality, in so far as they are responsible for the preparation of individuals for hospitality employment, need to expose students to critical ethical, professional and legal issues, all of which will undoubtedly confront them when they enter the workplace.

Stevens (1999) and Stevens & Brownell (2000), exploring some of the mechanisms of this preparation, would argue that graduates who have become aware of and are comfortable with their personal ethical beliefs, and whose ethical beliefs are in large measure, compatible with that of their employing organisation, will be more likely to act ethically, and also have a positive influence upon subordinates' ethical perspectives. They take the view that graduates are likely to be more effective communicators of an organisations' ethical code and expectations regarding acceptable behaviour in the workplace. In regard to the education process, Vallen and Casado (2000), Martin (1998), Stevens (2001) and Stevens & Brownell (2001) all believe that students in tertiary institutions may be assisted in the development of an awareness of ethical standards by way of case studies, vignettes and hypothetical employment dilemmas; each participant in this process is confronted with the complexities, competing interests and personal perceptions associated with a series of hospitality workplace ethical confrontations. Critical thinking skills are more likely to be fostered in participants who have to grapple with and arrive as a satisfying solution that holds in some balance their personal ethical precepts, the legal mores of the society, and the ethical climate of the organization. Morrison and O'Mahony (2003), Ross (2003b) and Lashley (1997, 2000, 2002) have variously argued that employees who graduate with an understanding of and some familiarity with this type of problem-solving will be of much greater utility within an organization, and also within the society at large, than will those graduates who are not confronted with dilemmas and are not challenged to find robust, rigorous, workable and personally acceptable solutions.

Trust

Commentators such as Collett and Furnham (1995), Cooper and Robertson (2001), Furnham (1997) and Peterson and Gonzales (2000) have all suggested that an important goal of organizational psychology has been the identification of factors that might predict intraorganisational cooperation, coordination and control. Trust, many researchers now believe, plays a major role in such endeavours (see Fukayama, 1995; Kramer, 1999, 2002; Pollitt, 2002; Putnam, 2000; Ross, 2003b; and Seligman, 1997). Moreover, an absence of trust, such as that which might exist as between employees and management within an organization, can have severely debilitating effects upon the climate and also the productivity of a workplace (Badaracco, 2002). The notions of trust and mistrust have been used in fields such as economics, organizational psychology, social psychology, sociology, management and marketing. Despite the prevalence and generally regarded importance of this construct, a succinct and universally acceptable definition appears unattainable; it has been employed in a variety of ways, both within and between disciplines. Hosmer (1995), Kramer (1999) suggests, characterises trust as an expectation of ethically justifiable behaviour which encompasses morally correct decisions that are founded on ethical principles, whereas Burt and Knez (1996) are cited as conceptualizing trust as simply an anticipation of cooperation. Kramer would further say that,

whatever the differences among theorists and commentators, most would agree that trust is in essence a psychological state.

While the absence of a universally acceptable operationalisation of trust may in the first instance be regarded as a limitation, others have argued that these very differences are not only necessary, but also of value for many applied researchers. Bigley and Pierce (1998) have concluded that any effort that might succeed in bringing existing trust perspectives under one conceptualization will simply result in formulations that are likely to be overly complex and extremely abstract, rendering them in practical terms unavailable for research purposes. They would prefer to adopt a specific problem-focused approach wherein individual components of trust are germane to the context of the research; they would moreover suggest that such an approach frees up the concept for research in diverse disciplinary fields and applied contexts. Clegg *et al.* (2002) support of this approach, finding evidence of its utility within the context of innovative behaviour.

Peterson and Gonzales (2002) have suggested that the promulgation of a set of ethical values within organisations has now become accepted practice; most organisations typically make some effort to display and to articulate codes of ethics and their contents to both staff and customers. Such efforts are generally assumed to be a positive and necessary step in the quest to be generally regarded as a good corporate citizen. Commentators such as Lencioni (2002) however conclude that many organizational value statements are at best bland, meaningless, or even dishonest. He further maintains that such a situation can be destructive in so far as empty value statements will likely provoke cynicism and lower motivation among employees, engender suspicion among customers, and represent management to both the employees and the wider community as lacking in truthfulness and credibility. The sequel of such a vague set of ethical values will be to create a climate wherein trust is in short supply.

This research explores major elements of the relationship between personal ethical values and both individual ethical influences and management response perceptions:

(1) It has sought to examine the dimensions of the personal ethical values, individual ethical influences and management response perceptions that are likely to be brought to tourism industry employment within an Asia-Pacific eco-tourism context.
(2) It has also sought to examine the relationships among personal ethical values, individual response conceptualizations and management response perceptions, in the context of an ethical dilemma involving eco-tour operations within the tourism/hospitality industry workplace;
(3) It has finally sought to examine the notions of trust and mistrust in tourism/hospitality industry management, and the extent to which levels of perceived trust and mistrust in the context of ethical problem solving within eco-tour operations may be predicted by personal ethical values as well as ethical influences and management response perceptions among potential employees.

METHOD

Subjects

Two hundred students enrolled in years 1, 2 and 3 within the School of Business at James Cook University, Cairns campus in north eastern Australia were sampled. Ross (1998; 2003b, 2004) has found that there is generally a high level of interest among young people in tourism and hospitality industry management employment, with many being prepared to undertake university/college level training in order to achieve their vocational goals.

Measures

Respondents were asked to rate the following ethical precepts, representing the notions of competence and integrity. Each of the ethical value precepts reflected in notions suggested by Aristotle, and have also appeared in the writings of both Rokeach (1973) and Feather(1975,1986); furthermore, each ethical precept was adapted to the tourism/hospitality industry workplace context, particularly as each precept may be interpreted within a service quality framework (Noe, 1999).

(1) How important do you see each of the following in any job offering service to the public? and *(2) How important do you believe that tourists see each of the following in a job offering service to the public?*

IMPORTANT	5 4 3 2 1	UNIMPORTANT

Being Hardworking	Being Sociable
Cooperative	Genuineness
Efficiency	Honesty
Initiative	Understanding
Positive Attitudes	Helpfulness

Figure 1

Respondents were presented with the following ethical dilemma:

The local eco-tour company for which you work is close to bankruptcy. You have become aware that, in order to keep the company going and paying the staff, drivers had been ordered by a supervisor to relax standards such as dumping waste by the side of the road. How important would each of these factors be in deciding on reactions.

IMPORTANT	5 4 3 2 1	UNIMPORTANT

(a) FOR YOU	(b) FOR MANAGEMENT
Career Implications	Company Practices
Legal Implications	Legal Implications
Societal Values	Company Image
Your Own Values	Justice for All

Figure 2

Responses to this ethical dilemma have been adapted from the work of Withey (1990). Age and sex for each respondent were also recorded.

RESULTS

The first set of analyses involved principal components factor analyses, applied to elements of the sets of competence and integrity ethical precepts. Analyses of each set revealed only one eigenvalue exceeding unity, accounted for approximately 40% of the explained variance, and in each case demonstrated standardised alpha reliability coefficients exceeding .6. competence: eigenvalue=2.152,

explained variance=43.041, standardized alpha=.6686; Integrity: eigenvalue=1.97, explained variance=39.404, standardized alpha=.6091. Both sets were thus summed and employed in subsequent analyses. Descriptive analyses applied to results from this study have revealed that both of these ethical dimensions were rated highly. Table 1 also reveals , for the individual ethical influences, a significant difference among the various precepts. An inspection of mean rank reveals career influences to be the least favoured, own values the most favoured, and both legal influences and societal values occupying a mid range position. For the analysis involving perceived management ethical influences, the least expected by respondents involved a justice for all response, whereas the most likely was anticipated by respondents to involve legal considerations and the preservation of company image.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics associated with major variables included in the study

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	Number
Integrity-Tourists	22.3333	2.635	14	192
Competence-Tourists	29.4375	3.884	18	192
Integrity-Self	21.4503	2.6845	13	191
Competence-Self	22.5	2.4792	13	192
Career implications	1.349	3.3903	4	187
Legal implications	1.1508	4.0425	4	188
Society's values	1.0762	4.223	4	188
Own values	0.938	4.4021	4	189
Company practices	1.1717	4.0687	4	189
Legal implications	1.0518	4.3333	4	189
Company image	1.1044	4.3227	4	189
Justice for all	1.3592	2.9677	4	186
Age	25.7884	8.962	35	199

Females=139 (69%) Males=62 (30.5%) Missing=1 (.5%) N=201

Table 2-8 also reveals significant differences among the measures of both integrity and competence. Respondents reported their own competence as being higher than that of tourists, whereas they estimated tourist's integrity to be higher than their own. Respondents estimated tourist's integrity higher than tourist's competence, whereas they personally regarded competence as more important than integrity.

Friedman ANOVA (by ranks) analyses of personal ethical values,
individual ethical response influences and perceived management response influences

Table 2
Summary Statistics Table

	Number	Chi Sq	Df	Asymp Sig
Individual ethical response	187	88.19	3	0
Management response	186	189.328	3	0
Competence T vs S	191	47.41	1	0
Integrity T vs S	190	24.343	1	0
IntegrityT vs CompetenceT	191	43.662	1	0
IntegrityS vs CompetenceS	191	29.681	1	0

T=perceived tourist ethical values; S=self, own ethical values;

Table 3
Personal Ethical Value Influences

Career implications	1.95
Legal implications	2.49
Societal values	2.32
Own values	2.84

Table 4
Perceived Management Ethical Value Influences

Company practices	2.6
Legal implications	2.91
Company image	2.85
Justice for all	1.63

Table 5
Competence T vs CompetenceS Ethical Values

CompetenceT	1.27
CompetenceS	1.73

Table 6
IntegrityT vs IntegrityS Ethical Values

IntegrityT	1.66
IntegrityS	1.34

Table 7
IntegrityT vs CompetenceT Ethical Values

IntegrityT	1.71
CompetenceT	1.29

Table 8
IntegrityS vs CompetenceS Ethical Values

IntegrityS	1.33
CompetenceS	1.67

Multiple regression analysis has been employed in this study so as to gauge the relative predictive power of the integrity and competence ethical measures in regard to the individual ethical influences. Table 9-10 reveals that high levels of personal assent to competence were found to predict ethical influences involving legal implications, societal values and own values. High levels of personal integrity were also found to predict societal values.

Multiple regression analyses of the integrity and competence ethical measures, employing the individual ethical influences as criterion variables

Table 9
Summary Statistics Table

Analyses	R	Adj R Sq	F	Sig
Legal implications	0.239	0.046	3.183	0.015
Societal values	0.35	0.103	6.177	0
Own values	0.272	0.053	3.581	0.008

Table 10
Coefficients Table

Analyses	STD Beta	T	Sig
Legal implications	-1	2.024	0.044
	-.003 (2)	-0.029	0.977
	.033 (3)	-0.355	0.723
	-.018 (4)	-0.17	0.865
	.280 (5)	3.151	0.002
Societal values		2.012	0.046
	-0.057	-0.643	0.527
	-0.163	-1.79	0.075
	0.229	2.269	0.023
	0.59	3.006	0
Own values		3.401	0.001
	-0.073	-0.795	0.428
	-0.064	-0.683	0.495
	0.074	0.723	0.47
	0.271	3.055	0.003

(1) constant; (2) CompetenceT; (3) IntegrityT; (4) IntegrityS; (5) CompetenceS

Table 11-12 reveals that high levels of personal assent to competence were found to predict the perceived management response influences involving law and company image. Higher levels of tourist competence were found to predict negatively a resort to law as a response to this ethical dilemma.

Multiple regression analyses of the integrity and competence ethical measures, employing the perceived management response influences as criterion variables

Table 11
Summary Statistics Table

Analyses	R	Adj R Sq	F	Sig
Legal implications	0.246	0.061	2.862	0.025
Company image	0.311	0.097	4.751	0.001

Table 12
Coefficients Table

Analyses	Std Beta	T	Sig
Legal implications	-1	3.688	0
	-.198 (2)	-2.142	0.034
	-.051 (3)	-0.537	0.592
	.157 (4)	1.523	0.13
	.178 (5)	1.993	0.048
Company image		2.117	0.036
	-0.07	-0.768	0.444
	-0.111	-1.194	0.234
	0.081	0.8	0.425
	0.315	3.596	0

(1) constant; (2) CompetenceT; (3) IntegrityT; (4) IntegrityS; (5) CompetenceS

Table 13-14 reports results from multiple regression analysis involving the company image management response influence, employed as a measure of mistrust, with the competence and integrity measures of personal ethical values as predictor variables; this analysis revealed that respondents high on own values were more likely to regard the preservation of company image as the likely response of management to this ethical dilemma.

Multiple regression analyses of the individual ethical influences,
employing the company image perceived management response influence

Table 13
Summary Statistics Table

Analyses	R	Adj RSq	F	Sig
Company image	0.409	0.149	9.153	0

Table 14
Coefficients Table

Analyses	Std Beta	T	Sig
Company image	-1	4.091	0
	.051 (2)	0.712	0.477
	.045 (3)	0.535	0.593
	.160 (4)	1.989	0.048
	.285 (5)	3.765	0

(1) constant; (2) Career Influences; (3) Legal Influences;
(4) Societal Values; (5) Own Values;

Analyses within Table 15-16 employs the company image variable as a measure of mistrust, and includes various deviation measures involving competence and integrity. From this table it can be seen that the company image preservation measure by management was predicted by higher levels of difference as between respondents' own integrity and perceived tourist'integrity. Thus the more that respondents regarded themselves as exceeding tourists in regard to integrity ethical values, the

more that they were likely to expect management to respond to this eco-tour company ethical dilemma by protecting the company image.

The next analysis (Table 17) involved a cross-tabulation of the company image mistrust measure by the own ethical values influence, so as to further examine patterns of association between these two measures. Standardised residuals within Table 17 reveal that respondents were more likely to be neutral, moderately high and high on both measures; they were also found to be less likely to be neutral on own values whilst being high on company image, and also less likely to be neutral on company image and also high on own values. Thus it would seem that the higher the respondent reported as relying upon his or her own values, the more that they would evidence this measure of management mistrust; moreover, respondents revealing this type of ethical influence were found to be much less likely to consider an equivocal response such as that represented by the neutral category.

The final analysis involved a Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA (by ranks) of the student level by company image protection employed as a measure of organisational mistrust. From an inspection of mean ranks within Table 18-19, it can be seen that the group to exhibit a considerably lower level of mistrust was the first year student subset. These respondents reported considerably less mistrust than did the second year and the third year groups; indeed, it may be observed that respondents, as they progressed through their studies, reported a rising level of organizational mistrust as gauged by an expectation of a company image protection response on the part of management when faced with this eco-tour operations dilemma.

Multiple regression analyses of individual ethical divergences, employing the company image perceived management response influence

Table 15
Summary Statistics Table

Analyses	R	Adj R Sq	F	Sig
Company image	0.235	0.039	3.459	0.018

Table 16
Coefficients Table

ANALYSES	STD BETA	T	SIG
Company image	-1	42.608	0
	.166 (2)	1.823	0.07
	.189 (3)	2.336	0.021
	.049 (4)	0.563	0.574

(1) constant; (2) CompetenceS-IntegrityS; (3) IntegrityS-IntegrityT;
(4) CompetenceS-CompetenceT

Note: The CompetenceT-IntegrityT divergence measure did not reach
acceptable tolerance levels for inclusion in this multiple regression
analysis.

Table 17
Crosstabulational analysis of personal ethical values
by company image management influence perceptions as a measure of mistrust

	Own ethical values– Low	Moderately low	Neutral	Moderately high	Own ethical values-High
Company image-Low	1 (1)	1	0	0	4
	.1 (2)	0.3	0.7	1.1	3.8
	3.8 (3)	1.4	-0.9	-1.2	0.1
Moderately low	1	2	1	4	5
	0.1	0.6	1.4	2.5	8.3
	2.4	1.9	-0.4	1.1	-2
Neutral	0	2	9	3	5
	0.2	0.9	2.1	3.6	12.2
	-0.5	1.2	5.3	-0.4	-3.6
Moderately high	0	0	3	9	15
	0.3	1.3	3	5.1	17.3
	-0.6	-1.3	0	2.1	-1
Company image-High	0	4	8	20	92
	1.3	5.9	13.8	23.6	79.4
	-2	-1.4	-2.8	-1.4	4

(1)=Observed Frequency; (2)=Expected Frequency; (3)=Standardised Residual
Pearson Chi Sq. = 68.310; df = 16; Asymp. Sig. = .000

Note: Standardised residuals are the difference between the observed and expected
frequencies divided by the square root of the expected frequencies. The overall
Chi Sq. statistic represents the sum of squares of these standardised residuals,
and each standardised residual represents the degree of fit for the no-effects
model for each cell.

Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA (by ranks) analysis of student level
by company image protection as a measure of respondent mistrust

Table 18
Summary Statistics Table

Statistic	Count
Chi Square	12.35
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	0.019

Table 19
Rank Table

Year Level	Count	Mean Rank
First Year	110	69.2
Second Year	41	95.96
Third Year	36	103.36

DISCUSSION

Whilst there has been a growing focus upon the importance of ethics within eco-tourism, relatively little research as hitherto been directed at an understanding of those individuals who do work in, or are likely upon graduation to find employment in the eco-tourism sphere. This study represents an exploration of such an area, and has examined both personal ethical values and also ethical influences among prospective eco-tourism employees within an Asia-Pacific context, as they conceptualise ethical problem-solving within the context of an eco-tourism operations dilemma. The study has been based upon an understanding of the power of personal values, pRarticularly ethical values such as integrity, in the understanding and prediction of ethical behaviour. It is basically argued that knowledge of an individual's personal value system will give a useful insight into their present and future behavioural patterns, as well as their expectations in regard to others' behaviour and problem-solving styles.

It has been found that both the competence and integrity dimensions of ethical belief were highly esteemed by many respondents: they were found to embrace work-place ethical precepts associated with notions such as efficiency, hardwork and initiative, as well as honesty, sociability and helpfulness. Such findings would seem to bode well for an industry that may eventually employ them, and also for the visitors with which they come in contact. It was further found that the most favoured individual ethical influence, in the face of this eco-tourism operations ethical dilemma, was believed to be ones own ethical values, and was less likely to be a career preservation response, or a response involving a simple resort to legal formulations. Thus responses appeared to suggest that they would rely upon their own ethical principles when encountering such a situation, and not be constrained by what the ambient society or organization might approve of; nor would they defer solely to the law and therefore make no response unless it was deemed to be covered by a legal solution or precedent; neither would they be likely to be governed principally by that which was perceived to be advantageous to their career prospects.

Respondent responses in regard to perceived management reactions to this ethical dilemma were not, however, found to be as positive. Many believed that the least likely response on the part of management would involve a justice for all perspective; rather they anticipated management to likely respond in such a way that the protection of the company image was viewed as their paramount concern, and to resort to law as a method to solve the problem presented by this dilemma. Such findings do not portray these prospective employees as having a favourable image of management in respect of ethical problem-solving. The study has also highlighted a number of differences as between respondents and perceived tourists' ethical precepts. In regard to competence, respondents esteemed this ethical dimension higher that they did perceived tourists' precepts; integrity, however, was believed to be higher among tourists than among themselves. These prospective employees believed tourists esteemed integrity higher than did they, and were more likely to esteem competence than integrity. A picture would seem to emerge here wherein competence generally was believed to be the more necessary precept for employment in this arena, whereas tourists were believed not to understand this, and rather, bring with them somewhat misguided or uninformed views regarding integrity. The difference as between the two was one of emphasis it should be pointed out, not one involving presence and absence of these ethical dimensions. The point should, however, be made that if notions such as honesty and helpfulness are deemed to be of lesser importance than are those of efficiency and initiative, then the ethical problem-solving process may at some later point produce an outcome wherein success could take precedence over truth.

The relative predictive potency of the competence and integrity ethical dimensions have also been explored in this study, with findings suggestive that respondent's own competence was a predictor of individual ethical influences involving law, as well as societal and own values, and also a predictor of perceived management responses involving law and company image. In comparison, perceived tourist's competence was found to negatively predict management's resort to law if faced with such a dilemma. Competence would thus appear to be the more salient predictor of both personal and perceived management responses to this eco-tour operations dilemma, and appears to be the overriding ethical conceptualization in the understanding of many respondents to such a dilemma. Integrity, in contrast, played no similar role. It may therefore be the case that notions such as efficiency, initiative and hardwork are regarded as being associated with problem-solving responses, both at the individual influence level and also at the management influence level in the context of an eco-tour operations dilemma; integrity has apparently been deemed not so relevant in this context, despite the apparent importance of precepts such as honesty, genuineness and helpfulness in any work-place ethical climate. Clearly more needs to be known about the perceived merits and relevance of both dimensions; it is possible that, whilst integrity is generally highly regarded, the belief may also be extant that it is competence to which people believe they must defer whenever problems such as this present.

Whilst analysis involving trust, as measured by the justice for all management response, revealed no significant results in this study, the measure of company image protection, as a measure of mistrust, did reveal a number of interesting and important findings. Those respondents likely to be influenced by their own values were found to predict the company image protection management response; those respondents more likely to believe that their integrity ethical values exceeded that of tourists were also likely to predict this measure of management mistrust. Thus those who are more likely to mistrust management were individuals who would respond in ways that they believed most ethical and also unaffected by outside sources, and also those who regarded tourists as having lower levels of integrity that themselves. A trust solely in one's own values in the framing of an ethical problem-solving response were found to predict a lack of trust in management; the more an individual trusted their own ethical values, the less they trusted the management response; this would appear to be a somewhat bleak perception regarding the ethical integrity of eco-tour operations management. Those who believed that they exceeded tourists in regard to integrity also were found to predict management mistrust, perhaps suggesting that those potential employees who regarded themselves as demonstrating more integrity than a potentially gullible visitor population were also less trusting of management's ethical problem-solving responses. Perhaps this group, because of the assumed naivety of tourists, believed that they needed to be more vigilant in regard to integrity ethics, and that such a heightened awareness in regard to the risk of unethical behaviour being shown to such visitors has produced this effect; certainly such issues could now be explored further. Moreover, this result would appear to offer a relatively poor estimation of management's ethical credentials. Finally, it was found that those respondents in later years of study would be less likely to trust management than would those starting their degree, suggesting perhaps that those with a growing familiarity regarding the business and tourism industry would, most likely during part-time employment in the local industry, have had experiences in or in some other manner gained opinions which led them to believe that a response of mistrust was the most appropriate. Further investigation of this trend would now seem appropriate in regard to other populations; research might profitably focus upon notions such as trust among the newly employed, among those who are experienced tourism industry personnel, and those who have progressed to various levels of industry management.

Limitations to this study should also here be acknowledged. The sample represents only first, second and third year business students at one university within the Asia-Pacific region. Attitudes

and problem-solving styles may well alter as those in training for the tourism industry finally become employed within areas such as eco-tourism. It is possible that those not yet in industry employment may be more idealistic or may not fully understand the many issues and complexities that confront an employee in daily work life. It would therefore seem to be valuable now to examine actual eco-tourism employees, and also management, so as to understand how the transition from student/trainee to paid operative influences ethical problem-solving style. It is possible that individuals might report precepts and individuals as important as an ideal, but when faced with the perceived exigencies of an actual ethical dilemma, act and intend to act, to varying degrees, quite differently.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of major findings have emerged from this study. First of all, both the competence and the integrity dimensions of ethics have been found to be highly represented in this sample of university business students studying at a major tourism city within the Asia-Pacific region: they would clearly assent to the importance of ethical precepts such as hard work, success and initiative, as well as precepts such as honesty, helpfulness and genuineness. The second major finding, however, reveals that, in regard to the relationship of ethical influences and responses to an eco-tourism ethical dilemma, it was only competence that was found to be relevant. Integrity generally played no similar role. It would thus appear the case that when it came to actually framing an ideal response to such a dilemma, it was competence that was held to be associated with a range of individual and also perceived management responses. Finally, the study has revealed a quite notable level of mistrust in management's ethicality: eco-tourism management was widely regarded as not likely to respond by embracing a perspective that would encompass justice for all those involved in the dilemma, but rather would favour a response that primarily protected the company image from harm. In summary, this finding would appear to suggest that eco-tourism management, at least in the eyes of a number of prospective employees, may need to expend some effort in clarifying their ethical image among potential staff members, and possibly also their problem-solving responses, if they wish to be regarded as ethically responsible corporate citizens by those whom they may wish to attract as future eco-tourism employees.

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