

Review of Hospitality Ethics Research in 2007

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Purpose

Isbell Hospitality Ethics shares its review and analysis of the ethics articles appearing in the hospitality journals each year, to facilitate hospitality ethics researchers' individual efforts. The purpose of this paper is to review and analyze the ethics articles which appeared in the hospitality journals in 2007.

Isbell Hospitality Ethics' on-line compendium of hospitality ethics research (www2.nau.edu/~clj5/Ethics) is designed to foster communication and coordination among hospitality ethics researchers whose work may ultimately improve the ethical status of the hospitality industry.

Method

The *Hospitality and Tourism Index* was used as the source of hospitality journals. A search was conducted and seventy-four articles were obtained and read for 2007. Nineteen of the articles were deemed not relevant. The 55 remaining articles came from 12 academic journals and 43 trade journals and magazines. Fourteen of the 2007 articles came from journals and magazines that had either not been part of the *Hospitality and Tourism Index* or had not previously published articles on ethics. Forty-six of the articles fit easily into the 11 topic areas that emerged during the past analyses of articles from 1990 to 2006. The remaining 9 articles required a new 12th topic.

Description of the Data

Figures 1 and 2 identify the topic areas, the total number of articles for each topic area, when they were written, and the journals they appeared in. Figure 3 shows the total number of hospitality journal articles on ethics appearing each year over an 18-year period. While this paper's focus is on the articles appearing in 2007, it may be interesting to look at the articles within the context of the previous 17 years.

From 1990 through 2001 there were approx 10 articles on ethics written in the hospitality journals each year. From 2002 through 2007 the average articles per year was closer to 40. The publishers for the *Hospitality and Tourism Index* changed around that time and may have more to do with the increase in the number of articles than an actual increase in interest in ethics in hospitality. Only 22% of the 55 articles were from academic journals as opposed to 53% in 2006. This decrease may have more to do with the large number of trade journals and magazines indexed in the *Hospitality and Tourism Index* rather than decreasing academic interest in ethics.

The distribution of articles changed dramatically in 2007 with 30% of the articles falling into the categories of Corporate Responsibility and Green/Sustainable. Ten articles, up from 4 in 2006, were about CSR, and 9 articles were about sustainability and the green movement and required a new topic. This change will be addressed in the topic discussions.

Topics

Unethical Actions (Topic 1)

Seven articles (13% of 55) described unethical actions. The bottled water industry was criticized for using energy to produce plastic bottles, which then end up in landfills. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, and New York City will no longer allow tax dollars to pay for bottled water instead of tap water (Pepsi clarifies, 2007). Environmental and political pressure

forced Aquafina (PepsiCo, Inc.) to write out “Public Water Source” on its labels (Pepsi clarifies, 2007).

Even though the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (CME) established standards which restricted pharmaceutical companies from paying for continuing medical education as a way to promote their products, the pharmaceutical industry gave more than \$1 billion in CME grants in 2005 (Sturken, 2007). Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers adopted a code of ethics in 2002 which outlawed expensive dinners, outings, and gifts for doctors as a means of promoting their drugs (Cobe, 2007).

An article in *Restaruant Business* encouraged restaurants to “get in on the action” of catering the lower cost medical office lunches pharmaceutical reps still use to get doctors to prescribe their drugs (Cobe, 2007). Restaurants in Washington, D. C. may lose as much as 30% of sales by new laws that prohibit federal lawmakers from accepting meals, gifts, travel, and entertainment from lobbyists (Frumkin, 2007).

Meeting planners are still grappling with problems caused by hotels offering personal incentives to planners in hopes of influencing planners’ booking decisions. Panelists at a Meeting Professionals International conference agreed that it unethical to take personal incentives but difficult to get across to unprofessional planners who hurt the reputation of the planning industry while validating the hoteliers’ practice of offering personal incentives (Pelletier, 2007).

The ethics of food choices and farming and production methods have come to the public’s attention in recent years. Numerous books and articles have appeared regarding the necessity of sustainable, just, and healthy food systems (Du Puis, 2007). Animals rights activists, restaurateurs, and politicians have worked together to ban foie gras (forced fed goose liver) in Chicago, California, and Israel (Fois gras, 2007).

How Ethical Are We? (Topic 2)

Four of the 6 articles in this category came from academic journals, and 3 of the articles have Ray Schmidgall as second or third author. In a study of European hospitality students, parents were found to have the greatest impact on students’ ethical beliefs. Professors in university programs were, however, also found to have substantial influence on students’ ethical beliefs which supports ethics instruction at that educational level. Male students in the study were more likely than female students to take part in unethical activities, as also reported in the literature (Wilborn, Brymer, & Schmidgall, 2007).

Beck, Lazer, & Schmidgall (2007) state “...the hospitality and tourism literature have given scant attention to ethics.” [All of the twenty-five references in the Beck, Lazer, & Schmidgall article, except one from 2001, were at least 10 years old from 1999 and back. Isbell Hospitality Ethics has reviewed and analyzed 287 ethics articles in the hospitality literature from 1999-2007.] Their study asked lodging sales and marketing executives to indicate whether scenarios involving a sales and marketing executive were ethical, unethical, or not about ethics, and whether they would do as the executives in the scenarios did. From the lack of consistency in the executives’ responses, the researchers concluded that codes of ethics should be put in place to guide the executives because they are more influenced by family and immediate supervisors, and, because sales and marketing managers are better able to look at consequences of behaviors to determine best behaviors, ethical behavior should be rewarded (Beck, Lazer, & Schmidgall, 2007).

A study of financial executives in 1993 was replicated and 135 responses indicated that the level of disagreement between financial executives as to what is ethical or unethical is still considerable (Damitio, & Schmidgall, 2007).

A study of public houses (bars and taverns) in the UK was undertaken in an attempt to reduce the costs of violence and crime due to excessive alcohol intake. Bar owners are blamed for overcrowding establishments, overserving alcohol, discounting drink prices, and underpaying their unknowledgeable employees. Public pressure on bar owners to exert more control over their employees to serve alcohol responsibly is made more difficult due to the need to make tips and profits (Pratten, 2007).

Meetings & Conventions conducted an online survey and found that 354 out of 492 (72%) respondents work under an ethics code in their organizations, but only 198 said the ethics code was strictly enforced. Twenty-five percent of the respondents have no gifts restriction, and 50% can accept meeting planner points (Braley, 2007).

Carnival Corporation ranked 16th worst in terms of risk management and environmental impact by *The Observer's* Good Companies Guide (Cook and Carnival, 2007).

How to do the Right Thing (Topic 3)

Ten articles appeared in various trade journals that discussed how to do the right thing. Chef Wolfgang Puck made news when he said “he will no longer serve factory animals raised in confinement facilities, eggs from battery chickens, or unsustainable seafood.” The ethics of eating is gaining awareness, and the editor of *Gourmet* wrote that in the future “we will look back and wonder why we ever debated the issue of doing the right thing” (Reichl, 2007).

Buying Fairtrade products helps equalize trade with developing countries, protects their workers, and contributes to more sustainable development. Readers of *Caterer & Hotelkeeper* are encouraged to turn their businesses into Fairtrade operations by utilizing Fairtrade suppliers so they can take advantage of this popular trend and do good at the same time (Kuhn, 2007).

Six Flags theme parks have instituted a ‘Guest Code of Conduct’ to protect all guests from offensive behavior such as swearing, cutting in line, or inappropriate clothing (Six Flags calls for, 2007). Guest service mistakes must be appropriately righted to be fair to both the guest and the hospitality operation. Treating customers fairly is the right thing to do and also profitable (Weinstein, 2007). Some financial services companies are rewarding ethical behavior and good customer service evaluations, rather than just sales, as part of their incentive programs (Bassett, 2007).

Breaches in confidentiality by managers are resulting in more employment-related lawsuits and putting individual managers in danger of losing personal assets. Professional ethics requires managers to keep the confidentiality of job applicants so as not to endanger their current jobs (Yost, 2007). Customers’ privacy must be protected and so must their personal data. Experts suggest that hospitality companies have a simply stated personal data policy so guests will know how their data will be used (Reduce legalese, 2007).

Managers’ duties in the UK are spelled out in the Companies Act 2006. While consumer protection issues are the most likely source of liability, managers failing to comply with the act can face civil and criminal charges and may be terminated and/or be required to pay damages or pay for losses (Glaze, 2007). Because most fraud takes place at the management level, it is recommended that companies change their cultures by putting ethics and integrity policies and procedures at the top management level (Lacey, 2007).

Frank Bucaro recommends, in an article by Levack (2007), that companies should establish ethics committees as a way of avoiding issues that could become legal problems. Ethics training costs far less than legal fees (Levack, 2007).

Topic 4 and Topic 5

No articles in 2007 appeared in “Company Values” or Ethics and Leadership.”

Codes of Ethics, the Need for, and How to Develop Them (Topic 6)

Three of the four articles in Topic 6 are from academic journals. The fourth article describes Marriott International’s Code of Business Ethics and their new Human Rights Policy Statement which are presented to all new associates in their ethics training program (Marriott Hotels International, 2007).

Local tourism department people, local guides, and residents of a remote village in Indonesia met with Stroma Cole, an involved researcher, to develop of tourist code of conduct so tourists would know how to behave appropriately in the village (Cole, 2007). Tourists’ and stakeholders’ reactions to the code were analyzed, and the code was found to be somewhat effective. Findings included: tourists were more likely to follow the code items when they were told the reasons for the items, tourists sometimes chose not to adhere to some of the items on the code even when they understood them, and the code must be distributed in a way to ensure all tourists read it before visiting the village (Cole, 2007).

Management accountants can become more aware of ethical implications in decision making as they age and become more educated, when they understand the consequences and probabilities of a particular decision, have been trained in moral reasoning, and/or have ethics codes that they are expected to adhere to (Miller, 2007). Ethics codes can be effective if senior management models the code, the code combines both rules and values, employees are given examples specific to their jobs and ethical decision making training, and there is someone available for employee support in ethical decision making (Miller, 2007).

Ethics can help business people to make better decisions, and because marketing is the most visible part of operations, the focus of ethics should be on marketing. More companies are involved globally, however, cultural differences make it nearly impossible to have a single marketing ethics code (Panda & Awadzi, 2007).

Topic 7

No articles in 2007 appeared in “Ethics for Hospitality Educators.”

Teaching Ethics (Topic 8)

The founder of Brinker International Inc., gave \$1 million to establish the Norman E. Brinker Institute for Hospitality and Restaurant Management at the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University. The institute focuses on accounting, leadership, and ethics. Brinker is known for helping others to succeed (A Legacy of Learning, 2007).

The other article in Topic 8 is from an academic journal and describes a study which compared 735 hospitality students’ responses to ethical dilemmas from a 1993 Damitio and Schmidgall study and students’ responses to the same ethical dilemmas in 1994. The study also asked respondents to indicate whether the manager’s behavior in the dilemmas was ethical or not ethical. The results indicated that while students try to do the right thing, half of the time, they do not know what the right thing is. The study did find female students to be more ethical, but also

suggested that ethics must be more consistently taught in hospitality programs (Lynn, Howey, & Combink, 2007).

Tourism Ethics (Topic 9)

Four articles, one from an academic journal, were categorized as “Tourism Ethics.” Readers of *Travel and Leisure* were given the opportunity take a tourism ethics quiz to test their own travel ethics (Mozes, 2007).

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) expanded its Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to include the social and cultural sustainability of tourism (Feature Profile, 2007). Montreal was honored to be the first city to sign the Geotourism Charter of the National Geographic Society. The charter is similar to the UNWTO’s Global code of Ethics for Tourism in terms of cultural attunement (Montreal Signs, 2007).

The UNWTO’s definition of sustainable/eco tourism is not met by many tourism organizations who advertise themselves as “sustainable” and amounts to false advertising. Lansing and De Vries (2007) have proposed an instrument that rates tourism corporations and destinations on the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural aspects of sustainable tourist development as defined in the UNWTO’s Global Code of Ethics for Tourism. This would have to be a cooperative effort between industry and the WTO in order to be effective. Tourists would have to respect the ratings which could somehow be integrated with existing ratings such as Michelin Stars and AAA Diamonds, and travel magazines could help to influence tourist acceptance of the ratings (Lansing & De Vries, 2007).

Trends, Issues, Challenges (Topic 10)

McDonald’s has been providing nutritional analysis of its menu items since the early 1990’s and has been meeting customer demands by adding more healthy choice items such as salads and fruit. McDonald’s issues a bi-annual Corporate Social Responsibility Report and has a “Code of Conduct” for its suppliers that requires energy and water conservation, fair labor practices, and attention to animal welfare (Adams, 2007).

Wolfgang Puck announced his commitment to only use meat from humanely raised animals, sustainably harvested seafood, all “natural” ingredients, and organic food in all of his operations. This food ethics trend is growing, and other foodservice operations, such as Chipotle’s and Bon Appetit Management are also requiring no hormones or antibiotics and humane treatment of animals (Jennings, 2007).

Fois gras (liver from force fed geese), long considered a delicacy, has come under attack as the process has become industrialized and taken over by big business. French farmers who produce the fois gras in the traditional manner, believe that animal activists are perhaps correct in condemning the cruelty of industrialized foie gras production, but to condemn them also is excessive (Strang, 2007).

Corporate Responsibility (Topic 11)

Ten articles (18%), 2 from academic journals, were about corporate social responsibility (CSR). Corporate social responsibility requires organizations to demonstrate responsible business conduct that does no harm in the marketplace, in the workplace, in the community they operate in, and to the natural environment (Roberts, 2007). The actions of business impact the local, national, and global community, so businesses have a responsibility to ensure that the impact is positive (Paton, 2007). While improvements in corporate citizenship result in strong

financial performance, methods to measure the effects of CSR are still in the early stages of development (Roberts, 2007).

Organizational commitment to CSR is becoming an important issue for prospective employees, and a good CSR track record may be necessary to recruit top level candidates (Cotterill, 2007). People prefer working for companies that care. Meeting planners are incorporating CSR activities at meetings where participants can work together on charitable activities in the community (Scofidio, 2007).

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is increasing its corporate social responsibilities in the areas of its environmental impact, its employees and the community, in health and safety, supply chain management, and stakeholder relations (Shangri-La, 2007). Saladworks makes growth decisions based on its core values (Chapman, 2007). McDonalds, Sodexo, Premier Travel Inn, and Mitchells & Butlers are among hospitality organizations in the UK known for their CSR initiatives (Paton, 2007).

MGM Grand Las Vegas received the 2007 Overall Best Practice Award after being named as a “Best Place to Work in America” (Nelson, 2007). Mellor Catering Services received a corporate and social responsibility award from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales for its work in the community and its ethical business practices (Caterer Scoops, 2007).

Researches analyzed the content of hotel websites, annual reports, and CSR reports to determine the level of social responsible behavior reported by the top ten hotel companies (Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus, 2007). Initiatives for sustainable tourism and CSR in the hospitality sector have been put forth over the past ten years by international and European organizations such as the World Tourism Organization. Increased attention, particularly in the public domain, is resulting in adoption of WTO ethical guidelines by more and more local associations and organizations. While reporting CSR activities does not necessarily correspond to actual CSR activities, it is obvious that CSR is becoming an accepted global initiative (Holcomb, Upchurch, & Okumus, 2007).

Eight out of the ten top hotel companies (80%) reported giving charitable donations, 60% reported having diversity policies, and 40% mentioned social responsibility as part of their company mission statements. Community, environment, marketplace, vision and values, and workforce were the categories the top ten hotel companies’ available information was entered into. Hilton Corporation was found to have the most comprehensive CSR reporting. Marriot came in as second most comprehensive and the Accor hotel group was third. Holcomb, Upchurch, and Okumus suggested that most hotel companies can improve their CSR reporting and that hotel companies should “live up to their reputation of being ‘hospitable’ not only to their guests but also to society” (2007).

Disaster management, such as needed after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, is not generally listed on any of the CSR checklists commonly agreed upon in the literature. Best Western, Hilton group, Accor, Intercontinental, and Six Senses did, however, commit over \$2.5 million, and other chains also provided aid (Henderson, 2007). Henderson calls for CSR efforts to be balanced between commercial and noncommercial priorities (2007).

Green/Sustainable Practices (Topic 12)

There were nine articles (16%) that were specifically about sustainable and green practices in 2007, so a new topic was added to the original 11 topics. Articles about sustainable practices in past years were written primarily about tourism. Articles about sustainable practices

in 2007 were written about packaging, farming, manufacturing, operations, suppliers, and delivery systems along with sustainability in tourism and tourism development. The increase in articles specifically about sustainable and green practices found in the hospitality literature mirrors the attention focused on sustainable and green practices in the public media in the last few years.

Sustainable practices are increasing due to cost savings realized by controlling and utilizing waste products and by more informed consumers demanding safer and healthier products produced through less destructive means (Bjerklie, 2007). A study of consumer preferences for environmentally friendly practices at hotels in India found that consumers do not, at this time, want to pay more for a sustainable product. They will, however, choose the greener hotel if everything else is equivalent (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). ITC Hotel Grand Kakatiya Sheraton & Towers was named *Environment Champion of the Year* by the Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI Awards, 2007).

A meeting planning company, MotivAction Group, turned down business from ExxonMobil because of ExxonMobil's "attempts to undermine the scientific consensus on climate change" (Scofidioi, 2007). The tourism and hospitality industries are being pressured by consumers, increasing environmental regulation, and issues related to maintenance of physical plants to be more environmentally friendly (Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007).

Food, prepared from locally grown organic produce and ethically treated animals and sea creatures, is now being seen as a political issue because "food ties into extremely important social, economic, environmental and institutional issues" (Caira, 2007). Aspects of sustainable/green wine production include organic growing, fair trade labeling, environmental and carbon footprinting, and the distance wine travels to market. Australian wine exporters may not be immediately affected by these issues, but will most assuredly be affected in the future. They are encouraged to begin now to be prepared for consumers' desire for more sustainably produced and distributed wine (Scott, 2007).

Wal-Mart is requiring more sustainable practices from its suppliers, Pepperidge Farm has seen huge savings from cutting energy, fuel, water, and other resources waste, Heinz North America saves resources through its Utility Optimization Process, Anheuser-Busch, Pilgrim's Pride, and Del Monte reduce, recycle and reuse water and other resources for large savings (Bjerklie, 2007). The Tourism Industry Association of Canada has a Code of Ethics & Guidelines for Sustainable Tourism designed to sustain Canada as a natural destination (Mowat, 2007).

Although there is a growing consumer demand for packaging that is less excessive and less damaging to the environment (Veal, 2007), the packaging industry, in a survey, ranked packaging source reduction last in importance to them. Packaging engineers were more concerned with sustainability issues of waste, energy, and transportation reductions (Higgins, 2007).

Conclusion

Over a third of the 2007 articles were categorized as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Green/Sustainable Practices. Ten out of 55 articles (18%) in 2007 were on CSR. The combined total of CSR articles in 2004, 2005, and 2006 was only 8 out of 131 articles (6%). There was a 5% increase in the number of CSR articles between 2006 and 2007. There was also a 5% increase in the number of articles on "How to do the Right Thing" from 2006 to 2007.

There were 9 articles on Green and Sustainable Practices where there had been almost none in 2006. There were minor declines in all of the other topic areas.

The focus of ethics articles in the hospitality literature seems to have changed from trying to keep individuals in companies from lying and cheating to companies being forced to conduct business in ways that do not harm the environment, their employees, and the communities they operate in. Much of the responsibility for ethical behavior has shifted from the individual in the institution to the institution itself. Because the head of an organization sets the ethical tone for the entire organization, it is possible that this shift could result in a more positive influence on the ethical behavior of individuals in the organization.

There were substantial increases in articles on CSR and Green/Sustainable Practices in the hospitality literature in 2007. Of the 19 articles in these two topics, only three, however, were from academic journals. Green and sustainability have become mainstream topics of interest in the last few years, and this awareness has found its way into the hospitality literature.

Figure 1. Number of Articles in the Twelve Topic Areas

Topic	Content Area	No. of Articles 1990-1999	No. of Articles 2000	No. of Articles 2001	No. of Articles 2002	No. of Articles 2003	No. of Articles 2004	No. of Articles 2005	No. of Articles 2006	No. of Articles 2007
1	Unethical Actions	27	4	4	8	3	13	8	9	7
2	How Ethical Are We?	16	1		3	5	4	2	5	6
3	How to do the Right Thing	12		4	4	10	15	8	4	10
4	Company Values	6			3			1	1	
5	Ethics and Leadership	9	1		1	1	1			
6	Codes of Ethics, the Need for and How to Develop Them	18	1	2	4	10	8	10	2	4
7	Ethics for Hospitality Educators	4								
8	Teaching Ethics	16	1		2	1	1	6	2	2
9	Tourism Ethics	6			5	8	9	8	4	4
10	Trends, Issues, Challenges				2		2		1	3

11	Corporate Responsibility								1	3	4	10
12	Green/Sustainable Practices											9

Figure 2. The Number and Year of Each Article Written on the Particular Topic for the Particular Journal. **(2007 articles in red)**

Journals *Academic Journals	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5	Topic 6	Topic 7	Topic 8	Topic 9	Topic 10	Topic 11	Topic 12	Totals
Accountancy											07		1
Anatolia: An Int'l Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Research *									06				1
Annals of Tourism Research *									93 95 99 03 05				5
AsiaPacific Journal of Tourism Research *									03				1
Association Meetings	07					02							2
Attractions Management			07										1
Australian & New Zealand Wine Industry Journal												07	1
Beverage Industry			02										1
Beverage World	07		05										2
Bottomline	94	91				91-2 94							5
Business	04					05							2

Insurance Meeting													
FIU Hospitality Review *		92 94 99 02 07	04		97			05 07					9
Food Engineering												07-2	2
Food Management			92		99	95							3
Food Manufacturer			07			04 05						07	4
FoodService Director	00					02							2
Foodservice & Hospitality												07	1
Foodservice Equipment & Supplies		05				03 05							3
Fresh Cup						05-2							2
GamingLaw Review *			04			04							2
Gastronomic a	07										07		2
Geographical									04				1
Gourmet			07										1
Green Hotelier	06					04 07			07			07	5
Hospitality												07	1
Hospitality& Tourism Educator *					91	92	93	91-2 93 94 96 02					9
Hospitality Education & Research Journal *								89					1
Hospitality Law	05-3 06-4		04 06-2 07										11
Hospitality Research Journal *		92		90			92-2 94	90-3					8
Hosteur			01			95							2

Consumer Marketing *													
Journal of Convention & Exhibition Management *						03							1
Journal of Ecotourism *									04-2 05 06				4
Journal of Foodservice Business Research *					04						06		2
Journal of Foodservice Systems *						91							1
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Education *	06	97 99							98 99-2 05-2				8
Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research *			06										1
Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality & Tourism *						02							1
Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics *										07			1
Journal of Property Management *			02										1
Journal of						05							1

Attractions & Parks													
Travel & Leisure									07				1
Travel Trade Gazette	04	07	04-2 07			05			02-3 05		07		11
Travel Weekly	03 04-4					03			04 05				8
Totals	83	42	67	11	13	59	4	31	44	8	18	9	389

Figure 3. Total Number of Articles on Ethics in Each Year 1990-2006

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Articles</u>
1990	13
1991	14
1992	22
1993	11
1994	13
1995	5
1996	8
1997	7
1998	8
1999	13
2000	8
2001	10
2002	32
2003	38
2004	53
2005	46
2006	32
2007	55

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