

**AN INTERNAL STAKEHOLDER APPROACH TO THE
EVALUATION OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN A SOCIAL
ENTERPRISE HOTEL**

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EVALUATION OF ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR IN A SOCIAL
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ABSTRACT

Purpose

This study aims to comprehend the meanings of ethical behaviour and the organisational implications for ethics institutionalisation (EI) in a social enterprise hotel. Despite widespread ethical misconduct, empirical research on EI in the hospitality industry is scarce. Adopting an internal stakeholder approach, this study explores the meanings employees attribute to ethical behaviour and implications for EI.

Methodology

This qualitative study adopts a social constructionist epistemology and an embedded single-case study design to explore the meanings attributed to ethical behaviour and EI from the perspectives of internal stakeholders of a social enterprise hotel. Individual semistructured open-ended interviews were conducted with nine employees representing three hierarchical levels from frontline and backline departments. A reflexive thematic analysis was conducted using eclectic coding methods within a normative stakeholder and ethical decisionmaking theoretical framework. Data analysis occurred at three levels: intrapersonal analysis identified key topics (topic summaries) for each participant; interpersonal analysis developed recurring themes across transcripts; and organisational analysis examined organisational implications.

Findings

Through an embedded case study of a social enterprise hotel, findings reveal six themes surrounding ethical behaviour: prosocial teamwork, multidirectional candid communication, understanding differences, the organisation's social purpose, brand representation, and the ideal-practice dilemma. Prosocial teamwork, communication, and empathy (affective, cognitive, and ethnocultural) are identified as fundamental pillars of ethical behaviour. Employee brand representation and the organisation's social purpose are considered essential aspects of individual and organisational ethical behaviour. The ideal-practice dilemma sheds lights on the complexities of consistent

ethical behaviour. Drawing upon these findings, organisational implications are proposed to promote endogenous ethical behaviour aimed at an ethical workplace and exogenous ethical behaviour aimed at an ethical purpose. An ethical organisation is the intersection of an ethical workplace and purpose.

Contributions

This research makes five key contributions. Firstly, it demonstrates the complementary roles of implicit and explicit EI, when aligned. Secondly, it identifies five dimensions of multidirectional candid communication and links them to ethical behaviour. Thirdly, it delineates five dimensions of prosocial teamwork and establishes teamwork as a driver of ethical behaviour. Fourthly, it distinguishes three forms of empathy tied to ethical behaviour. Fifthly, it integrates normative stakeholder and ethical decisionmaking theories to align ethical decisionmaking with stakeholder value creation. Overall, this study advances theoretical understanding of EI, communication, teamwork, empathy, and their relationships to ethical behaviour and stakeholder value creation.

Originality

This research takes an inductive approach to investigate EI and yields new insights into antecedents of EI. Rather than classifying internal stakeholders into generic hierarchical categories, they are regarded as individual actors, each in their own right. Such an approach provides a more holistic understanding of ethical behaviour in relation to EI.

Keywords

Ethics institutionalisation · Ethical behaviour · Ethical decisionmaking · Stakeholders · Hospitality · Social enterprise

This work is dedicated to my loving grandparents for making my world a better place

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"Ethics, like natural selection, makes existence possible" (Oscar Wilde, 1891a - The Critic as Artist)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research context

Ethical misconduct is widespread in the hospitality industry and causes serious financial and reputational damage to businesses. It is due to a variety of factors and occurs in several areas: 1) amongst employees in the form of theft, racism, bullying, or substance abuse; 2) amongst guests, whom Lovelock and Wirtz (2011, p. 387) refer to as jaycustomers when they *"act in a thoughtless or abusive way, causing problems for the firm, its employees, and other customers"*. Examples of jaycustomers include property abusers, sexual abusers (Daunt and Harris, 2011, p. 1035), opportunistic plotters (Ro and Wong, 2012, pp. 419–420); and 3) amongst managers with, for example, preferential treatment to employees (Woods *et al.*, 2013; Wong and Li, 2015). The hospitality industry is by nature labour intensive, physically and emotionally demanding. Not only are employees exposed to long working hours, high pressure, and low pay, but they also need to display positive emotions (e.g., enthusiasm, friendliness) despite any negative feelings or stressful events that they may experience. Such pressure can lead to employees becoming disengaged and behaving unethically.

In an effort to control unethical practices, firms started institutionalising ethics (Sims, 1991, p. 493; Foote and Ruona, 2008, p. 292). The term ethics institutionalisation (hereafter EI) refers to *"the degree to which an organization [...] incorporates ethics into its decision-making processes"* (Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007, p. 284). As Donham (1929, p. 385) describes, ethics is *"the art of living together"*, and the intricacy of this art is related to *"the infinite variety and changeableness of human environment and the infinite complexity of the human individual"*. Therefore, institutionalising ethics in the context of hospitality is a complex process because service industries currently still rely on intense human interaction. Social, cultural, political, and religious differences shape communities and bring discrepancies in

ethical values and perceptions, as well as conflicts of interests and goals. As a result, interactions between employees and guests are prone to fluctuations and can lead to unpredictable and inconsistent service outcomes. Moreover, these interactions are moments of truth during which guests shape their perceptions of the firm and its ethicality (Wong, 1998, p. 108, 2000, p. 130; Kandampully, Zhang and Jaakkola, 2018, p. 33; Milliman, Gatling and Kim, 2018, p. 57). It is, therefore, crucial to gain a better understanding of the causes and consequences of unethical behaviour and, in turn, to seek out ways to forestall and tackle such behaviour.

1.2 Problem statement

Extant research provides valuable insights into EI (Sims, 1991; Weber, 1993; Carlson and Perrewé, 1995; Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007; Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2010), and there is an extensive literature on business ethics in a wide range of industries—from cosmetics (e.g., Nakano, 1999), education (e.g., Popoola *et al.*, 2017), financial services (e.g., Tseng, 2017), to sports manufacturing (e.g., Grosset and Attali, 2011), healthcare (e.g., Dam *et al.*, 2014), public sector (e.g., Preston, 1997), or a mix of industries (e.g., Carlson and Perrewé, 1995; Soutar, McNeil and Molster, 1995; Melé, Debeljuh and Arruda, 2006; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010)—but there are currently few empirical studies in hospitality (Ruhi Yaman and Gurel, 2006; Knani, 2014, p. 1; Lee *et al.*, 2014, p. 97; Köseoglu *et al.*, 2016, p. 1599; Myung, 2018, p. 12). An initial search in various databases for academic articles on the topic of “*business ethics*”, or “*ethics institutionalisation*” revealed a striking differential when refining the search with the keyword “*hospitality*”. For instance, a search in the Journal Storage (JSTOR) digital library for “*ethics institutionalisation*” yielded 583 articles, against 26 articles on “*hospitality ethics institutionalisation*” (see [Appendix A. Articles yielded: keyword searches with\(out\) “hospitality”](#)). There is also a further need for stakeholder-related research in the fields of business ethics (Lee and Tsang, 2013, p. 228; Knani, 2014, p. 6; Köseoglu *et al.*, 2016, p. 1615) and hospitality (Barakat and Wada, 2021). Adopting an internal stakeholder approach to study EI can undermine the shortcomings of unilateral, and thus incomplete findings and provide useful insights for the development of inclusive ethical decisionmaking and strategies. Moreover, research on EI often examined only one aspect of the phenomenon, such as the effect of ethical practices

on employee performance (Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010; Marta *et al.*, 2013; Torlak *et al.*, 2014), or on economic performance (Nakano, 1999; Roberts and Dietrich, 1999). Alternatively, researchers have examined how different factors affect EI: leadership style (e.g., Carlson and Perrewe, 1995), decisionmaking process (e.g., Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2010). The lack of research in the context of hospitality industry, and studies that focus on individual aspects of the phenomenon, therefore, only provide a partial understanding of the phenomenon. To gain a holistic overview of the impact of EI in the hospitality industry, several crucial questions remain unanswered. A thorough investigation can help firms avoid developing biased and unethical decisionmaking processes, whilst contributing to ethical decisionmaking that benefits the industry as a whole.

1.3 Contribution to knowledge and practice

This research enquiry represents an effort to fill the research gaps identified in the previous section and seeks to aggregate a fragmented body of knowledge to comprehend the meanings of ethical behaviour and the organisational implications for EI within the hospitality industry. It does this firstly by setting the study in the hospitality context and secondly, by exploring the perspectives of internal stakeholders from three organisational hierarchical levels (nonmanagerial employees, middle managers, and executive managers) in backline and frontline departments. Findings may contribute towards addressing Yin's (2018, p. 316) statement that, *“[t]o this day, this type of problem persists whenever studies of organizations appear to represent the perspectives of management and not workers”*. Though stakeholders may agree on the importance of ethical behaviour, its meaning is likely to differ amongst stakeholders, which can lead to conflicts between stakeholders and with the organisation. Thus, engaging internal stakeholders can enhance sensemaking of the interconnectedness and complexity of the plural meanings of ethical behaviour, which, in turn, can help to build shared insights and construct meanings that can guide joint efforts to institutionalise ethics. Since research on business ethics in the context of the hospitality industry is not as developed as in other industries (Knani, 2014), the relevance of this study, for researchers, lies in its attempt to develop the body of knowledge by (re)contextualising EI research in the field of hospitality. The originality of this research is related to its internal stakeholder approach by treating informants as

individual stakeholders rather than categorising them into generic hierarchical stakeholder groups. *"In an effort to move away from the dislocations and inequalities of society, therefore, we ought to strive for the development of communities where all people are treated as equal and as ends in themselves. Consequently, we all have each others' interests in mind in our actions as well as our own, in the development of the ideal state"* (Fennell, 2006, p. 79). This study integrates the perspectives of internal stakeholders to explore how each perceives ethical behaviour and is affected by an organisation's EI strategy.

By incorporating the perspectives of internal stakeholders, this study aims to discover new and relevant information that demonstrates the implications of ethical decisionmaking in relation to EI. As explained, multiperspectivity provides an integrative picture of the effects of EI. Therefore, by contextualising it in the hospitality industry and adopting an internal stakeholder approach, this study aims to fill two research gaps. As this study also seeks to bridge the gap between practice and theory, for practitioners, this research represents an effort in providing insights into constructive ways to institutionalise ethics that create value for the organisation and its internal stakeholders. Findings can help managers identify and address ethical issues at their root and create a positive ethical work climate that can improve employee job satisfaction, guest experience, and organisational performance (Knani, 2014). A newly developed framework promises to provide managers with an appropriate means to identify and understand important ethical issues to develop ethical business models. Micro policymakers may also benefit from this study in setting ethical standards and best practices. Therefore, the ambition of this research is threefold: to further explore the field of ethics in the hospitality industry by evaluating the implications from an internal stakeholder approach for developing EI strategies; to develop an integrative awareness of the impact of EI on stakeholders; and to develop a framework that can contribute to business models that promote ethical decisionmaking through an internal stakeholder approach.

1.4 Rationale for study

In this section, I employ the first person as I take a reflexive approach to justify the rationale for studying ethical behaviour and the institutionalisation of ethics in the hospitality industry. The justification for this research stems from a personal motivation.

Having worked in the industry for nearly twenty five years, I have developed a fascination for the culture of service and the notion of hospitality. It is very enriching to meet and work with people with different worldviews, ambitions, responsibilities, or values, and to learn from their cultures is very enriching. However, in a work context, interpersonal dynamics can become challenging to manage and lead to behaviours that may appear meaningless to some but are harmful to others. Also, the fast-paced nature of hospitality work is what makes it interesting, but at the same time, it can lead to ethical blind spots. I consider it a joint effort and responsibility to understand the meaning and importance of ethical behaviour to ensure that ethics are institutionalised in such a way that ethical behaviour becomes embedded in the workplace and creates value for the organisation, workforce, guests, and the industry. As such, it is out of personal interest that I have conducted this research to gain a more comprehensive understanding of what ethical behaviour can mean to others and how organisations could benefit from placing ethical behaviour more at the heart of their strategies.

1.5 Aim and objectives

The overall aim of this study is to comprehend the meanings of ethical behaviour and the implications for EI in the hospitality industry. The specific research objectives are:

- to scrutinise the meanings internal stakeholders attribute to ethical behaviour;
- to understand the meanings internal stakeholders attribute to EI; and
- to investigate the implications of the meanings of ethical behaviour and EI for organisations seeking to institutionalise ethics

1.6 Thesis structure

This study consists of an introductory chapter, five core chapters, a concluding chapter, and a chapter outlining the limitations of the study. The introduction sets the research context, defines the problem statement, presents contributions to knowledge and practice, describes the rationale for the study, and highlights the research aim and objectives.

Chapter two reviews the literature relevant to the study. Subchapters one and two review the key normative ethical theories and concepts in applied ethics.

Subchapter three recognises the influential role of power relations and power asymmetries in business management and the role of business ethics. Subchapter four focuses on three facets of understanding, namely affective and cognitive empathy, and making oneself understood. Subchapter five concentrates on the concepts of stakeholders and stakeholderism.

Chapter three details the research methodology. Subchapters one and two present the ontology, epistemology, and theories that provide the framework for the research and analyses. Subchapters three through seven describe the research design, sampling procedures and criteria, and data collection and analysis methods. Subchapter eight reflects upon the researcher's standpoints in light of positionalities and reflexivity. This subchapter serves to showcase the emic and etic viewpoints in the study of ethical behaviour in the context of the hospitality industry, an industry within which the researcher has worked for over twenty years.

Chapters four through six consist of the presentation and discussion of the research findings. Chapter four presents and discusses the various meanings attributed to ethical behaviour at the individual level. The discussion is presented in the form of topic summaries and lays the foundation for the discussions in chapters five and six. Chapter five consists of the reflexive thematic analysis, in which the predominant meanings of ethical behaviour are presented and discussed in the form of themes and subthemes. Building upon the main findings of chapters four and five, chapter six discusses organisational implications for institutionalising ethics.

Chapter seven contains the conclusion, which summarises the key findings of the study and highlights the extent to which this study has addressed the overall aim and objectives. This chapter critically evaluates the practical and theoretical implications and contributions, presents the originality of this research, and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter eight addresses the limitations of the study.

2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter depicts a theoretical backdrop of this study by introducing the theoretical underpinnings central to scrutinising the meanings and impacts of ethics institutionalisation (EI) in the social entrepreneurial hotel sector and synthesising the key theories and concepts relevant to comprehending the interrelations between EI and internal stakeholders. Section 2.1 identifies and reviews key normative ethical theories relevant to understanding interpretations of ethics, ethical character, act, purpose, and result. Section 2.2 focuses upon ethics in practice and discusses key, sometimes overlapping, concepts in applied ethics to understand the complexities organisations face in institutionalising ethics. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 respectively examine the notions of ‘power’ and ‘understanding’ and aim to clarify their roles in the organisational context and in ethical behaviour (individual and organisational). Section 2.5 recognises the role and contribution of stakeholders in ethical decisionmaking.

2.1 Normative ethical theories

Morals and ethics are central to human attitudes and behaviour, in that they shape people’s beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong about their choices in life (Jolivet, 1960, p. 13). More specifically, and in the context of this inquiry, ethics guides business leaders in their approaches to conducting business (Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes, 2007) and influences employees’ values and beliefs, and thus, their perceptions and expectations towards an organisation (Cheng *et al.*, 2013; Abdel-Ati and Deraz, 2018). Ethical theories underpin and frame individual and organisational values and behaviours. Though EI may pertain more directly to applied ethics than philosophical theories, it is essential to review the fundamental ethical ideologies that underlie the decisions of people and organisations.

As a branch of philosophy, ethics (or moral philosophy) encompasses a broad spectrum of ethical theories and deals with questions around *how one ought to act* and *what morality is*. A comprehensive discussion of ethical theories goes beyond the

scope of this study. Nevertheless, a general overview of the major schools of thought in normative ethics can provide insight into the diversity of interpretations of what is considered ethical and, subsequently, elucidate the complexities of institutionalising ethics. Though “*morality*” and “*ethics*” are often used interchangeably (Guy, 1990, p. 5), scholars have noted distinct differences between the two terms. Morality stems from the Greek word *moralis* and is concerned with which social practices (Arnold, Beauchamp and Bowie, 2014, pp. 2–3), actions (Vardy and Grosch, 2016, p. 14), norms, values, and beliefs are right and wrong for an individual or community (Crane and Matten, 2016, p. 8). Morality has a social function and is a guidance instrument at the individual and group levels (Fennell, 2006, p. 56). In contrast, ethics comes from the Latin *ethikos* and generally refers to the customary way of behaving in society (Vardy and Grosch, 2016, p. 14). More specifically, ethics is concerned with the study of morality and the nature of rules and principles that determine right and wrong (Arnold, Beauchamp and Bowie, 2014, p. 2; Crane and Matten, 2016, p. 8). Ethical systems serve to delineate shared values that reflect the general public, not just groups (Ray, 2000, p. 241; Fennell, 2006, p. 56). In sum, morality refers to actions that are right or wrong at the individual and group levels, and ethics to the attempt of theorising morality for the general public.

Three key subdisciplines of ethics include metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics (see [Figure 1. Major schools of thought of western theories of ethics](#)). Metaethics is primarily concerned with the *nature* of ethical theories (Duignan, 2011, pp. x–xi) and seeks to understand, *inter alia*, whether moral claims are true (Copp, 2006, p. 6), man-made, or a divine creation (Shafer-Landau, 2013, p. 3). Normative ethics, in contrast to metaethics, is concerned with the *content* of ethical theories and seeks to determine what is right or wrong and to establish norms for behaviour (Duignan, 2011, p. 131). Applied ethics is concerned with the *application* of normative ethics to real-life situations, such as business ethics. Although these three subdisciplines may appear distinct, they are not discrete but rather are on a continuum that ranges from abstract to concrete (Almond, 1995, p. 2). The first section of this review provides an overview of key western schools of thought in normative ethics, and the following section discusses overlapping concepts within applied ethics.

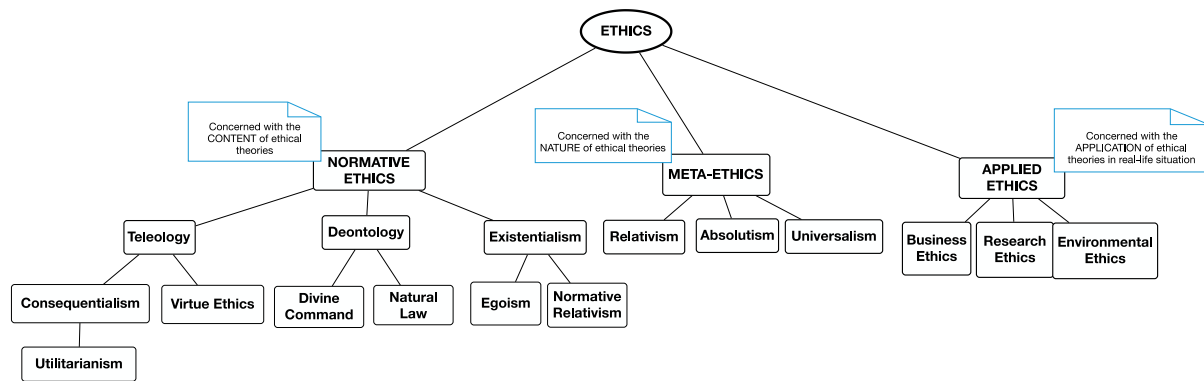


Figure 1. Major schools of thought of western theories of ethics

The fundamental principles underpinning normative ethical theories are complex and diverse—between and amongst schools of thought. Such intricacies lead to disparate philosophical interpretations, which legitimises the challenge of making sense of and finding meaning in these interpretations in order to apply them in daily life. Normative ethical theory is a vast field, and for the purposes of this study, which is set in Europe, this review concentrates on three central schools of thought in western ethical theories—teleology, deontology, and existentialism.

2.1.1 Teleology

Teleology derives from the Greek word *telos*, meaning ‘end’, ‘goal’, ‘purpose’. Teleological ethics encompasses several forms of theoretical perspectives that agree that the rightness of an act lies in its effects or consequences. As Agarwal and Malloy (2000, p. 144) explain, “*what is ethically good is what achieves the ‘best’ end*”. In other words, teleology is outcome oriented. Teleological theories, however, differ on the nature of the effect an action ought to promote. Teleological ethics holds that the only basic normative factor is the good, whether it is the good for the individual (consequentialism), the agent (egoism), or the good for the greatest number (utilitarianism) (Kagan, 1997, p. 191).

Consequentialism, coined by Elizabeth Anscombe (1919–2001), holds that the ends of an action justify the means. How an act is deemed right or wrong depends on the consequences of that act rather than the means by which it is achieved or the nature of the act itself (Almond, 1995, p. 7). Though Anscombe coined the term consequentialism to demarcate it from utilitarianism (Anscombe, 1958, p. 12), she

condemned the doctrine, and Henry Sidgwick (1838–1900) in particular, for making no distinction between intention and foresight. She raised this issue in her ‘principle of side-effects’, criticising that such a pernicious assimilation implies that an agent is equally responsible for the effects of her actions, irrespective of whether those effects were foreseen or not, intended or not, unavoidable or not (Anscombe, 2005, pp. 196–215).

Utilitarianism, a form of consequentialism, proposes that the rightness of an act is determined by the happiness it generates and the pain it prevents, what John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) called the Principle of Utility or Greatest Happiness (Mill, 2009, p. 14 [1863]). Similarly, Jeremy Bentham (1747–1832) maintained that humankind is governed by pain and pleasure, and that an act is right based on the “*benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness*” it produces or the “*mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness*” it prevents (Bentham, 2000, pp. 14–15 [1789]). Though often associated with John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham, it was Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746), a precursor of classical utilitarianism, who introduced the maxim:

*“that Action is best, which procures **the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers**; and that, worst, which, in like manner, occasions Misery.”*
(Hutcheson, 2008, p. 125 [1726])

It is important to note that the utilitarian view has been criticised for focusing on the happiness of the greatest number, which is not only difficult to measure but can also lead to overlooking individuals and minority groups (Fennell, 2006, p. 70). This issue can be observed, for instance, in the hospitality industry, where minority communities are displaced to make way for hotel facilities (Asham, 2022), and where the rise of Airbnb rentals is disrupting the residential home markets by increasing home prices and rents and leading to the gentrification of neighbourhoods (Shabrina, Arcaute and Batty, 2022). A further criticism of utilitarian ethics revolves around the question of whose happiness ought to be promoted (Shaw, 1998, p. 15), which can pose an ethical dilemma for hospitality managers in determining which stakeholder group should have the greatest happiness—the local community, the hosts, or the guests. Notwithstanding that the nature of stakeholder groups is itself heterogenous (see [2.5 Stakeholders and stakeholderism](#)). Another criticism, as Breed (2017, p. 187) argues, is that utilitarianism ignores the motives and means underpinning an act. Assuming that an act leads to the happiness of the general public, the means is considered right,

and the motive is disregarded. Such an approach to judging the rightness of an act would justify resorting to ‘unethical’ means to reach ethical ends. With a utilitarian approach to hospitality and tourism management, the largely debated phenomenon of mass tourism (e.g., Weaver, 1991; Rogers, 2001; Bianchi, 2017; Cárdenas-García *et al.*, 2022) could be regarded as ethical, on the basis that it provides job opportunities for local residents (Weaver, 2012), in/directly creates business opportunities for organisations within and outside the tourism and hospitality sectors (i.e., construction (Biddulph, 2015) and retail (Jansen-Verbeke, 1998)). At the same time, budget airlines and all-inclusive packages, contributors to mass tourism, have given the low-income segment greater opportunity to travel (Pescador, 2016). On the basis of such contributions, a utilitarian might argue that mass tourism generates the greatest good for employees, businesses, and travellers. In practice, however, numerous initiatives suggest otherwise: local residents across Europe protesting mass tourism and developing “tourism-phobia” (Rifai, 2017), the Catalan political organisation, Esquerra Republicana, requiring a new strategic plan for tourism from the municipal government as a result of post-pandemic reactivation of mass tourism (City Council of Barcelona, 2022), and the removal of the ‘I Amsterdam’ sign from the city centre as a result of it becoming an overly popular selfie spot (Ahmed, 2018) are but a few examples of the measures to counter mass tourism.

Though virtue ethics is often considered a separate school of thought (e.g., Kagan, 1992; Driver, 2005; Copp, 2006; Shafer-Landau, 2013), in this review, similar to Korsgaard, (1998), Breed (2017), and Traer (2020), the theory of virtue ethics is classified as a subdiscipline of teleological doctrine, on the basis that, as previously mentioned, teleology comes from the Greek *telos*, which also means ‘final purpose’. Teleological ethical theories are concerned with the final purpose or goal, such as the greatest good (consequentialism) or the greatest happiness for the greatest number (utilitarianism). For utilitarian teleologists, the rightness of an act or the virtuousness of traits depends on their causal relationship to the good (result). In contrast, for non-utilitarian teleologists, the rightness of an act or the virtuousness of a trait depends on the extent to which the good (purpose) is an intentional object (Trianosky, 1990, p. 338). In the west, virtue ethics derives from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, which held that the purpose of life is the attainment of *eudæmonia*, commonly translated as ‘happiness’, which refers to “*activity that makes appropriate use of our capacities, a*

way of life in which we are optimally functioning in accord with our purpose as human beings" (Bragues, 2006, p. 343). For virtue ethicists, the moral evaluation is not located in the act—be it in its intention or consequences—but in the individual who performs that act (Louden, 1986, p. 475). A virtuous person exercises intellectual and moral virtues in order to achieve *eudæmonia*, which Aristotle (2009, p. 205 [c. 350 BC]) defines as: "*living well and faring well*". Whilst intellectual virtues—which include knowledge, wisdom, and goodness in deliberation—can be taught, moral virtues—which include courage, temperance, and generosity—cannot be taught but are "*acquired by repetition of the corresponding acts*" (Aristotle, 2009, p. 23 [c. 350 BC]). Whereas in utilitarian teleology the end justifies the means—insofar as an ethical end exonerates all the means employed to achieve that end—non-utilitarian teleology, like Aristotelian virtue ethics, regards the means (the exercise of virtues) as a constitutive element of the end (*eudæmonia*) (Trianosky, 1990, p. 339). Instead of focusing on what one ought to *do*, virtue ethics focuses on what one ought to *be*. Attention thus shifts from the nature of an act towards the virtues and vices that determine the rightness or the wrongness of a character. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), the moral philosopher Adam Smith set forth his interpretation of the importance of ethics in the development of character. Whilst Aristotle divided the virtues into intellectual virtues and moral virtues, Smith, in contrast, distinguished between negative virtue and positive virtues. The negative virtue of *justice* refers to abstinence from injury, and the positive virtues of *prudence* and *benevolence* promote the good for self and others, respectively (Smith, 2002, pp. 91–100; 248–255; 256–279 [1759]). However, only with the virtue of *self-command* will one be able to act according to the aforementioned virtues. Smith explained that a person's own passions, such as fear and selfish gratification, can mislead her into violating the rules to which she has agreed, and that only self-command can refrain her from giving in (Smith, 2002, pp. 279–309). Despite the differences in the nature or classification of the virtues, Aristotle and Smith converge in the importance of acting according to them. Critics of virtue ethics argue that, though this doctrine may provide guidelines on how to develop a virtuous character, it fails to provide guidelines on how to act when in an ethical dilemma (Solomon, 1988, p. 432).

2.1.2 Deontology

Deontology derives from the Greek word *deon*, which means ‘obligation’, ‘duty’. In contrast to teleological theories, deontologists hold that the end does not justify the means (non-consequentialist theory) and that an act should not be judged by its result or purpose but by whether it conforms to a rule or duty. The rightness of an act is rooted in the act itself and not in its consequence (Breed, 2017, p. 20). In deontology, reason plays a crucial role in different ways. A central figure of deontology, Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), postulated that the moral law is based on reason and rejected any connection between ethics and feelings, inclinations, passions, or sentiments (Singer, 1994, p. 7). In contrast, David Hume (1711–1776) maintained that reason guides us in our ethical thinking and it that is our passions that motivate us to act. As Hume (2009, p. 636 [1739]) stated, “[r]eason is [...] the slave of the passions”. Kant, on the other hand, believed that we must set aside our inclinations—which Hume called passion—and perform an action with the mere intention of obeying the moral law. Then and only then is it a moral action, for no action can be moral if it is motivated by our inclinations (Kant, 1926, p. 22).

Kant rejected the consequentialist principle of judging an act by its consequences but asserted that an act can only be qualified ethical if and only if it abides to certain rules and if these rules can be universally applied (Duignan, 2011, p. 97). An act ought to be pursued out of a sense of duty and not out of sentiment. More particularly, Kant distinguished two types of imperatives: hypothetical and categorical. Hypothetical imperatives have no place in ethics because they are motivated, not by reason, but by our inclinations. Categorical imperatives, however, apply to every rational being irrespective of the inclinations they may have (Singer, 1994, p. 9) even if these do not generate any good. For instance, the categorical imperative ‘one must not lie’ should be applied categorically, even if this leads to the death of a family member. In contrast, a hypothetical imperative that appears to be good and to lead to something good is not considered an ethical act, because it is motivated by emotions and not by duty. In practice, critics of codes of ethics argue that such codes can only serve as windowdressing, as they fail to provide the necessary guidance when one finds oneself in an ethical dilemma (Stevens, 1997, p. 268). Nevertheless, the availability of codes of ethics may raise awareness amongst some individuals of the role of ethical behaviour and, thereby, promote what is good. However, if it is indeed

the case that the initiative to develop a code of ethics is for the sole purpose of windowdressing, then according to Kant, this initiative falls under the hypothetical imperative and, thus, has nothing to do with ethics.

Deontological theories include the divine command theory, where the laws to be followed are formulated by God, and the natural law theory, where the laws of nature ought to be followed. Divine command theory in ethics, or the command of God, is a form of theism—such as Christian, Islamic, and Jewish faiths—in the sense that it is assumed that there is a God. Proponents of the divine command theory include Saint Augustine (354–430) and Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), for whom the moral commandments are formulated by God, and it is our duty to fulfil and live according to God's commands. The central claim of the divine command theory is that (Breed, 2017, p. 20):

- (1) An act is morally prohibited if God commands that it not be performed;
- (2) An act is morally permitted if God does not prohibit it; and
- (3) An act is morally obligatory if God commands that it be performed

Kierkegaard was a committed advocate of divine command theory (Evans, 2004, p. 123). He also postulated that we are responsible for forming our own “*ethical view of life*” (Kierkegaard, 2004, p. 481 [1843])—which is related to the existentialist doctrine, discussed in the following section. Within the existentialist paradigm, ethical decisionmaking concerns the acknowledgement of our responsibility for our own choices rather than blindly obeying external rules, and Kierkegaard deliberately chose to accept the command of God as moral obligation. Ethics and hospitality are inextricably linked and are not constrained to the business arena. Studies across disciplines define hospitality and the role of ethics in different ways. In anthropology, Candea and Da Col (2012) discuss the concept of hospitality as a form of way of life and explain that there is a need for ethical reasoning in a multicultural environment (Candea and Da Col, 2012). In social science, Mason (2011) explores the politics of hospitality in the context of refugees facing a moral panic that turns into political questions around the ethics of hospitality and human rights and duties (Derrida, 2005). In the Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Islam, and Christianity—hospitality is a sacred duty, in which hosts have a moral obligation to provide food, beverage, and shelter to guests or strangers (Siddiqui, 2015).

Advocates of an ethic of Natural law, such as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), argue that the rights and laws applicable to all human beings are derived from nature, not society (Duignan, 2011, pp. 54, 58). These rights and laws (natural law) are the ethical guidelines that dictate what people ought to do, and natural-law theorists believe that these guidelines (also called natural inclinations) are embedded in human nature (Breed, 2017, p. 101). An act is right if and only if it conforms to the natural inclinations of human beings. Natural inclinations are categorised into 1) biological values—life and procreation, and 2) human values—knowledge and sociability. The natural inclination of *life* refers to the obligation to promote our health, and that of *procreation* refers to the obligation to perform in sexual acts for the sole purpose of procreation. *Knowledge* concerns the obligation to seek knowledge about ourselves, the world, and God. Refraining from developing an intellectual curiosity is considered wrong. *Sociability* refers to the natural tendency to form ties with other individuals, groups, and societies. This inclination implies an obligation to submit to the authority of the state and to not cause nuisance involving anti-social behaviour (Harris Jr, 1997, pp. 101–102). The difficulty of natural law theory lies in the evaluation of which inclination is of greater importance resulting in potential conflict between these laws (Breed, 2017, p. 103). In the case of the obligation to procreate, for example, abortion is, by definition, a wrong act. Thus, if a life-threatening pregnancy could only be prevented by abortion, not having the abortion to abide by the obligation of *procreation* would violate the obligation of *health*. To mitigate the effects of these absolute prohibitions, natural law ethics applies the double effect doctrine (Duignan, 2011, p. 144), according to which abortion would be permitted, because its purpose is not to kill the foetus (not procreating) but to ensure the survival of the pregnant woman (health). The death of the foetus is an undesirable and indirect side effect of the intervention.

One criticism of deontological theories is that such theories refrain people from taking responsibility for their own acts because they hide behind the rules. To illustrate this point, Kierkegaard stated that, “[o]n principle a man can do anything, take part in anything and himself remain inhuman and indeterminate [...]. In this way everything becomes permissible if done on principle” (Kierkegaard, 1940, p. 56). In hospitality and tourism, it is common for organisations to develop codes of ethics with a deontological dimension. Codes of ethics are intended to provide the normative guidelines for

employee behaviour but have been criticised for being proscriptive rather than prescriptive (Wakefield, 1976, p. 663).

2.1.3 Existentialism

Existentialism (also called subjectivism) is a movement that places importance in the individual autonomy and the subjective aspect of human beings. The essence of existentialism lies neither in happiness, nor in goodness, nor in the rightness of an act, but in the exploration of conscious and reflective choices (Greene, 1952, p. 266). Existentialism is subjective in that we make our personal choices consciously and our interpretation of reality, similar to social constructionists, is based on our own experiences and is, therefore, unique. Existentialism is often associated with Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), although his main interest was in the theory of Being (ontology) rather than ethics, and it is the work of Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) that has made the term existential philosophy widely used. Existentialists agree that only human beings are capable of making reflective choices; to exist is something only humans can do (Williams, 2001, pp. 508–509). Within the existentialist paradigm, a rabbit, a nonhuman animal, is there and real, but it does not *exist*. Only human animals, endowed with conscious and reflective choice, *exist*, because existing is related to the conscious activity of reflection and choice. Another central tenet of existentialism is that of authenticity, which requires honesty and courage in deciding one's moral commitments; *"the authentic individual faces something the unauthentic is afraid to face"* (Greene, 1952, p. 267).

In his most influential work in existentialism, *"Being and Nothingness"* (1943), and *"Existentialism is a Humanism"* (1946), Sartre states that *"Man is condemned to be free"*. By this he means that, as he puts it, we are *thrown* into freedom (Sartre, 1943, p. 530), and since we are free to make conscious choices, we are also responsible for those choices, and as Sartre puts it; since we are condemned to be free, we also carry the world on our shoulders: we are responsible for ourselves and for the world (Sartre, 1943, p. 598). Sartre derives the starting point of existentialism from Dostoevsky's saying, *"If God does not exist, everything is permissible."* If, indeed, God does not exist, everything is permitted because we do not have to obey His commands. It is then our deliberate choice and responsibility to create our own values and orders to justify our conduct (Sartre, 2007, pp. 28–29). Whilst Sartre attributes authenticity to honesty and

the courage to face freedom, Heidegger advances that an authentic existence is one that has the courage to face death. Rather than 'hiding' behind prosaic concerns, we must dare to accept the inevitable and lead an authentic existence, because it is we ourselves who give meaning to our existence and our world (Greene, 1952, pp. 266–267). It is the courage to face death that makes it possible to understand and make sense of existence.

2.1.4 Egoism

Building on the role of death is that of survival, which Ayn Rand (1905–1982), a proponent of ethical egoism, qualifies as an ultimate value, because survival is the root and final goal of all actions and gives meaning to all other values (Badhwar and Long, 2020).

“ethics is an objective, metaphysical necessity of man’s survival” (Rand, 1964, p. 16).

According to Rand, ethics begins with the recognition that one needs a moral code to guide one’s choices and actions, followed by the analysis of the concept of ultimate value, which is *“that final goal or end to which all lesser goals are the means—and it sets the standard by which all lesser goals are evaluated”* (Rand, 1964, p. 10). The purpose of morality is to define one’s values and interests, and the essence of a moral existence is concern for one’s own interests and that one must be the beneficiary of one’s own moral actions. Rand points out that egoism, though it may be controversial in ethics, is not inherently wrong. The wrongness of an act does not lie in the pursuit of one’s own values, but may lie in *what* one chooses to value (Rand, 1964, p. 3). For instance, if a hotel owner deliberately overcharges guests to increase her revenue, the wrongness lies not in the hotel’s owner pursuit of her own interests but in her interest in increasing revenue by overcharging. Similarly, when a businessperson sets up a social enterprise, the rightness lies not in the nature of the enterprise, but in the fact the business owner is pursuing her own interest in helping a societal issue. Moreover, the pursuit of self-interest must be motivated and guided by reason in order to be considered ethical. Rand rejected the notion that ethics is subjective, to the extent that she challenged thinkers who claim ethics is subjective by saying that their standards are an *“ethics of whim”* and denounced that *“if you wonder why the world is now collapsing to a lower and ever lower rung of hell, this is the reason”* (Rand, 1964, p. 8).

Ethical egoism is not a contemporary doctrine. In Plato's Republic, the sophist Thrasymachus stated that "you ought to consider how the just man always comes off worse than the unjust. For instance, in any business relations between them, you won't find the just man better off at the end of the deal than the unjust" (343d) (Plato, 1987, pp. 26–27 [c. 375 BC]). Though not explicitly expressed, Thrasymachus' argument presupposes an egoistic premise; the pursuit of self-interest. Similarly, for Max Stirner (1806–1856), the individual is of extreme importance and each individual is unique. In "The Ego and His Own" (1844), he explains that the path to salvation is achieved by knowledge of true metaphysics, which teaches where the true interest of the individual lies.

"I decide whether it is the right thing in me; there is no right outside me. If it is right for me, it is right. Possibly this may not suffice to make it right for the rest; their care, not mine: let them defend themselves. [...] So every one does who knows how to value himself, every one in the degree that he is an egoist". (Stirner, 1907, p. 148)

The idea of the pursuit of self-interest is also found in Adam Smith's (1723–1790) Invisible Hand argument, discussed in The Theory of Moral Sentiments. Smith contends that rich landowners, whilst producing goods out of pure self-interest, consume only what they need and are guided by an invisible hand that distributes the rest of the production to the poor, as if the land were evenly distributed amongst inhabitants. So, even if it was not the initial intention, the landowner contributes to the welfare of society (Smith, 2002, p. 215 [1759]).

So, the perhaps controversial doctrine of ethical egoism could be an approach to conducting business, as Adam Smith demonstrates with the Invisible Hand. Yet, as Thrasymachus defends, practice also evidences that an egoistic approach to ethics can lead to ethical misconduct, albeit 'unintentionally'—which might be related to cultural differences, as discussed in the following section on ethical relativism. This validates Rand's argument that moral codes must be motivated by reason and not by inclinations or passions. Ethical egoism has been criticised for its inability to provide ethical solutions in the event of conflicts of interest. If everyone should pursue their own interests, then it becomes impossible to decide whose interest should be pursued in case of conflict (Baier, 1970, pp. 190–191). It has also been argued that egoism is

self-contradictory, because by declaring one's own interest to be the only good, it rejects the self-interest of others (Moore, 1922, p. 97 [1903]).

2.1.5 Relativism

There are two forms of ethical relativism: cultural relativism and individual relativism (also called ethical subjectivism). The former, propagated by anthropologist Ruth Benedict (1887–1948), defends that the rightness of a moral standard is relative to cultures and societies, the latter relative to each individual (Shafer-Landau, 2012, p. 291). The relativist principle states that it is ethically wrong to judge an act of another individual or society on the basis of one's own moral standards; likewise, it is ethically wrong to intervene in the affairs of another individual or society on the basis of one's own moral standards (Wong, 2001, p. 1166). In the face of such assertions, there is no objective or universal moral principle to guide our actions. When two individuals from different cultures—or two individuals if it is an individual relativist—disagree about the rightness of an act, both may be telling the truth (Velleman, 2015, p. 76). Normative ethical relativism, however, is not about determining whose truth is at stake. Harman's interpretation of relativism aims to justify how one ought to act, not to judge the rightness or wrongness of an act. And for this, he calls for inner judgments, that is, judgments of what one ought to do, rather than judgments about the individual (Harman, 2013, p. 76). Normative ethical relativism has been criticised as incoherent due to its nonjudgmental tolerance and noninterventional character (Wong, 2001, p. 1166).

One criticism of cultural relativism is that it rejects the existence of universal ethical standards, which means that it is unable to judge the rightness or wrongness of an act (McDonald, 2010, p. 454). For instance, in the United Kingdom, bribery is forbidden and same-gender marriage is legal, whilst in certain Middle Eastern countries, bribing is widely accepted and same-gender marriage is punishable by death penalty. If cultural relativism is true, there is no method for deciding whether bribery or same-gender marriage are right or wrong. For corporations, relativism has far-reaching consequences. As multinational companies operate in the global arena, managers are required to conduct business in different places and workplaces, making decisionmaking and conflict management insurmountable tasks. Though the noninterventionist aspect of relativism may seem unhelpful in managing conflict, the

nonjudgmental dimension can still be helpful in acknowledging individual and cultural differences and developing an organisational culture that fosters acceptance and understanding of differences.

Whilst this review does not provide a detailed discussion of the various forms of each ethical theory. It does, however, highlight the many differences and disagreements in the interpretation of ethics, not only between but also within each doctrine (see [*Table 1. Overview of normative ethical theories features*](#)). This legitimises the fact that, institutionalising ethics in a business is a difficult process in practice. An internal stakeholder approach to institutionalising ethics has similarities with utilitarian theory in that it seeks the greatest good for the greatest number (nonmanagerial employees, middle managers, executive managers). The challenge then, is to determine what is meant by 'good', whose 'good' is to be promoted, and how to assess the greatness of that 'good' in advance. If one applies an egoist interpretation to, for instance, the owner of a social enterprise whose purpose is to support communities in need by providing sponsorship for education—assuming that the business owner's self-interest is in running a business, and her ultimate value is in helping communities by sponsoring education—it is her rational and conscious choice to pursue her self-interest that can be classified as ethical behaviour, not the fact that she is running a business with a social purpose. The fact that others may benefit through access to education is a mere corollary of the business owner's choice, and thus, does not fall within the realm of egoist ethics. A consequentialist may consider the business owner's decision to run a social enterprise and sponsor education to be right if that decision represents the greatest good for her. An advocate of virtue ethics may consider her character virtuous on the basis of her generosity (one of Aristotle's moral virtues) towards communities in need. Interpretations of the rightness of one same individual, act, or situation are, thus, numerous. A central premise of this study is to understand how the workforce of this social business interprets ethics and how it is influenced by the organisation's approach to institutionalising ethics. With such a diversity of ethical theories, a wide range of interpretations amongst members of the workforce is to be expected. Gaining understanding of this diversity can help the organisation institutionalise ethics in a way that benefits all internal stakeholders and creates a multilateral understanding of each other's behaviours and decisions.

Table 1. Overview of normative ethical theories features

	NORMATIVE ETHICAL THEORIES FEATURES					
	TELEOLOGY		DEONTOLOGY		EXISTENTIALISM	
	CONSEQUENTIALISM/UTILITARIANISM	VIRTUE ETHICS	DIVINE COMMAND	NATURAL LAW	EGOISM	RELATIVISM
Locus of rightness evaluation	Result of an act	Individual's character	Act itself	Act itself	The individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The individual (subjectivism) - The culture (cultural relativism)
Ethical principle	Pursuit of greatest good for individual (consequentialism) Pursuit of greatest good for greatest number (utilitarianism)	Pursuit of eudæmonia through virtuousness	Obedience to God's commands	Compliance to natural inclinations	Pursuit of self-interest through reason	Authenticity through conscious and reflective choice
Key western philosophers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consequentialism: Henry Sidgwick - Utilitarianism: John Stuart Mill; Jeremy Bentham 	Aristotle; Adam Smith	Søren Kierkegaard; Saint-Augustine	Thomas Aquinas	Ayn Rand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existentialism: Martin Heidegger; Jean-Paul Sartre - Cultural relativism: Ruth Benedict
Main criticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on subjective goodness rather than on reason. - Difficult to anticipate and evaluate consequences. - Difficult to measure happiness and determine whose happiness to promote (utilitarianism). 	Guidelines on how to be virtuous but not on how to act when in an ethical dilemma	Deontological approach refrains people from taking responsibility of their own acts		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inability to provide ethical solutions in the event of conflicts of interests. - Self-contradictory: declaring one's own self-interest rejects self-interests of others 	Nonjudgmental and noninterventionist nature makes it impossible to judge rightness or wrongness of an act.

2.2 Concepts in applied ethics

2.2.1 Business ethics

It has often been questioned whether business ethics is an oxymoron (e.g., Collins, 1994; Nash, 2000; Weidenbaum, 2005; Hartman, DesJardins and MacDonald, 2014; Prasad and Agarwal, 2015, p. 5), since the common notion of the purpose of a business is the pursuit of self-interest (i.e., growth and profitability), which is at odds with conventional ethical behaviour (Shepard, Shepard and Wokutch, 1991; Collins, 1994; Duska, 2000). However, turning to Rand's ethical theory of egoism, the pursuit of self-interest is central to ethical behaviour. In a capitalist free-market economy, it is not *per se* unethical for entrepreneurs to pursuing their self-interest in growth and profitability. It is the way in which this self-interest is pursued that can be subject to unethical behaviour. As Rand phrases it:

"[a]nd this, ladies and gentlemen, is why man needs a code of ethics" (Rand, 1964, p. 16)

Given the power and influence of business in society, and, in particular, the economic contribution of the UK travel and tourism sector—contributing 5.7% (£131.5 billion) to the UK GDP and 11.7% (4.11 million jobs) of all UK jobs (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022)—it is of paramount importance to consider how this contribution is made in terms of its social role. The post-Brexit crisis, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, has severely blemished the business landscape, forcing leaders to deal with supply chain issues and labour shortages. Inflation has affected both businesses and consumers. The cost-of-living crisis has reduced the disposable income of consumers and, subsequently, led to lost sales for businesses (Garnett, Doherty and Heron, 2020; OECD, 2020; Salehnia, Zabihi and Safarzaei, 2020; Elsayed and Abdelrhim, 2021; Kohnert, 2021; Spanaki, Papatheodorou and Pappas, 2021). Business leaders are then faced with critical decisions and dilemmas in the internal environment of the organisation, such as balancing investments in human resource and operating costs. Business ethics can help leaders understand the impact and implications of ethical behaviour and ethical misconduct, and improve their ethical decisionmaking (Crane and Matten, 2016).

Ethics in business dates back to the era of barter, based on the principle of reciprocity discussed by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (350 BC), which refers to

equal exchange in commercial transactions (Theocarakis, 2008). In his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), John Locke (1632–1704) discussed the concept of private property and argued that the goods of one's labour are a natural right. Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), affirmed the role of virtues in business ethics. It has been argued that Karl Marx (1818–1883) did not devote any of his works directly to moral philosophy (Massey, 1982, p. 301; Wood, 1984, p. 131; Kain, 1991, p. 1). In his analysis of the capitalist system, rather than questioning what *ought* to be, Marx looked into what *is* (Kamenka, 2015, p. 1). Nevertheless, Marx's critique of capitalism can have ethical associations. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx (1998, pp. 1–12 [1884]) denounced capitalism as a class struggle in which the oppressed majority (proletarians) is exploited by the capitalists (bourgeoisie). Although Marx did not explicitly seek an ethical analysis of the capitalist system, his denunciation bears similarities to the utilitarian principle: “*that Action is best, which procures the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers*” (Hutcheson, 2008, p. 125 [1726]). Marx also argued that capitalism has a dehumanising effect because the exploitation of proletarians alienates them from their labour and reduces them to mere means to an end (Knippenberg and de Jong, 2010, p. 19), what Foucault (1982, pp. 777–781) calls objectification of human beings (see [2.3 Power relations in business management and the role of ethics](#)). Similarly, Marx critiqued European growth for causing the ruin of the East Asian production system and “*forcibly convert[ed] them into fields for the supply of its raw material*” (Marx, 1990, p. 394 [1887]). Such behaviour is diametrically opposed to Goal 10 of the UNSDG: Reduce inequality within and amongst countries. Though Marx did not explicitly address ethics or morality in his works, certain ethical principles can be implicitly derived from his analyses.

In the modern era, the role of business ethics was brought to the fore by a series of corporate scandals in the 1960s and 1970s (De George, 2012). Two decades that endured ecological disasters as industrials disposed of toxic and nuclear waste. In parallel, a movement to protect consumer rights emerged during this period, leading to the development of consumer protection laws and acts (e.g., *Wholesome Meat Act*, 1967; *Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972*, 1972; *Consumer Safety Act*, 1978) (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2002, p. 9) and the introduction of corporate codes of conduct (*Business Ethics and Compliance Timeline*, 2019). In the 1980s, business ethics developed as a field of study, and in practice, firms became

increasingly concerned about their image after important major ethical issues emerged (i.e., bribery, deceptive advertising, financial fraud), and leading firms recognised the need to address these issues and established ethics committees. In addition, the *Defense Industry Initiative on Business Ethics and Conduct* (DII) was formed in 1986 to guide corporate support for ethical conduct (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2002, pp. 9–10; *Business Ethics and Compliance Timeline*, 2019). That same year, the *Caux Round Table for Moral Capitalism* (2019) was founded to promote international ethical business practices. In the 1990s and 2000s, new ethical issues such as child labour, unsafe work practices, cybercrime, and international corruption emerged with global expansion. As a result, anticorruption efforts were stepped up (e.g., *OECD Anti-Bribery Convention* (1997); *United Nations (UN) Convention against Corruption* (2003)). In addition, there is greater emphasis on corporate social responsibility; organisations are held accountable for the misconduct of their employees. The Global Sullivan Principles “seek to encourage social responsibility around the world” (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2002, p. 219). Business ethics has become an established field of study, and in the organisational context, firms recognise the value of ethics programmes, an ethical organisational climate, and ethical initiatives (Ferrell, Fraedrich and Ferrell, 2002, p. 13).

The numerous corporate scandals and the consumer protection movement have transformed the business scene and require business leaders to develop an awareness of the impact of their decisions. Societal demands have shifted towards more ethical and responsible products and organisations (Goodwin and Francis, 2003; Marchoo, Butcher and Watkins, 2014; Crane and Matten, 2016, p. 9; Kuokkanen and Catrett, 2022). At the same time, technological advances such as social media platforms have the potential to instantly expose organisational ethical misconduct to a wider audience (Becker and Gao, 2010, p. 142). These demands and advances require organisations to rethink their strategies and incorporate ethical initiatives, not only for matters external to the organisation but also in the workplace. Initiatives such as the United Nations’ (UN) Tenth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of promoting decent work for all (United Nations, 2015), and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development’s “Ethics at work” guide (CIPD, 2019), demonstrate that there is a demand for workers’ rights to an ethical workplace, and that organisations must commit to corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development.

2.2.2 Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

In the context of corporations, shareholders and investors own a share in the company and have limited liability, meaning they are not responsible for debts or damages caused by the corporation. Executive managers have a fiduciary responsibility to protect shareholders' investments (Szto, 2004, p. 61). Managers are thus expected to act in the best interest of shareholders (Crane and Matten, 2016, p. 43). This outlines the legal responsibility of corporations, but it also raises the question of whether corporations can have moral responsibility for their actions. Friedman held that only human beings can have social responsibility, on the premise that a corporation is an artificial person, which means corporations can only have an artificial responsibility. The only responsibility firms have is to run their business in accordance with the wishes of their owners, which, according to Friedman, generally amounts to generating as much profit as possible. However, he also pointed out that whilst managers should conduct business in the interest of shareholders, they should also abide by the basic rules of society, which are enshrined in law and ethical practices (Friedman, 2007, pp. 173–174 [1970]). Since Friedman wrote his article in 1970, society's needs and ethical custom have evolved, as explained in the previous section, and CSR has shifted from a shareholder priority to a stakeholder approach (Freeman, 2010).

Although ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) are two related concepts, they are distinct constructs (Ruhi Yaman and Gurel, 2006). As Robin and Reidenbach (1987) explain, ethics is about rules and norms of conduct that refer to moral philosophical rules, whilst social responsibility is about the social contract between business and society. There are different definitions of CSR, but there is a consensus that an organisation's activities entail responsibilities that go beyond its owners, such as to employees, guests, governments, and society in general (Carroll and Shabana, 2010). In 1999, the Secretary General of UN, Kofi Annan, suggested business leaders initiate the UN Global Compact to encourage them to conduct business responsibly and in accordance with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact (Annan, 1999). The Ten Principles, in the areas of human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption, are derived from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the

United Nations Convention Against Corruption (United Nations Global Compact, 2014, p. 11).

Commitment to CSR initiatives is important for the hospitality industry because operations incur environmental costs related to water and energy consumption, reductions in which can have a positive impact on the bottom-line and the environment (Rhou and Singal, 2020, p. 1). Until 2000, the focus of CSR was primarily on environmental matters, but later consumers and employees were also included. CSR issues specific to the hospitality industry include responsible gaming strategies, food waste management, disaster relief, and the use of local produce and non-GMO ingredients (Rhou and Singal, 2020, p. 2). Studies on CSR initiatives for hospitality employees—such as fair wages, career opportunities, fair employment and labour practices (McGinley, Hanks and Line, 2017), diversity management (Singal, 2014a)—have shown that CSR plays an important role in attracting and retaining new employees (Singal, 2015). In addition, CSR contributes towards a positive organisational culture, which in turn enhances employee satisfaction and commitment (Wong and Gao, 2014).

There are some challenges associated with deploying CSR strategies. Internally, lack of resources and implementation costs often discourage hospitality organisations from including CSR components in their strategies (Chan, 2008). Externally, consumers have become more discerning and aware of environmentally friendly initiatives (Chen and Peng, 2012). Travellers are increasingly choosing green measures in their lodging and are critical of organisations' *green practices*, especially when operations are not in line with the organisation's marketing communications. In addition, consumers have become better informed about *greenwashing* (Rahman, Park and Chi, 2015) and *bluwashing* (Seele and Gatti, 2017) by hospitality organisations. The term *greenwashing* was coined by Jay Westerveld, a prominent environmentalist, in a 1986 article denouncing the hotel industry for falsely touting towel reuse as part of its environmental strategy, whilst pursuing poor environmental policies on operational aspects (Pearson, 2010). The term *bluwashing*, on the other hand, which derives from the colour of the UN flag, was devised by the 2002 World Summit to refer to policies that overemphasise humanitarian and social issues, such as poverty eradication, disaster relief, and human rights (Seele, 2017).

In a similar vein, the inclusion of minority groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) communities, is an emerging societal demand. Recognised as a universal development agenda, the United Nations Development Group *“has called for States to fulfil their obligations under international human rights laws to end violence and discrimination against [LGBT] people”*. LGBTQ+ inclusion has, subsequently, also become relevant in the business environment (Badgett *et al.*, 2015; Theodorakopoulos and Budhwar, 2015; Blanck, Hyseni and Wise, 2020; Vongvisitsin and Wong, 2021). To mitigate the challenges LGBTQ+ individuals face in expressing their sexual orientation and gender identities (Everly and Schwarz, 2015; Holman, 2018), the European Commission has proposed a business case for diversity in the workplace (van Beek, Cancedda and Scheele, 2016) and organisations have implemented strategies to support LGBTQ+ inclusion, such as non-discrimination policies (Brooks and Edwards, 2009).

Concurrently, hospitality business leaders have recognised the growing economic significance of the LGBTQ+ market segment (Chang, 2014; Guaracino and Salvato, 2017). In their pursuit of the so-called ‘pink pound’ or ‘pink dollar’ (Coombes and Singh, 2022), organisations often promote themselves as ‘gay-friendly’ establishments, such as misterb&b (no date), or Hamilton Hall Men Only Hotel (2000). Such marketing strategies have raised ethical questions. Jeffrey and Sposato (2021, p. 208) stress that the term ‘gay-friendly’ is problematic and condescending, and that ‘gay-friendly’ narratives imply that heterosexuality is the norm, further marginalising LGBTQ+ communities. Similarly, the exploitation of the LGBTQ+ agenda for commercial ends has been criticised for a lack authenticity (Ciszek and Lim, 2021; Lim, Ciszek and Moon, 2022)—which resonates with the existentialist notion of authenticity, which requires honesty and the courage to engage in ethical behaviour—especially when it is not reflected in organisational practice (Angeli, 2017; Lahiri, 2020). This phenomenon is referred to as *pinkwashing*, which is the strategy of promoting LGBTQ+ rights in order to appear tolerant (Schulman, 2012, p. 135). For instance, Kama and Ram (2020) argue that the Israeli government deploys pinkwashing strategies to attract tourists and camouflage the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Though the purpose of CSR is to encourage organisations to genuinely develop best practices, some organisations make use of CSR as a promotional tool, or windowdressing tactic (Taylor, Vithayathil and Yim, 2018; Hu, Dou and Wang, 2019), to appear socially responsible. To avoid

such practices, “*organisations have a certain level or moral responsibility, because policies, decisions structures and organisational cultures can influence the individual’s ethical decisionmaking and behaviour*” (Crane and Matten, 2016, p. 45). Given the importance and complexity of deploying authentic CSR strategies, it is essential to align the needs of the organisation with those of its internal stakeholders. Such alignment can help embed CSR into daily operations and develop socially responsible practices internally, which is essential for the survival of an industry prone to seasonality (Fernández-Morales, Cisneros-Martínez and McCabe, 2016), high employee turnover rate (Asghar *et al.*, 2021), and labour shortages (Stergiou and Farmaki, 2021).

2.2.3 Sustainable development

A concept that bears similarities to CSR is that of sustainable development, defined in the 1987 Brundtland Report as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43). Sustainable development encompasses three dimensions: social, environmental, and economic, to which Elkington (2004, p. 1) refers as the triple bottom line. As previously mentioned, shifting societal demands related to environmental and social concerns have led governments, intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and industries to rethink their strategies and incorporate these issues into their agendas. For instance, the UK government has developed several acts and regulations to improve the natural environment and protect workers and LGBT communities from discrimination, (*The Equal Opportunities (Employment Legislation) Regulations*, 1999; *The Environment Act*, 2021; LGBT Action Plan, Government Equalities Office, 2018). Since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, the United Nations and its member states have worked together in a global partnership to end poverty, improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth, all whilst combating climate change. Several resolutions have been adopted to improve human lives and protect the environment (*Agenda 21*, 1992), reduce extreme poverty (*Millennium Development Goals*, 2000; *The Future We Want*, 2012), culminating, in September 2015, with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable

Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015).

Despite the 'good' intentions of the UN which proposes resolutions and regulations to promote sustainable development, these have been criticised for failing to address a fundamental problem: the politico-economic system, itself, in which business takes place (Bianchi and de Man, 2021). Instead of challenging leaders to conduct business responsibly and sustainably to tackle societal and environmental issues, it is the system that that needs to be challenged to promote holistic, sustainable development rather than merely sustaining business (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2018; Boluk, Cavaliere and Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019, p. 860). The capitalist system, as Marx (1990 [1867]) analysed, is geared towards economic growth and focuses on expanding capitalist production to the detriment of the labour force. Such a system nurtures the perpetual pursuit of self-interest, exacerbates social (Harcourt, 2014, p. 1326) and environmental (Bell, 2015, p. 5) injustices, and sometimes leads to windowdressing practices such as pink- or greenwashing (Lucena, Vorobjovas-Pinta and Cai, 2021; Tark and Oh, 2022). Money, as Aristotle noted, is a means to *eudæmonia* rather than an end in itself. It enables the exchange of goods and should not be viewed as profit opportunities, as otherwise *"all too many end up being caught on a treadmill in, however more one has, it never seems enough"* (Bragues, 2006, p. 344). Labour exploitation as an instrument to generate profit is the root cause of employee alienation and disengagement (Sawyer and Gampa, 2020). Consequently, in times of crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic, business leaders who prioritised the wellbeing (economic or reputational) of the organisation over the wellbeing of the workforce severely compromised employee trust in the organisation (Guzzo *et al.*, 2021).

It is not the goal of this research to investigate the politico-economic system. Rather, it is to expand knowledge of the internal organisational system, more precisely, an internal stakeholder approach to institutionalising ethics. Nevertheless, the two systems are closely intertwined. Businesses that want to align with societal needs also need an internal alignment (Luca, 2018, p. 14). Sustainable development and social responsibility are not only outside-in processes where businesses adapt to societal needs but also inside-out processes, where businesses and employees develop and execute strategies to meet those societal needs, with internal stakeholders becoming central actors. Though Dodds (2019, p. 1) discusses the concept of

(multi)stakeholderism at the global level, arguing *“that involving stakeholders in the decision-making process will result in better-informed decisions”*, this can also be applicable at the organisational level, as *“the multistakeholder approach argues that the correct way forward is to bring together all the [...] actors that have a potential ‘stake’ in an issue and ask them to collaboratively sort out a solution”* (Gleckman, 2018, p. xiii).

In addition to developing a collaborative solution, engaging all stakeholders can be a key driver of employee engagement and values alignment, which is critical to developing a shared vision (Simon, 2011; Glavas, 2012). The purpose of EI is to promote ethical decisionmaking and behaviour. And in the context of sustainability and social responsibility, making ethics a central tenet of conducting business is pivotal for authenticity. When it comes to CSR and sustainable development, existentialists advocate authenticity, which involves deliberate and reflective decisionmaking, and requires courage and honesty (Greene, 1952). Following Sartre’s (1978, p. 439, 2007, p. 29) statement that humankind is condemned to be free, organisations are free to choose the direction they want to go (e.g., budget hotel, beach resort, local pub, gastronomy restaurant). They are also free to choose how they pursue that chosen direction. At the same time, they are condemned or held accountable for the choices they make. Thus, business leaders who choose to make CSR and sustainable development a core element of their business, are also accountable for the effects thereof. CSR and sustainability are either ends in themselves or means to appear good (windowdressing) in the public eye and generate revenue.

Anscombe (1958) discusses the concept of intention and emphasises the need to include the notion of foresight when discussing the intention underlying an action. Thus, when organisations decide to incorporate sustainability and CSR matters into their strategies, they must be able to foresee the potential consequences of their business actions, and these foreseeable consequences must be considered when deciding which intentions to put into action. Thus, organisations that choose to incorporate CSR and sustainable development into their strategies must also intend to act in a sustainable and socially responsible. The deliberate inclusion of CSR and sustainable development practices with the intention of greenwashing reduces these practices to a means to an end. Similarly, a virtue ethicist will regard the pursuit of CSR and sustainable development as ethical if and only if that pursuit is through the

appropriate use of intellectual and moral virtues (Aristotle, 2009), for the means (exercising virtues) are an integral part of the ends (*eudæmonia*) (Trianosky, 1990).

Though CSR and sustainable development are different concepts, they are closely intertwined and have common concerns (Montiel, 2008). The former is a form of social contract between businesses and society, which states that businesses should contribute to societal needs (Robin and Reidenbach, 1987). The latter is based on the triple bottom line principle, which combines corporate economic development with consideration of social and environmental concerns (Elkington, 1998, 2004). Increasingly informed and demanding consumers regarding ethical products (Rahman, Park and Chi, 2015; Kuokkanen and Catrett, 2022), combined with crises regarding CSR and sustainable development (Boluk, Cavaliere and Higgins-Desbiolles, 2019; Hall, 2019; Bianchi and de Man, 2021; Ciszek and Lim, 2021; Jeffrey and Sposato, M., 2021), require business leaders to make internal stakeholders and ethics a central tenet. Stakeholder engagement can facilitate alignment, both, within the organisation and with societal needs, leading to a shared vision (Simon, 2011; Glavas, 2012). Furthermore, promoting ethical behaviour can help avoid windowdressing practices (Nakano, 1999; Rossouw and van Vuuren, 2003; Connors, Anderson-MacDonald and Thomson, 2017). In this way, organisations can authentically become ethical businesses in terms of purpose and workplace.

2.2.4 Hospitality ethics

Common ethical dilemmas arise from the inherent characteristics that distinguish the hospitality industry from other industries. First, service delivery processes rely on *intangible* guest-employee interactions and are *perishable*, meaning they cannot be stored to be consumed at a later date. Second, *simultaneity* means that production and consumption of services occur simultaneously, with both employee and guest involved in the process. Such characteristics make it difficult to monitor the quality and ethical quality of the service (Becker and Gao, 2010, p. 146). Third, because each staff member has unique skills and each guest has unique demands, a service delivery is vulnerable to *heterogeneity* (Wirtz and Lovelock, 2022, pp. 22–23). Consequently, opportunities for unethical behaviour are numerous and difficult to detect, making it a complex process to ensure consistent service quality (Knani, 2014; Mittal, Saxena and Matta, 2014; Tavitiyaman *et al.*, 2019). Moreover, service delivery

still depends on intense human-interaction, and differences in sociopolitical, religious, and cultural backgrounds lead to discrepancies in beliefs, values, interests, and perceptions (Becker and Gao, 2010). As a result, employee-guest interactions are prone to fluctuations, leading to volatile and unpredictable service outcomes. These interactions are crucial moments of truth in which guests form their perceptions of the organisation (Hultman, 2005; Widjaja, 2005), and it is, therefore, important to recognise these differences in order to understand and address unethical behaviour. In this regard, leaders play a critical role in the implementation of ethics (Brownell, 2010, 2017; Eluwole, Karatepe and Evci, 2022) and, therefore, need to have the appropriate competences to make ethical decisions. Similarly, managers need to assess how their decisions affect different stakeholders. On these grounds, it is suggested that the phenomenon of EI should be studied from an ethical decisionmaking theory approach, as a comprehensive understanding of ethical decisionmaking enhances leaders' competencies in dealing with challenging situations (Obioma Ejimabo, 2015).

Ethical misconduct is widespread in hospitality organisations and affects both internal (i.e., nonmanagerial employees, middle managers, executive managers) and external stakeholders (i.e., guests, suppliers, host communities, environment). For firms, such misconduct causes severe financial and reputational damage (Okumus *et al.*, 2019; Yan, Hu and Wu, 2021). Extant research on hospitality ethics covers a wide range of practices and actors that pose a serious societal issue. For instance, hospitality and tourism organisations play an important role in human- and sex-trafficking activities, which refer to the exploitation of adults and children for commercial and sexual purposes (Paraskevas and Brookes, 2018; Wen *et al.*, 2020; Aston *et al.*, 2022). Animal abuse is also associated with the tourism and hospitality industries, where animals are mistreated and exploited for entertainment and commercial purposes (Božić *et al.*, 2018), for example in zoos (Fennell, 2012), circuses (von Essen, Lindsjö and Berg, 2020), theme parks, and other venues where tourists may come in contact with wild animals (Cohen, 2013). Similarly, host communities are victims of ethical misconduct, with phenomena such as mass- or overtourism (Capocchi *et al.*, 2019), leading to tourism overcrowding and carrying capacity issues (Butowski, 2019), which in turn results in gentrification and minority groups displacement (Daly, Dias and Patuleia, 2021; Verlaan, 2022). Controversial travel trends have also raised ethical dilemmas. For instance, slum tourism or poverty

tourism—a form of tourism that involves “*transforming poverty, squalor and violence into a tourism product*” (Dürr and Jaffe, 2012, p. 113)—has often been criticised as a form of voyeurism associated with colonialism (Freire-Medeiros, 2009; Iqani, 2016), turning poverty into entertainment (Meschkank, 2011). Another form of tourism that has raised several ethical concerns is dark tourism, an umbrella term for a macabre form of tourism associated with death and tragedy (Mionel, 2019), such as prison tourism (Strange and Kempa, 2003), suicide tourism (Yu, Wen and Meng, 2020), fright tourism (Bristow and Jenkins, 2020), genocide tourism (Sharpley, 2012). Though it is argued that such forms of tourism are seen as an act of honouring the dead and a way of learning about the world to prevent similar tragedies from happening again (Olejniczak, 2019), it has also been questioned to what extent it is ethical for hospitality and tourism organisations to benefit from suffering and death (Garcia, 2012).

Unethical employee behaviours include providing misleading information, deliberately overcharging for services, infringement of guest privacy (Harris, 2012; Kuo, Zhang and Cranage, 2015; Thomas and Kumar, 2016; Mishra and Sajjani, 2020), substance abuse (Eade, 1983; Belhassen and Shani, 2012; Giousmpasoglou, Brown and Cooper, 2018; Kaminski *et al.*, 2018; Hight and Park, 2019), theft (Poulston, 2008b; Goh and Kong, 2018; Pratt, 2019), bullying (Jung and Yoon, 2018; Hsu, Liu and Tsaur, 2019; Gürlek, 2020; Srivastava and Agarwal, 2020). For managers, unethical practices range from soliciting dishonest acts to breaching fiduciary duties to treating subordinates unfavourably (Woods *et al.*, 2013; Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara and Suarez-Acosta, 2014; Wong and Li, 2015; Hight, Gajjar and Okumus, 2019; Sarwar *et al.*, 2020). Even guests are not immune to ethical misconduct; Lovelock and Wirtz (2011, p. 387) refer to them as jaycustomers when they: “*act in a thoughtless or abusive way, causing problems for the firm, its employees, and other customers*”. Examples of jaycustomers include property abusers, opportunistic complaints, sexual harassment (Harris and Reynolds, 2004; Poulston, 2008a; Daunt and Harris, 2011; Ro and Wong, 2012; Kensbock *et al.*, 2015; Ram, Tribe and Biran, 2016; Chia-Wei, 2019; Lugosi, 2019; Kotera, Adhikari and Sheffield, 2020; Tan *et al.*, 2020).

In an effort to control unethical practices, IGOs and NGOs have included ethical standards as a central part of their agendas (e.g., UNWTO, 2001; Clark, 2015; Russell and Weeks, 2019) (see [2.2.2 Corporate social responsibility \(CSR\)](#) and [2.2.3](#)

Sustainable development), and firms have begun to institutionalise ethics in the form of ethics codes, training programmes, and ethical leadership (e.g., ACCOR, 2018; Aitken Spence Hotel Holdings PLC, 2019; Hilton Worldwide, no date). Ensuring ethical practices is a pivotal challenge in the hospitality industry that needs to be addressed (Carlson and Perrewé, 1995; Wong, 1998; Yeh, 2012; Knani, 2014). A number of studies point to a direct relationship between employees' positive perceptions of an ethical work environment and job satisfaction and commitment (Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Guçer *et al.*, 2016; Nicolaides, 2016; Abdel-Ati and Deraz, 2018; Tarkang Mary and Oztüren, 2019; Haldorai *et al.*, 2020; Kim *et al.*, 2020). Also, previous research suggests that guests' favourable perceptions of a firm's ethical considerations are related to a positive guest experience (Ramphal and Nicolaides, 2018; Dimitriou and Schwepker, 2019; Hasan, Jasfar and Kristaung, 2020, p. 75).

Thus, firms that foster an ethical environment can enhance employee and guest satisfaction and loyalty. To this extent, firms that promote ethics and establish clear policies can promote higher levels of job commitment, and consequently, lower turnover rates, thereby reducing recruitment costs (Tavitiyaman *et al.*, 2019). In a similar vein, increased levels of guest satisfaction and loyalty can manifest in less irresponsible guest behaviour and, thus, lower guest acquisition or service recovery costs (Dimitriou and Schwepker, 2019; Hasan, Jasfar and Kristaung, 2020). Therefore, a firm's ethical climate can improve employee and guest satisfaction and commitment, which in turn reduces recruitment and acquisition costs, and thereby, improving firm performance (Kim and Brymer, 2011; Wang, 2014; Tavitiyaman *et al.*, 2019). However, the lack of seriousness in implementing ethics in organisations has been subject to criticism (Painter-Morland, 2010), resulting in reduced impact of ethical codes on organisational behaviour (Pater and Van Gils, 2003) and moral disengagement amongst employees (Zhao, Xu and Wang, 2022). Similarly, organisations that fail to clearly communicate ethical standards, such as CSR initiatives, intensify customer scepticism (Zhang and Hanks, 2017) and distrust (Ying *et al.*, 2021), ultimately leading to negative behavioural intention. Customers' CSR scepticism is related to the greenwashing practices of hospitality organisations (Rahman, Park and Chi, 2015). In sum, ethical misconduct in the hospitality industry is widespread and has serious repercussions for many stakeholders inside and outside organisations. Even organisations that do deploy ethical standards are at risk of customer and employee

distrust and moral engagement. It is, therefore, essential to ensure ethical standards are understood by all stakeholders and are reflected in operations. As explained earlier, the purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of how incorporating internal stakeholder perspectives may contribute to EI strategies that are embedded throughout the organisation and its operations.

2.2.5 Ethics institutionalisation

Sims (2003a, pp. 242–243) defines EI as “*getting ethics formally and explicitly into daily business life*” and argues that this process can be enhanced by acknowledging the importance of organisational commitment, a strong ethical culture, the role of management (executive management, middle management, and the board of directors), creating an environment that encourages whistleblowing, and structuring a system to enforce ethical principles. Though Sims identifies several key variables, he does not specifically mention the role of employees. However, employees are central to daily business operations, as they are typically the ones who execute the organisations’ strategies. Furthermore, organisational commitment refers to employee commitment (Sims, 2003b, p. 244), where it can be argued that organisations should expect the commitment of all internal stakeholders, rather than expecting only the commitment of employee and assuming that of management. Such an approach seems to emphasise a top-down approach that can lead to EI becoming a coercive control mechanism (Stansbury and Barry, 2007, p. 247).

Whilst some scholars define EI as an explicit approach to incorporating ethics in everyday business (Purcell, 1985; Carlson and Perrewé, 1995), others distinguish between explicit and implicit approaches (Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010; Chakrabarty and Bass, 2014; D.-J. Lee *et al.*, 2018). Sims (1991) and Dunham (1984), on the other hand, distinguish between long-term and short-term approaches to institutionalising ethics. Despite the different approaches, the authors agree that EI refers to the integration of ethics into daily business activities and organisational decisionmaking processes. Implicit forms of EI refer to ethical behaviour being implied and not directly articulated, whereas explicit EI means that ethical behaviour is formally and clearly communicated (Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008, pp. 284–285).

Firms that explicitly institutionalise ethics, integrate ethics through codes of ethics (Carlson and Perrewe, 1995; Chakrabarty and Bass, 2014), ethics committees (Purcell, 1985; Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007), ethics officers (Fitzpatrick, 1996), mentoring or training programmes (Sims, 1991; Goosen and Van Vuuren, 2005; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007). The primary function of explicit EI is to codify ethical behaviour by explaining the organisation's value systems (Carlson and Perrewe, 1995) and providing clear guidelines for ethical decisionmaking (Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007). In contrast, implicit EI is reflected in an ethical corporate culture and in ethical leadership styles (Sims, 1991; Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Chakrabarty and Whitten, 2011), to which Carroll and Buchholtz (2009, p. 337) add the need for corporate transparency, defined as *"a quality, characteristic, or state in which activities, processes, practices, and decisions that take place in companies become open or visible to the outside world"*. Pressures for greater transparency, as Carroll and Buchholtz point out, comes from both external stakeholders (i.e., consumers, environmentalists, governments, investors) and internal stakeholders. Such demands may be the result of numerous corporate scandals and windowdressing practices (i.e., pink-, green-, bluewashing – see [2.2.2 Corporate social responsibility \(CSR\)](#)), through which organisations need to (re)gain the trust of consumers and employees. It is, therefore, crucial that organisations do not treat ethics just as another add-on module or adopt a tick-box approach to ethics management (Goosen and Van Vuuren, 2005). Rather, ethics and transparency should be an integral part of daily operations in order to enhance the organisation's legitimacy in the marketplace and in society (Pagano, Pagano and Lundin, 2003).

A distinction is made between explicit and implicit EI, but they are not mutually exclusive forms of EI. Instead, organisations that take a holistic approach by integrating both components are more likely to achieve desirable outcomes (Foote and Ruona, 2008). Jose and Thibodeaux (1999) argue that explicit forms of EI, such as codes of ethics, ethics committees and commissioners, tend to receive more attention, whilst managers emphasise the critical role of implicit forms, such as organisational culture, ethical leadership, and open communication, in institutionalising ethics. EI is not only about developing codes of ethics, appointing ethics officers, or establishing committees, but it also about top management support, an organisational culture that fosters ethical behaviour and leadership (Hatcher, 2002; Goosen and Van Vuuren,

2005; Foote and Ruona, 2008; Murphy, 2009 [1989]). However, Jose and Thibodeaux (1999, p. 140) point out the need for an ethical fit between implicit and explicit elements of EI, such that an organisation's ethical strategies are compatible with its existing structure, policies, system, and culture.

In this regard, stakeholders (internal and external) play an influential part in the institutionalisation of ethics, as they can affect and/or be affected by an organisation's goals and activities (Sharp Paine, 1996; Hatcher, 2002; Carroll and Buchholtz, 2009; Freeman, 2010, 2010). In doing so, organisations seeking to institutionalise ethics should involve all internal stakeholders to mitigate internal power imbalances, which may lead to EI becoming a coercive control system (Weaver, Treviño and Cochran, 2017) or coercive formalisation rather than enabling (Adler and Borys, 1996). Such an orientation of EI may lead to stakeholders feeling indoctrinated and unwilling to support the organisation's goals. Furthermore, a coercive approach has the potential to *"diminish rather enhance the individual's ability to manage ethical ambiguity"* (Stansbury and Barry, 2007, pp. 249, 253). This study seeks to advance understanding of how to involve stakeholders from all levels of hierarchy and departments in institutionalising ethics, so as to develop a multilateral understanding of the various needs and objectives, and to create a shared vision to institutionalise ethics so that it is embedded throughout the organisation and its operations.

A number of studies have investigated EI in the hospitality industry (e.g., Whitney, 1990; Upchurch, 1998; Stevens, 2001; Minett, Yaman and Denizci, 2009; Paek and Chathoth, 2013; Brownell, 2017). To date, these studies have typically focused on merely one aspect of the phenomenon or examined it from a particular perspective, such as the effect of ethical practices on employee performance (Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010; Marta *et al.*, 2013; Torlak *et al.*, 2014), or on economic performance (Nakano, 1999; Roberts and Dietrich, 1999; Wang, 2014; Tavitiyaman *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, researchers have examined how different factors affect EI: leadership style (Carlson and Perrewé, 1995; Minett, Yaman and Denizci, 2009; Qin *et al.*, 2014), decisionmaking processes (Upchurch, 1998; Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Singhapakdi, Sirgy and Lee, 2010). As a result, the existing literature in this area provides only a partial understanding of the phenomenon, which may leave several questions unanswered. This present study seeks to capture and integrate internal stakeholders' perspectives on the meaning and impact of ethics. The

multiple occasions for ethical misconduct in the context of hospitality industry (i.e., amongst employees, managers, guests, supply chain), combined with the damage such misconduct can cause (i.e., financial, reputational, morale), compel businesses to place ethics at the core of their strategies. To further develop knowledge on ethics in the hospitality industry, it is proposed to shift to a more comprehensive approach, taking into account the perspectives of key internal stakeholders. This approach aims to provide a more holistic picture and understanding of how and to what extent un/ethical behaviour affects key actors and the firm.

2.3 Power relations in business management and the role of ethics

When taking an internal stakeholder approach to examining the meanings and impacts of EI, the notion of power relations becomes central. Sociologist Michael Mann (2012, p. 6) defines **power** as *“the ability to pursue and attain goals through the mastery of one’s environment”*, and **social power** *“restricts its meaning to the mastery exercised over other people”*, to which Parsons (1960, pp. 199–225) adds the collective aspect of power, through which cooperation can enhance shared power over others. Foucault (1982, p. 788) defines the **exercise of power** as *“not simply a relationship between partners, individual or collective [but as] a way in which certain actions modify others”*. He stresses the importance of focusing on how power is exerted—that is, the means by which power is exerted—so that it does not become a form of domination or exploitation that subsequently leads to the objectification of human beings (Foucault, 1982, pp. 777–781), which can amount to a reduction to a means to an end. Moreover, the role of power can have a different meaning for each person, especially in the hospitality realm, where diversity is ubiquitous due to demographic change and international labour mobility (Manoharan and Singal, 2017). Awareness of the impact of power relations is crucial in the hospitality industry, which is characterised by its inherent seasonality. The pressures of peak season and daily rush hours can limit the ability of decisionmakers to recognise the ethical dimension of a decision (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012, p. 324). Hence the importance of scrutinising the notion of power relations in business to shed light on the different typologies of power relations and on how ethics fits in to ensure that power exertion is a contribution to the business and its stakeholders, rather than an impediment to their performance and behaviour.

Within organisations, various factors shape the nature of power relations, such as the degree of external control of the organisation, the personal needs of internal stakeholders, organisational culture and configuration (Mintzberg, 1979, pp. 288–297). Organisational configurations refer to an organisation's design in terms of internal relationship patterns or hierarchies (i.e., horizontal, vertical, divisional, functional) (Thompson, 1967, pp. 39–44, 57–65, 94) and locus of decisionmaking (i.e., centralised or decentralised) (Dwyer, Teal and Kemp, 1998, pp. 31–32). Each configuration has a different power structure. Organisations with a vertical structure have several clearly defined hierarchical levels, whilst organisations with a horizontal (flat) structure typically have fewer hierarchical levels. In both structures, decisionmaking may be centralised at the higher level of hierarchy or decentralised to the lower levels (Mintzberg, 1979, pp. 181–213). Whatever the configuration, organisations need to recognise and examine how power exertion affects others—be it performance (of employee or the organisation), morale, (ethical) behaviour, job satisfaction or loyalty. It is important to note that more power comes with more authority and responsibility. When decisionmaking is controlled by the upper levels of hierarchy (decentralised), the lower levels are left with less decisionmaking autonomy and their responsibility is limited to obeying their superordinates in the pursuit of the organisational goal (Velasquez, 1982, p. 304). Such a configuration bears similarities to deontology, where one acts in a certain way out of a sense of—an argument for which deontology advocates have been criticised. Decisionmaking power, which is related to hierarchical differences also needs to be considered to avoid abuse of power (Woods *et al.*, 2013).

The hospitality is often stereotypically viewed as a low-skill industry (Burns, 1997; Baum, 2002, 2008; Sisson and Adams, 2013; Mannaa and Abou-Shouk, 2020; Lugosi and Ndiuini, 2022). Whilst it may be argued that many positions in the hospitality industry do not require extensive formal qualifications or hard skills (Lugosi and Ndiuini, 2022), this does not justify the hospitality industry being regarded as a low-skill industry. Extensive research stresses the indispensable role of soft skills in the hospitality industry (Sisson and Adams, 2013), such as emotional intelligence (Hochschild, 2012; Seeler, 2019), cultural intelligence (Fakhreldin, 2011; Rohmetra and Arora, 2012), physical skills (Lugosi and Ndiuini, 2022), communication skills, intra- and interpersonal skills (Čuić Tanković, Kapeš and Kraljić, 2021, p. 170). Despite the significance of these skills for working in a physically and emotionally demanding

industry such as hospitality, they are often underestimated (Burns, 1997; Lundberg and Mossberg, 2008).

Moreover, numerous studies point to severe shortages of skilled labour in the hospitality and tourism industries (e.g., Cameron, Jenkins and Marson, 2018; Sheehan, Grant and Garavan, 2018; Elshaer and Marzouk, 2019; Goh and Okumus, 2020; Tiwasing, 2021; Papadopoulos and Ioannou, 2022). Skills shortages are result of a lack of curricular preparation (English, Maton and Walker, 2007; Hearn, Devine and Baum, 2007; Lolli, 2013), restricted freedom of movement as a result of Brexit (Cameron, Jenkins and Marson, 2018; Tiwasing, 2021), low salaries and precarious working conditions (Ibrahim, 2018; Shereni, 2020; Papadopoulos and Ioannou, 2022). Such misleading amalgam of hard and soft skills may exacerbate the power asymmetry amongst internal stakeholder groups. It is, therefore, imperative to include multiple perspectives, that can help decisionmakers in their approach to EI to develop a mutual organisational understanding where subordinates understand the implications of their superordinates decisionmaking authority and associated responsibilities. Similarly, superordinates may develop an understanding of their positions of power and the implications associated with them. Gleckman and Dodds (2019, p. 1) discuss the importance of stakeholderism at the macro level, where stakeholders—organisations and their external stakeholder groups—engage in *“helping governments and intergovernmental bodies make better decisions, and helping them to deliver these decisions in partnerships amongst various stakeholders”*. At the organisational level (micro level), engaging internal stakeholders and building such relationships is equally important to support organisations in their approaches to institutionalising ethics.

The power differential is not limited to differences in hierarchical position. Within the same level of hierarchy, power may differ based on level of experience or knowledge one has. Foucault (1977, 1978, 1982), in his work on the concept of knowledge, argued that knowledge is intertwined with forms of power and domination (Gutting, 2007, p. 95). When the international dimension, an inherent characteristic of the hospitality sector, is included, meanings and expectations about power can differ substantially. Hofstede’s work (e.g., 2001, 2011; 2010) discusses the concept of power in detail from an intercultural perspective. He identifies several dimensions that play a role in an international setting, of which the dimension of power distance—defined as

the “*extent to which the less powerful member of organizations and institutions [...] accept and expect that power is distributed unequally*” (Hofstede, 2011, p. 9)—which shapes organisational structures (vertical versus horizontal structure and centralised versus decentralised decisionmaking authority). In a multicultural context, team members are likely to have different expectations of their sub- and superordinates. Though the doctrine of cultural relativism has been criticised for its inability to judge the rightness or wrongness of an act (McDonald, 2010, p. 454), it, nonetheless, may help organisations and their stakeholders understand the underlying considerations of an act. Understanding the different meanings and expectations associated with power relations in an intercultural context may also contribute to decisionmakers in their approaches to institutionalising ethics.

Aside from internal power inequality, power inequalities also exist between organisations and their external stakeholders (Harrison, 2003, p. 144). Though not central to this study, it is, nonetheless, of interest to be aware of external forces, as they can affect the internal scene of an organisation. Governments are in a power position as they can enact laws and regulations to control corporate activity. For instance, measures imposed by governments on the hospitality industry in the context of the coronavirus pandemic have forced organisations to temporarily close (Aharon *et al.*, 2021; Canhoto and Wei, 2021). State laws and regulations provide the legal framework within which organisations must conduct their business. It is then up to organisations to decide whether they will conduct their business solely in accordance with government regulations or, within their means, to addressing a societal issue, such as ‘green hotels’ contributing to environmental protection (Tan, Aziz and Ngah, 2020), or hotels supporting healthcare systems during the coronavirus pandemic by making their rooms available to relieve overcrowded hospitals (Booth, 2021). Changes in laws and regulations also reflect the changing needs of society (Roach Anleu, 2000), as seen in the shifts towards an inclusive workplace (Vongvisitsin and Wong, 2021; Luu, 2022) and equal opportunities (Purcell, 1993; Burrell *et al.*, 1997). However, the power position of an organisation can increase as its economic contribution increases, especially in the case of multinational companies located in developing economies (Fagre and Wells, Jr., 1983).

Likewise, intergovernmental organisations influence the way business is done. For instance, the United Nations (UN) and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)

are working towards the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve a better and sustainable future for all (United Nations, no date; WTTC, no date). Such initiatives shape the way business is conducted, and the way business leaders consider such matters is relevant in the realm of ethics. When organisations adopt a tick-box approach to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, they may fail to make a meaningful contribution to sustainable development and become a mere windowdressing tactics (e.g., pinkwashing, greenwashing) (Newell and Frynas, 2007; Hartal, 2022). Simultaneously, consumers have become better informed and more critical of such aberrations, which raises the bar for organisations (Rahman, Park and Chi, 2015).

Power relations also exist between business partners and the organisation. Porter (1998) has developed a five forces model that shows how each stakeholder group (i.e., suppliers, buyers, substitutes, and potential entrants) within an industry has bargaining power over the incumbents. It is essential to explore approaches to how organisations manage this bargaining power in order to build ethical and sustainable relationships. An important stakeholder group in Porter's framework is that of consumers. Existing guests have a buying power, or leverage, as organisations rely on guests to generate revenue. This phenomenon has been amplified by the emergence of third-party online booking platforms such as Booking.com and Travelocity.com, forcing organisations to adapt their strategies. This is also reflected in the loyalty scheme strategies that organisations have developed to attract and retain their customer base (Back, 2005; McMahon and Harvey, 2007).

In sum, the concept of power plays an important role in business and business ethics. This review has discussed (1) the different loci of power (internal versus external forces and decentralised versus centralised decisionmaking power) and how these can shape business operations; (2) the nature of power relationships that need to be considered to ensure that they are exercised in a contributing manner rather than a dominating manner, especially in a (3) culturally diverse environment where power is perceived and expected differently. Thus, consideration of the notion of power relations is paramount when investigating how organisations institutionalise ethics and how it affects the organisation's internal stakeholders in order to develop a multilateral understanding of these power relations and avoid falling into Thrasymachus' "*claim*

that morality is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger party” (Plato, 1993, p. 18).

2.4 Three facets of ‘*understanding*’ as ethical behaviour

In attempting to gain understanding of multiple perspectives, it is important to investigate the meanings of the term *understanding*, its nuances, and the relationship between *understanding* and ethical behaviour. This section reviews the literature on three aspects of understanding: 1) feeling understanding for the other, 2) understanding the other’s perspective, and 3) making oneself understood. Feeling understanding for the other and understanding what the other is trying to convey has to do with empathy, which Ickes (1993, p. 588) defines as “*the ability to [...] infer the specific content of another person’s thoughts and feelings*”. In his definition, Ickes highlights two aspects of empathy; making inferences about another’s thoughts and about another’s feelings. The latter is otherwise known as affective empathy (Davis, 1983; Aaltola, 2014; Decety and Cowell, 2014) and the former as cognitive empathy (Davis, 1983; Cox *et al.*, 2012; van Berkhout and Malouff, 2016). Although still relatively scarce, research on empathy in hospitality and tourism industries is generally framed in employee-guest interactions rather than amongst internal stakeholders themselves. Nevertheless, findings generally show that empathy has an impact on prosocial behaviour, service quality, and customer satisfaction (Costa, Glinia and Drakou, 2004; Barlow and Maul, 2012; Tucker, 2016; Umasuthan, Park and Ryu, 2017; Sharifi-Tehrani *et al.*, 2019; Zamanillo Tamborrel and Cheer, 2019).

2.4.1 Affective empathy: feeling understanding for the other

Studies in neuroscience and psychology have indicated that affective empathy is an essential component in the development of prosocial behaviours and the formation of moral judgments (Thompson and Hoffman, 1980; Roberts and Strayer, 1996; Blair and Blair, 2009). The ability to recognise the feelings of others resonates with Adam Smith’s virtue of sympathy, which he described, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, as an innate interest in the fortune of others:

“How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their

happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it except the pleasure of seeing it. Of this kind is pity or compassion, the emotion which we feel for the misery of others, when we either see it, or are made to conceive it in a very lively manner. That often we often derive sorrow from the sorrow of others, [...] is by no means confined to the virtuous humane, though they perhaps may feel it with the most exquisite sensibility. The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it” (Smith, 2010, p. 9 [1759]).

Similarly, Hume, in his *Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), discussed sympathy as a source of morality:

“No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own. (Hume, 2009, p. 490 [1739]).

Affective empathy differs from emotional contagion and over-identification, in that the person empathising with another person’s feelings is able to recognise that these feelings are located in the other and not in themselves. In contrast, with emotional contagion and over-identification, the distinction between another’s feelings and one’s own becomes less clear (Bachman *et al.*, 2000; Cox, Mitcheva and Cole, 2021). The hospitality industry, characterised by long working hours, seasonal peaks, and interpersonal interaction, is known to be an emotionally demanding work environment, whilst at the same time “service with a smile” is usually expected (Hwa *et al.*, 2010; Hochschild, 2012). This requires frontline employees to display positive emotions even when they are experiencing negative or stressful feelings. This is related to emotional intelligence, more specifically the ability to manage others’ emotions as well as their own (Caruso and Salovey, 2004, pp. x–xi). Organisations seeking to institutionalise ethics, thus, need to recognise the implications of an emotionally demanding work environment, value, and support team members in their efforts to promote ethical behaviour and create an ethical work climate.

2.4.2 Cognitive empathy: understanding the perspective of the other

In contrast to affective empathy, cognitive empathy coincides with recognising the internal mental state, or the perspective, of the other rather than their feelings (Blair, 2008, p. 159; Aaltola, 2014, p. 76). Stakeholders have different assumptions, beliefs, and experiences about a particular issue, so the same issue is likely to be interpreted differently (Simcic Brønn and Brønn, 2003). In the process of institutionalising ethics, it is imperative to include the perspectives of internal stakeholders—in terms of needs, expectations, or capabilities—in order to achieve a mutual understanding of the different interpretations of ethics, so that ethics is institutionalised in a way that aligns the needs and expectations of the organisation and those of internal stakeholders. As Simcic Brønn and Brønn (2003) explain, it is important for the organisation to have a comprehensive understanding of stakeholders' perspectives in the course of strategy development. This is not about reaching agreement, but rather about understanding the different interpretations of a complex issue, which is crucial to making progress in developing a strategy. It is also a way of involving stakeholders in the process. This falls within the remit of stakeholder management and is discussed in the following section (see [2.5 Stakeholders and stakeholderism](#)).

Cognitive empathy is a conscious process that involves the deliberate consideration of another's perspective from one's own point of view (Davis, 1980; Cox *et al.*, 2012), which echoes with Adam Smith's concept of imagination:

“By imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them” (Smith, 2010, p. 9 [1759])

Moreover, the conscious and deliberate aspects of cognitive empathy recall the existentialist premise that ethical behaviour involves conscious and reflective choice (Greene, 1952, p. 266). However, Davis (1990, p. 711) contends that empathy cannot be taught but is only fostered through the development of listening skills, self-awareness, respect and tolerance for differences. This echoes Smith's belief that sympathy is an innate character trait that *“is by no means confined to the virtuous humane. [...] The greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it”* (Smith, 2010, p. 9 [1759]). When trying to understand

someone, it seems self-explanatory to be a good listener. Extensive research in the hospitality and tourism context corroborates the importance of listening skills (e.g., Brownell, 1994, 2008, 2009; Mayo and Thomas-Haybert, 2005; Umasuthan, Park and Ryu, 2017). However, there are many forms of listening, from passive or feigned listening to active, empathic, and facilitative listening (Aspinwall-Roberts, 2012, pp. 21–22). When it comes to conveying cognitive empathy, Dumas (2005, p. 783) speaks of facilitative listening, *“a form of communication fostering understanding and nonjudgmental acceptance of thoughts, feelings, and actions”*, which has two goals; 1) to obtain detailed information about the other person’s perspective, 2) with the intention of helping the other. In the hospitality industry, interpersonal interactions frequently occur between people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds (Baum *et al.*, 2007; Pantelidis and Wrobel, 2008). In this context, Sharifi-Tehrani and colleagues (2019) emphasise the influential role of developing ethnocultural empathy—a form of empathy *“directed toward people from racial and ethnic cultural groups who are different from one’s own ethnocultural group”* (Wang *et al.*, 2003, p. 221)—, which is related to cultural intelligence, *“the capability to adapt to new cultural environments”* (Earley, Ang and Tan, 2006).

In *understanding the other*, the role of the organisation is twofold. First, to facilitate mutual understanding at the individual level (Garvin, 1993), by, for instance, fostering a work climate that facilitates cognitive and affective empathy. Second, to gain organisational understanding of stakeholder perspectives, which has similarities with the widely researched construct of absorptive capacity (ACAP) (e.g., Todorova and Durisin, 2007; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008; Fabrizio, 2009; Kostopoulos *et al.*, 2011; Azinuddin *et al.*, 2022; Córcoles Muñoz, Parra Requana and García Villaverde, 2022; Marrucci *et al.*, 2022; Qu *et al.*, 2022), defined by Cohen and Levinthal (1990, p. 128) as an organisation’s *“ability to recognize the value of new information, assimilate it, and apply it to commercial ends”*. However, the focus of this study is not examining approaches to acquiring knowledge for commercial purposes, but rather on examining approaches to acquiring and assimilating knowledge about stakeholder perspectives to inform organisational EI strategies. Extant research on ACAP draws attention to four complementary dimensions that shape an organisation’s ACAP: acquisition, assimilation, transformation, and exploitation. Knowledge acquisition consists of an organisation’s ability to identify and acquire knowledge (Engelman *et al.*, 2017, p. 474).

The speed and intensity of an organisation's efforts to identify and acquire knowledge can determine the quality of organisational learning (Kim, 1997b, 1997a). Assimilation of knowledge refers to the organisation's ability to analyse, interpret, and understand new knowledge, which Szulanski (1996) calls "*internal stickiness*", and is dependent on the learning and interpretive abilities of the organisation and the individual (Dodgson, 1993, p. 384). Transformation refers to the organisation's ability to convert newly acquired knowledge and internalise it with existing knowledge (Fichman and Kemerer, 1999). This capability can lead to new insights and facilitate the identification of opportunities (Zahra and George, 2002). Exploitation denotes the organisation's capability to refine and leverage existing competencies and yield new competencies by integrating new and transformed knowledge into daily operations (Tiemessen *et al.*, 1997). However, ACAP is often studied as a construct for absorbing new knowledge external to the organisation (e.g., Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Tiemessen *et al.*, 1997; Kostopoulos *et al.*, 2011; Sancho-Zamora *et al.*, 2022). This study, however, argues that sources of (new) knowledge are not only exogenous, but that internal stakeholders' perspectives can provide a valuable knowledgebase for organisations when seeking to institutionalise ethics.

2.4.3 Making oneself understood

A construct intricately linked to *understanding the other* and *feeling understood*, is the ability to *making oneself understood or understandable*, which pertains to communication skills. As the focus of this study is on internal stakeholders, this section of the review mainly focuses on internal communication. Several definitions of internal communication can be found in the literature, such as "*social interaction through messages*" (Kalla, 2005, p. 303), "*interaction between an organisation and its employees*" (Dolphin, 2005, p. 171), "*the communications between individuals and/or groups at various levels in different areas of specialisation*" (Frank and Brownell, 1989, pp. 5–6), "*organizations' encouragement of interaction between employees and of the development [...] of employees' awareness of the importance of knowledge exchange and sharing*" (Chen and Cheng, 2012, p. 469). Each definition identifies one specific aspect of internal communication; Dolphin focuses on the interactions between the organisation and its internal stakeholders, Frank and Brownell on the interactions between internal stakeholders, and Chen and Cheng on the role of the organisation in

facilitating interactions between internal stakeholders. Whilst each definition identifies an important aspect of internal communication, they each provide a partial definition of internal communication and, effectively, complement each other.

Studies have demonstrated that internal communication plays an important role in employee satisfaction (Tanković, Bilić and Brajković, 2022) and engagement (Braimah, 2016; Uysal, 2020), to which Downs and Hazen (1977) add that the level of employee satisfaction is dependent on several dimensions, including relationship with supervisor, media quality, and communication climate. The latter dimension is consistent with Chen and Cheng's (2012) definition of internal communication, which focuses on the role of the organisation in fostering communication amongst employees. Effective internal communication has also been associated with improved service recovery processes, where employees receive feedback from guests on service failures and relay it to the appropriate departments or team members to ensure adequate service recovery (Dalgic, Toksöz and Birdir, 2017), which in turn enhances guest satisfaction and loyalty (Komunda and Osarenkhoe, 2012). Verbeke and colleagues (1996) have found that effective internal communication can improve ethical decisionmaking, because people display cognitive empathy when interacting with others and seek to incorporate others' perspectives into their decisionmaking, which stimulates moral judgment and leads to decisions that benefit others. Poor communication, conversely, can give employees the impression that top management or team members are dishonest or have an unclear vision, leading to employee dissatisfaction and distrust (Proctor and Doukakis, 2003). Quirke (2000, p. 10) views internal communication as an opportunity for organisations to create value. Communication is crucial for strategic management, because for strategies to be successfully implemented, employees must first understand the strategy in terms of context, rationale, and implications. This aspect of communication resembles Dolphin's (2005) definition of internal communication, which focuses on the interaction between the organisation and its employees. Quirke (2000, p. 22) further argues that internal communication must enable organisations to access, integrate, share, and extract meaning from information, and transform that information into decisions. This process coincides with that of ACAP (acquisition, assimilation, transformation, and exploitation of knowledge). As Quirke explains,

“Companies are now being forced into the business of understanding, needing to bring meaning, clarity and focus to their own information and to make the complex clear. Communication is about creating and sharing meaning, not simply about sending messages. It is not enough to tell employees that you have a strategy, and not enough for them to be able to repeat the corporate priorities or recite the mission statement” (2000, p. 34)

The many factors underlying differences in perspectives (e.g., needs, expectations, cultural, intergenerational, interpretations), the different abilities to understand the perspectives of others (e.g., innate nature of empathy, ACAP, individual assumptions, organisational learning), the pressures organisations face (e.g., shifting societal demands, globalisation, politico-economic system, crises), and stakeholders (e.g., seasonal peaks, long working hours, cultural and role differences) can make the three aspects of understanding an intricate, yet, vital process for organisations and their stakeholders. Therefore, it is important that organisations become and remain aware of their influential role on the work climate and the influential role of stakeholders.

2.5 Stakeholders and stakeholderism

Business is no longer limited to addressing the needs of the owners or maximising their profits. The success of a firm depends on the extent to which it takes into account its environment (Gazzola, 2018, p. 418). To become or remain competitive, firms nowadays face increasing pressures and uncertainties in developing strategies and decisionmaking processes. External uncontrollable factors such as economic or political instabilities, socio-cultural trends, environmental repercussions, industry trends and issues, or technological advances may affect industries in one way or another (see [2.2.2 Corporate social responsibility \(CSR\)](#) and [2.2.3 Sustainable development](#)). Shifting societal values and demands in relation to equal opportunities and employees rights have led to changes in UK legislation, such as The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations (2017), which require organisations to publish information annually on the pay gap between female and male employees. The Employment Rights Act 1996 (Protection from Detriment in Health and Safety Cases) Order (2021) protects employees from being exposed to health and safety risks

by their employers. Tips and gratuities will be included in the next Employment Bill that prohibits employers from withholding tips (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2021). The increase in employment rates between 1984 and 2015 for women aged 60–64 (from 18% to 41%) and women aged 55–59 (from 49% to 69%) (Department for Work & Pensions, 2015) means that more working women will reach menopausal transition, prompting the UK government to launch New Government Menopause Taskforce to provide improved support and care for this segment of the workforce (Department of Health and Social Care, 2021). These legislations and initiatives contribute to the development of internal stakeholder rights and enable these stakeholders to assume a more central role in the organisation's strategy deployment.

In addition to legal forces, the hospitality labour market has undergone a structural transformation as a result of globalisation (e.g., Baum, 2002; Littlejohn and Watson, 2004; Zampoukos and Ioannides, 2011; French, 2018) and Brexit (e.g., Sumption, 2017; Cameron, Jenkins and Marson, 2018; Filimonau and Mika, 2019; Davenport and Levell, 2022). In addition, whilst the emergence of Industry 4.0 technologies (i.e., Internet of Things, Big Data analytics, cloud computing, cognitive computing) gives firms access to more data and knowledge, which in turn can improve productivity and efficiency, it also gives the public eye (i.e., competitors, customers, influential groups, pressure groups) access to information about firms. Increased transparency requires firms to be honest, fair, and accountable, which can foster trustworthiness with stakeholders (Elia, 2009, p. 145). At the same time, openness also places businesses in a vulnerable position, as information can be distorted, exaggerated, or misinterpreted, jeopardising the firm's reputation, and thus its competitiveness. In addition, consumers have become more sensitive to ethical behaviour (Basgoze and Tektas, 2012; Gazzola, 2018, p. 418). Internally, the adoption of 4.0 technologies can lead to savings in labour costs savings, which are related to improving work processes rather replacing employees with robots (Kuo, Chen and Tseng, 2017). However, it typically incurs high acquisition, installation, and maintenance costs (Ivanov and Webster, 2019). In addition, the introduction of such technologies may cause resistance from employees who feel threatened by the change, resulting in the need for employees to develop new skills (M. Lee *et al.*, 2018) and for employers to invest in training (Schwab, 2016).

The manifold pressures, exerted on hospitality firms, have a considerable impact on the workplace and, by extension, on internal stakeholders. Organisations must, therefore, recognise the vital role of internal stakeholders in addressing these pressures. Concomitantly, organisations must also recognise that these pressures, in addition to those specific to the hospitality industry, may induce unethical behaviour. And in an effort to promote ethical behaviour and relationships, organisations should place internal stakeholders and ethics at the centre of their agendas. Business ethics is about improving the ethical conduct of organisations by, for instance, serving more than just the needs of owners (Kaler, 2002, pp. 93–94) and creating stakeholder value (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 88; Phillips, Freeman and Wicks, 2003, p. 481; Benn, Abratt and O’Leary, 2016, p. 1). The stakeholder concept has gained prominence amongst management researchers and practitioners (Bryson, 2004, p. 22) and has become a commonly used term, resulting in a plethora of definitions. Yet, there is no clear picture of what and who stakeholders are (Stoney and Winstanley, 2001, p. 605). Indeed, there is heterogeneity in their definition, identification, and classification. In this regard, the term stakeholder is considered to be an essentially contested concept that is constantly debated and modified and has no universally accepted definition due to its complexity (Miles, 2017, pp. 26–28).

2.5.1 Definitions of stakeholders

The term stakeholder was coined at the Stanford Research Institute in 1963 as *“those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist”* and included shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers, leaders, and society (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89). Since then, the term stakeholder has been widely used without a universally accepted definition. Miles (2017, p. 23) identified 593 interpretations of 885 definitions that have different purposes in different contexts. Such a discrepancy makes competing interpretations inevitable (Kaler, 2002, p. 91; Phillips, Freeman and Wicks, 2003, p. 480; Friedman and Miles, 2006; Laplume, Sonpar and Litz, 2008; Miles, 2012, p. 96). The lack of consensus in stakeholder definition is related to the nature of their theory; it encompasses different disciplines (e.g., finance, human resources, business ethics, marketing) and contexts (e.g., academics, practitioners, policymakers) and, thereby, has different meanings (Phillips, Freeman and Wicks, 2003, p. 479). Definitions of stakeholders vary and are based on

different attributes such as influence, power, stake, risk, dependence, and responsibility. Stakeholders (are) impact(ed by) the organisation, whether positively or negatively (Sturdivant, 1979, p. 54; Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 89; Frost, 1995, p. 655; Miles, 2017, p. 24); they have the power to influence an organisation's strategy (Eden and Ackermann, 1998; Benn, Abratt and O'Leary, 2016, p. 3); they have a stake or interest in the organisation (Miles, 2017, pp. 31–33); or they depend on the organisation, and the organisation, in turn, depends on them to fulfil their respective goals (Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2008; Miles, 2017, p. 33). Other definitions are ethics-based, where stakeholders are those to whom the organisation has a responsibility (Alkhafaji, 1989, p. 36; Kaler, 2002, p. 94; Fassin, 2012, p. 93; McGrath and Whitty, 2017, p. 727).

Given the different characteristics and dimensions considered in formulating each definition of stakeholder, a single definition that encompasses all of these components would seem unfeasible and futile. Instead, Freeman and colleagues (2010, p. 211) propose a relative approach. *“Rather than seeing the definitional problem as a singular and fixed, admitting of one answer, we instead can see different definitions serving different purposes”*. Since the purpose of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how an organisation's workforce views a phenomenon (EI), rather than viewing the workforce from an employee-employer perspective, which might imply a hierarchical relationship, the focus of this study resides in the 'stake' that each party may have in the organisation, and conversely, the stake that the organisation has in its workforce. Grouping stakeholders according to their function in the organisation may limit a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives. Workforce members may have a specific function in an organisation (e.g., frontline or backline employees, line or staff manager, managerial or nonmanagerial), but it is not only their function that shapes their perspectives. A function-based approach would, therefore, fail to include other aspects that characterise individuals and define them as persons and not just members of the organisation's workforce in a particular function. Furthermore, the stakeholder construct also focuses on the notion of impact, whereby a stakeholder impacts or is impacted by the organisation. This highlights the mutual impact that is important in the context of this study, as this study seeks to gain understanding of how stakeholders

are affected by EI and, in turn, what the organisational implications are for institutionalising ethics.

Furthermore, the stakeholder approach, or stakeholder theory, takes a relational approach rather than a transactional approach to analyse the relationships between individuals in an attempt to create value for all involved with and in the organisation (Bosse, Phillips and Harrison, 2009; Freeman *et al.*, 2010). Thus, attempting to understand employee perspectives would only yield a partial understanding. This study focuses on stakeholders as individuals with more dimensions than just their function within the organisation. It also focuses on the nature of the relationships between the organisation and stakeholders, as well as the relationships between stakeholders within the organisation. The reasons for this choice lie in this study's attempt to gain an understanding of how stakeholders interpret the role of ethics in order to understand potential overlaps in interpretations as well as discrepancies. Such an understanding may support organisations in implementing their EI strategy to develop a mutual understanding and engagement.

2.5.2 Identification of stakeholders

Given such diverse definitions, it is to be expected that identifying an organisation's stakeholders can become a complex undertaking. Depending on the context, identification can vary in scope. A stakeholder can be any group or individual (Freeman, 2010, p. 46), including neighbourhoods, organisations, institutions, entities, humans, non-humans (Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997, p. 855; Miles, 2017, p. 24). Nature can be considered a non-human stakeholder because nature can influence and be influenced by an organisation's activities. Phillips and Reichart (2000) suggest creating a human proxy to represent nature as a stakeholder. The environment is a significant stakeholder in the hospitality industry that can no longer be ignored. It is important to consider the environment as a stakeholder because the hospitality industry is dependent on seasonality. The impact of weather has a major impact on sales and operating costs (Cerović and Horvat, 2013; Franzoni and Pelizzari, 2019). Similarly, resource consumption associated with hospitality activities leaves a large environmental footprint. Huemann and colleagues (2013, pp. 382–383) suggest broadening the temporal and spatial perspectives when identifying stakeholders. Broadening the temporal perspective allows for the inclusion of current, past (i.e., non-

living (Miles, 2017, p. 24)), and future stakeholders (i.e., unborn foetus or future generations (Miles, 2017, p. 24)). Broadening the spatial perspective allows for local, regional, and global stakeholders to be considered.

Stakeholders can impact and be impacted by a variety of actors: an organisation, an association, a business, a corporation, a manager. The nature of the impact can be negative or positive, either for the stakeholder or for the organisation. Stakeholders can contribute by supporting or promoting the organisation. In return, they can harm the organisation. In addition, the influence may affect the strategy, survival, reputation, performance, operations, or future of the organisation. There must be a relationship between the organisation and the stakeholder (Miles, 2017, p. 24), and the nature of this relationship can be formal (Savage *et al.*, 1991) or informal (Murray and Vogel, 1997), in/direct, in/voluntary, internal/external, economic, social, or strategic/moral (Miles, 2017). Stakeholder groups can be described as temporary because their influence and significance are situation- and issue-dependent (Savage *et al.*, 1991, p. 62; Winn, 2001, p. 136). In business context, stakeholder groups are traditionally employees, customers, shareholders, communities, suppliers, media, and regulators. In traditional communities, however, stakeholder groups can be elders, children, neighbours, or enemies (Miles, 2012, p. 291).

2.5.3 Classifications of stakeholders

In line with the diversity of definitions and identifications of stakeholders, their classifications are also disputed due to the different dimensions involved. Stakeholders can be grouped around shared objectives, interests, claims, or rights (Clarkson, 1995, p. 106; Winn, 2001, p. 134). Alternatively, classification can be meritocracy-based, in terms of respective contributions, costs, and risks. Alternatively, a distinction can be made between normative and derivative stakeholders, where normative stakeholders are those to whom the focal organisation has a direct moral obligation to attend to their welfare (e.g., employees, customers, suppliers, local communities); and derivative stakeholders are those who may benefit or harm the organisation but to whom the organisation has no direct moral obligation (e.g., media, competitors, activists) (Phillips, Freeman and Wicks, 2003, pp. 488–489). This categorisation has similarities with that of Clarkson (1995, pp. 106–107), who divides stakeholders into two main groups, namely primary and secondary stakeholders. The former includes those

“without whose continuing participation the corporation cannot survive” (employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders), whilst the latter are *“those who influence or affect, or are influenced or affected by, the corporation, but they are not essential for its survival”* (media, special interest groups). McGrath and Whitty (2017, p. 732) propose a more detailed classification of stakeholders: 1) invested stakeholder; one who has some control over the activity of the organisation; 2) a contributing (primary) stakeholder; one whose participation is necessary to sustain the activity; 3) an observer (secondary) stakeholder; one whose acceptance is necessary to sustain the activity; 4) a tertiary stakeholder; one who benefits from the outcomes of the activity.

Despite the many attempts at classification, Phillips (2003, p. 33) notes that the stakeholder status can vary over time and context, and that it cannot be assumed that all members of a stakeholder group have the same interests, level of involvement or influence. It, therefore, becomes problematic to treat workers as a homogeneous stakeholder group. Furthermore, members of one stakeholder group may have multiple roles, as a worker may also be a local resident (Greenwood, 2001). To address these issues, Winn (2001, p. 156) suggests revising *a priori* stakeholder definitions by incorporating the perspectives of managers and other respondents. This grounded approach to analysing stakeholder objectives, motivations, and relationships to the firm in focus allows for a better understanding of stakeholders and their heterogeneity (Freeman and Reed, 1983, p. 91). In addition to heterogeneity within stakeholder groups, context and situation are also of critical importance to understand. Wolfe and Putler (2002) propose a stakeholder analysis derived from the customer segmentation used in marketing. This approach incites firms to focus on the needs and interests of stakeholders rather than their roles when defining stakeholder groups. The assumption that generic stakeholder groups are homogeneous impedes the understanding of the relationship between organisations and stakeholders. By focusing on stakeholder needs, firms can refine their identification into relatively more homogeneous groups.

Following Freeman and colleagues' (2010, p. 211) approach to stakeholder definition, this study adopts a similar *ad hoc* approach to classifying stakeholder groups to fit its purpose. The only distinction made is between internal and external stakeholders, as the purpose of this study is to understand the perspectives of the organisation's workforce, which means that external stakeholders are excluded. However, internal stakeholders are not classified into different groups, as the purpose

of this study is to assess the different interpretations of a phenomenon that may result from many factors other than the group into which a stakeholder can be classified, such as function or hierarchical level. Such an approach takes into account the heterogeneous perspectives of internal stakeholders (Hejjas, Miller and Scarles, 2019). In sum, the focus of this study is on assessing differences in meanings rather than differences between groups. Furthermore, the intricacies of stakeholder classification, combined with potential bias due to the researcher's assumptions, may hinder the inductive process of developing themes in the analysis.

2.5.4 (Multi)stakeholderism

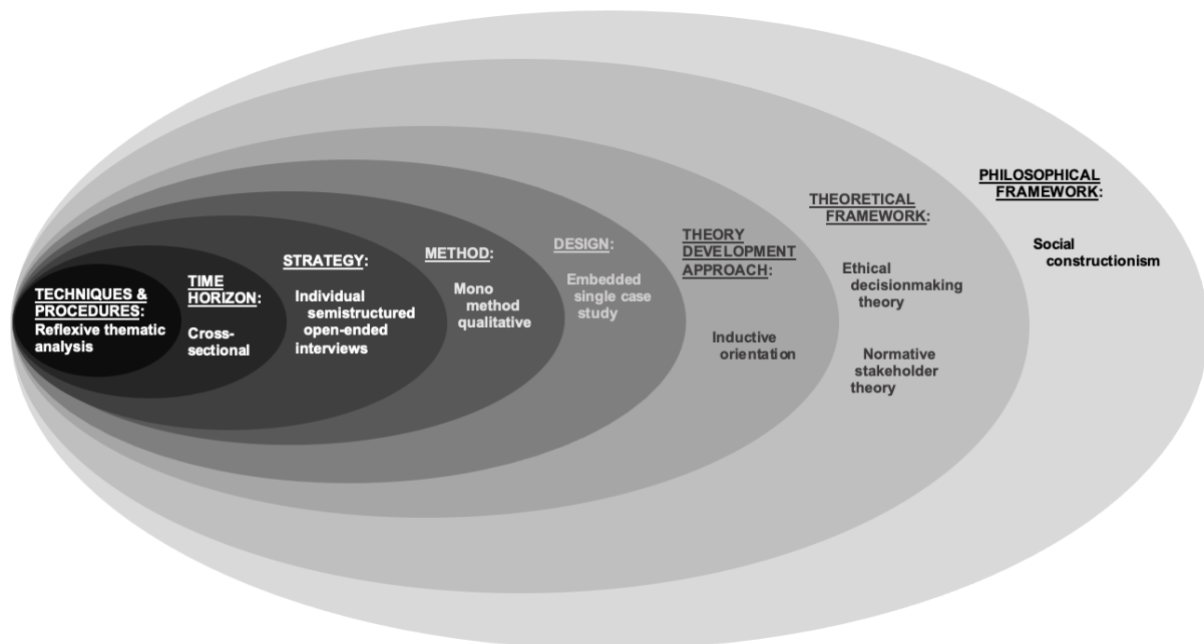
Multistakeholderism or stakeholderism was discussed in a global setting at the General Assembly of UN in 2015, where the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted, with the aim of forming multistakeholder partnerships to share knowledge and resources to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs worldwide (United Nations, 2015, p. 27). In this context, stakeholderism is applied at the macro level, involving, *inter alia*, regional groups, governments, local authorities, nongovernmental organisations, international institutions, or private sector partners (Strandenaes, 2019, p. 16). For the purposes of this study, stakeholderism is applied to the micro level, where stakeholders are internal to the organisation, as explained in the previous section (see [2.5.3 Classifications of stakeholders](#)). Though the contexts may differ, there are similarities in terms of objectives. Stakeholderism is participatory in nature and promotes the meaningful involvement of stakeholders in decisionmaking and implementation (Strandenaes, 2019, p. 17); and, according to Dodds (2019, p. 1), *“involving stakeholders in the decision-making process will result in better-informed decisions [and will make] them more likely to partner with each other [...] at all levels to help deliver on the commitments associated with those agreements”*. The diversity and complexity of principles outlined by ethical theories have led to different interpretations of what constitutes ethical behaviour (see [2.1 Normative ethical theories](#)). Given the complexity, deploying strategies to institutionalise ethics can become an equally complicated process. In this context, taking into account the different perspectives of stakeholders, i.e., those who implement the strategies, can provide organisations with information on the aspects that need to be addressed. In turn, internal stakeholders may be better informed about the purpose of the

organisation (Duque Chopitea, 2019, p. 130). A top-down approach to strategy deployment, on the other hand, can lead to a disconnect between decisionmaking and implementation. Without stakeholder engagement, the strategy and purpose of the organisation may be difficult to understand or become meaningless. In this context, Bäckstrand (2006) argues that involving stakeholders in the development of strategies can lead to stakeholders taking ownership of the outcome, thereby, assuming greater responsibility for the actions.

In the hospitality industry, institutionalising ethics relates is important because unethical behaviour occurs in many places (e.g., amongst employees, between employees and guests, amongst managers), and because the hospitality industry is subject to particular pressures and working conditions. This suggests that organisations should make internal stakeholders central to their decisionmaking in order to gain understanding of their needs and capabilities and to nurture an ethical climate that meets stakeholders' needs.

3

METHODOLOGY



Derived from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p. 164)

Figure 2. Research onion

3.1 Ontology and epistemology

The overall aim of this study is to comprehend the meanings of ethical behaviour and the implications for EI in the hospitality industry by exploring the perspectives of internal stakeholders. To gain such an understanding, the ontological position regarding the nature of the social world of this study must be determined (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010, p. 121). As this study acknowledges differences in perspective between stakeholders, it is assumed that stakeholders construct their own realities of ethical behaviour and EI, based on their respective experiences and interactions with others, and that there are, therefore, multiple realities. This ties in with the subjectivist ontology, which assumes that multiple realities exist and that they are the “*output of human cognitive processes*” (Karataş-Özkan and Murphy, 2010, p. 458). In this case, the realities refer to the perspectives of stakeholders, the social phenomenon concerns

EI in the hospitality industry, and the human cognitive processes refer to the stakeholders' experiences and interactions with other people.

The study is conducted through a social constructionist lens. Though social constructivism and social constructionism are sometimes used interchangeably (Charmaz, 2006; Andrews, 2012), the former has an individual focus whilst the latter has a social focus. Strict social constructivists argue that the construction of reality is an internal process (Piaget and Inhelder, 1969) and is developed in the individual mind (von Glaserfeld, 1993). Social constructionists, on the other hand, argue that reality is also a product of social processes and interactions (Gergen, 2001). Social constructionists “*view reality as multiple and actively look for multiple perspectives*” (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018, p. 37). They argue that reality is independent of knowledge but is constructed and a product of struggles, processes, and daily interactions between social actors (Burr, 2003a, p. 3; Bourdieu, 2004, p. 88; Karataş-Özkan and Murphy, 2010, p. 458; Weinberg, 2014, p. 5). Realities are, thus, shaped by individual experiences and contexts (Andrews, 2012; Misra and Prakash, 2012). Scott theorises organisations as a product of social reality constructed through human interaction, relational systems, and routines (in Foote and Ruona, 2008, p. 298).

Furthermore, social constructionists argue that we construct our reality based on our cultural and historical backgrounds, which means that our understanding of reality is contextual. This is in line with the notions of ethical decisionmaking and ethical blindness, which are context-bound (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012, p. 325). Multiperspectivity aims to highlight differences in meaning- and sense-making. This makes the social constructionist paradigm an appropriate paradigm for this study. By attempting to analyse the perspectives of internal stakeholders to gain a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of EI and its impact on stakeholders, this study is consistent with the social constructionists' concern to make sense of subjective worldviews that are influenced by the social contexts in which we find ourselves (Berger and Luckmann, 1991, p. 30). As Mannheim states, a systematic analysis of as many different perspectives as possible helps in the search for “*any correct understanding of human events*” (quoted in Berger and Luckmann, 1991, p. 22). The multiperspectival element of this research, thus, assumes that there are multiple realities, which connects to the subjectivist ontology. Epistemologically, the social

constructionist lens allows for the presentation of a rich picture from multiple perspectives in order to gain a consolidated understanding of the phenomenon.

3.2 Theoretical framework

In an attempt to capture and connect the key variables of this inquiry, this study combines two disciplines: ethical decisionmaking theory and normative stakeholder theory. Ethical decisionmaking theory provides the framework for investigating EI and how leaders make ethical decisions (Ferrell and Gresham, 1985; Obioma Ejimabo, 2015; Schwartz and Kusyk, 2017). Stakeholder theory advocates that firms have a responsibility to incorporate stakeholder needs into their decisionmaking and to reconcile conflicts of interest between the firm and stakeholder groups (Carroll, 1996, p. 23). Therefore, stakeholder theory is considered an appropriate framework to address the internal stakeholder aspect of this study. Furthermore, stakeholder theory distinguishes between two approaches; whilst the normative stakeholder theory focuses on ethical and moral standards, the instrumental stakeholder approach focuses on stakeholders as a means to improve business performance (Berman *et al.*, 1999; Berrone, Surroca and Tribó, 2007). Since this study explores the meanings of ethical behaviour and implications for EI, rather than how ethics can be institutionalised as a means to improve business performance, this study is framed within the normative stakeholder theory and excludes the instrumental stakeholder theory.

3.3 Research design

In this research, an **embedded single case study approach** was adopted to scrutinise the meanings of ethical behaviour at the level within and between actors and to investigate the organisational implications for the institutionalisation of ethics. As Yin (1989, p. 15) explains, a case study is *“an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”*. In this study, the contemporary phenomenon under investigation is the institutionalisation of business ethics. Though ethics is an ancient discipline that originated in religious beliefs, business ethics is considered a modern phenomenon that emerged following numerous corporate scandals (e.g., Enron, Vivendi, Ahold) (Lewis, 1985; De George,

1987; Fombrun and Foss, 2004; Clegg, Kornberger and Rhodes, 2007). Unlike experiments, phenomena in case studies are maintained within their specific context, which allows for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon and the organisational processes in which the phenomenon is embedded, as well as of the context of the case (Eisenhardt, 1989; Baxter and Jack, 2008; Brady and Collier, 2010; Yin, 2018). This is particularly relevant when studying ethical issues, as these are often context-bound (Treviño, 1986).

Although case study findings neither test theory nor provide a basis for generalisation to a population (i.e., *statistical generalisation* (Kennedy, 1979; de Vaus, 2001, p. 237)), they offer insights that are transferable to similar contexts (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 316), which in turn helps to expand and generalise theories (i.e., *analytic generalisation* (Yin, 1994, p. 10; Kothari, 2004, p. 115)). The strength of case study research resides in its ability to document the effects of a phenomenon (i.e., EI) and the underlying reasons for those effects by analysing the relationships between the phenomenon and its effects (Edgington, 1967). When it comes to ethical issues, Falkenberg (2010) discusses the concept of the ripple effect. A decision made at one level of the organisation has an impact on stakeholders and other levels of the organisation. Case studies, therefore, make it possible to examine and identify relationships between decisions and their repercussions across the organisation and stakeholders.

As the overall aim of this research is to comprehend the meanings of ethical behaviour and the implications for EI by exploring the perspectives of internal stakeholders, this case study research adopted a social constructionist paradigm, which acknowledges the existence of multiple realities and argues that “*what exists is what we perceive to exist*” (Burr, 2006, p. 2). Employing a multiperspective approach allowed for the discovery of dis/similarities amongst stakeholders and the understanding of the phenomenon from more than but one standpoint. As Yin (2018) points out, a case study that examines a phenomenon from merely one perspective fails to gather all relevant evidence and leads to a one-sided case. For a case study to be exemplary, it must seek multiple perspectives. The following three research subquestions were derived from the overall objective:

- 1) “What meanings do internal stakeholders attribute to ethical behaviour?”;
- 2) “What meanings do internal stakeholders attribute to EI?”, and;

- 3) “What are the implications for social enterprise hotel organisations that seek to institutionalise ethics?”

To address the subquestions, the case study approach is appropriate for several reasons (see [Table 2. Rationale for case study approach](#)). Firstly, case studies are preferred to address “*how*” or “*why*” questions that are related to a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context (Yin, 1994, p. 1, 2018, p. 347; Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler, 2011, p. 256). Secondly, case studies maintain phenomena in their context (Eisenhardt, 1989; Dubois and Gadde, 2002; Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2010), which is central to business ethics research as ethical issues are often context-bound (Falkenberg, 2010). Thirdly, case study research is particularly suitable for obtaining multiple perspectives on a phenomenon (Cooper and Schindler, 2006, p. 217). In fact, integrating multiple perspectives is a prerequisite for producing an exemplary case study (Yin, 2018). Fourthly, in line with the social constructionist theory, which places emphasis on the interaction between people to understand the nature of knowledge (Andrews, 2012, p. 44), case studies are concerned with the analysis of a phenomenon and its interrelationships within a particular context (Dubois and Gadde, 2002). In addition, case study research seeks to identify individual factors and analyse them in relation to other individuals (Odum and Jocher, 1929; Kothari, 2004).

[Table 2. Rationale for case study approach](#)

Case studies...	This study...
investigate contemporary phenomena	investigates the contemporary phenomenon of EI
maintain phenomena within their real-life contexts	looks into ethical issues, which are often context-bound
document effects of a phenomenon and their underlying reasons	seeks to understand effects and underlying reasons of EI on stakeholder job satisfaction levels and ethical behaviour
integrate multiple perspectives	integrates the multiple perspectives of internal stakeholders

3.4 Sampling

Whilst large-scale studies usually perform random sampling (*probability sampling* (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016b, p. 275)) to avoid selection bias and ensure a representative sample of the target population (Creswell, 2009, p. 155; Henry,

2009, p. 78; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016a, p. 288), “*sampling for case study research is about appropriateness, purpose, and access to good information rather than representative and random/probability sampling*” (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2010, p. 839). As case study findings focus on analytic generalisation rather than statistical generalisation, sample selection must follow **purposeful selection procedures** (*non-probability sampling* (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016b, p. 275)); the cases selected must be information-rich and contribute towards addressing the research questions (Gerring, 2008, p. 645; Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2010, p. 836; Emmel, 2014, p. 33), and are, thus, strongly determined by the nature of the cases. Cases need to provide access to valuable and in-depth information to enable a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, in this case the effects of EI from the perspectives of internal stakeholders. In single case studies, a probability sampling method cannot guarantee that such information will be provided. Moreover, information-rich cases enhance the credibility, richness, and depth of information (Patton, 2002, p. 241; Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2010, p. 838).

For confidentiality reasons, the case and participants remain anonymous. The case was selected based on its business model. This hotel, run as a social enterprise, was originally a non-governmental organisation (NGO) dedicated to supporting the local economy and education. In order to generate sustainable funds and employment opportunities, the cofounders decided to create hotels. The organisation also provides hospitality training to member of the local community who have been long-term unemployed to improve their career opportunities. Based on its profit for non-profit business model, it is assumed that ethical behaviour is a core element of the business. On these grounds, the chosen organisation fulfils all the criteria outlined in [Table 3. Case selection criteria](#) and is considered as an exemplary study case.

[Table 3. Case selection criteria](#)

Units of analysis	Characteristics	Rationales
Core business	Hospitality organisation	Representative of the industry defined in the research objectives
Organisation philosophy	Explicit ethical strategic focus	Exemplary case
Individual participants	- Nonmanagerial employees - Middle managers - Executive managers	Representatives of the stakeholder groups as this is a multiperspective research

3.5 Participants

Data were collected from nine members of the focal organisation's workforce representing three organisational hierarchy levels—three nonmanagerial employees of which two have completed the hospitality training programme offered by the organisation as part of its social purpose; four middle managers; and two executive managers—from front- and backline departments. *Table 4. Overview of participants* provides an outline of the participants' profiles. In view of preserving anonymity, names were pseudonymised and descriptions were kept to a minimum to mitigate any risk of compromising anonymity.

Table 4. Overview of participants

Pseudonym	Code	Hierarchical level	Department	Former trainee
Amelia	BNM1	Nonmanagerial	Backline	Yes
Ike	FNM2	Nonmanagerial	Frontline	Yes
Izabel	BNM3	Nonmanagerial	Backline	No
Adriana	BMM1	Middle management	Backline	No
Luca	FMM2	Middle management	Frontline	No
Karolina	BMM3	Middle management	Backline	No
Joana	FMM4	Middle management	Frontline	No
Jane	BEM1	Executive management	Backline	No
Elena	FEM2	Executive management	Frontline	No

3.6 Data saturation, information power

This study adopted a reflexive thematic analysis approach to explore internal stakeholders' interpretations of ethical behaviour and organisational implications for institutionalising ethics. As an exploratory qualitative study, rather than seeking to yield generalisable findings, the objective was gaining in-depth understanding of ethical behaviour and EI from internal stakeholders' perspectives. In qualitative research, sample size is usually purposefully determined based on research objectives and should provide rich information for in-depth understanding (Staller, 2021, p. 7). Thus, a small, purposeful sample of participants selected for relevance is appropriate, with the validity and adequacy of findings resting on the richness of information obtained rather than sample size representativeness (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006, p. 492). In addition, in reflexive thematic analysis, the iterative process of generating codes (Saldaña, 2021a), defining and refining themes (Braun and Clarke, 2022), *“requires small sample sizes so that all the emerging material can be kept in the researcher's*

mind as a totality under investigation at all stages of the research” (Crouch and McKenzie, 2006, p. 495).

Data saturation—the point at which no new themes are yielded from the dataset (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006, p. 59)—is commonly used to justify sample size (Francis *et al.*, 2010; Mason, 2010). Whilst Boddy (2016, p. 431) notes that saturation may be suitable for positivist thematic analysis which prioritises consensus and reliability, Braun and Clarke (2019) argue it is incompatible with reflexive thematic analysis which values situated, subjective meaning-making, since saturation assumes stable pre-existing themes, whilst in reflexive thematic analysis, meaning is actively constructed through continual reinterpretation. As Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016, p. 1) argue, information power is a more adequate guide for sample size in qualitative studies, indicating that the more information relevant to the study a sample holds, the fewer participants are needed.

With no new insights constructed from the final transcript, nine information-rich in-depth semistructured interviews with participants representing diverse demographics and organisational roles generated sufficiently rich and varied insights for an in-depth understanding of internal stakeholders’ interpretations of ethical behaviour and implications for institutionalising ethics.

3.7 Data collection

In view of the focal organisation’s choice to remain anonymous, this study employed a single data collection method and excluded secondary data to minimise the risk of breaching anonymity.

3.7.1 Individual semistructured open-ended interviews

Advancing knowledge in the field of (organisational) ethical behaviour requires researchers to simultaneously capture the complexity of the (multi)perspectival and behavioural aspects of individuals and the organisational context in which they occur. The intricacy of a multiperspective approach to studying complex phenomena such as EI lies in the intertwinedness of each respondent’s ethical perspective, their behaviour, and the context within which the behaviour occurs. The use of more rigorous

quantitative methods may oversimplify the situation and fail to capture these complex contexts (Liedtka, 1992, p. 163).

For the data analysis at the person level, Denzin (1978, p. 296) distinguishes three levels of analysis, namely aggregate analysis, interactive analysis, and the collectivity. In aggregate analysis, the focus is on the individual without making connections to other participants or the social setting. In interactive analysis, the subunit of analysis is no longer at the level of the individual but at the level of the group, focusing on (inter)relationships. At the third level, collectivity, the subunit of analysis is the organisation, by synthesising the findings of the aggregate and interactive analyses and contextualising them within the organisation. This approach of data analysis is in line with the embedded aspect of this case study, where the subunits of analysis are intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organisation. Similarly, Zartler (2010), in her multiple perspective research, suggests a stepwise process of data analysis (see [Table 5. Subunits of analysis vs. levels of analysis](#)).

Table 5. Subunits of analysis vs. levels of analysis

Single embedded case study subunits of analysis	Levels of person analysis (Denzin, 1978, p. 296)	Multiple perspective research (Zartler, 2010, pp. 178–179)
Individual (intrapersonal)	Aggregate analysis	Individual level
Group/relational (interpersonal)	Interactive analysis	Group or dyadic level
Organisational	The collectivity	Family level

As the focal case opted to remain anonymous, this study relied exclusively on primary data collected in individual semistructured open-ended interviews. Though secondary data (i.e., guest reviews, financial and non-financial reports) are available in the public domain, preserving the anonymity of the organisation was of paramount importance, and it was, therefore, decided not to use secondary data to minimise any risk of a breach of anonymity. Participant observation was only used during the data collection to identify behavioural cues that indicated that the participant was having difficulty understanding the questions or was uncomfortable. However, participant observation was not used in the data analysis phase because the interviews were conducted online, which made it more difficult to fully read body language than if the interviews had been conducted in person. For these reasons, it was decided to rely solely on the interviews as a data collection method.

Individual semistructured open-ended interviews are suitable for several reasons (see

Table 6. Rationale for individual semistructured open-ended interviews). Firstly, the open-ended feature of interviews allowed for exploration of the different meanings (i.e., intelligibility versus value, manifest versus latent) that participants ascribed to EI. In contrast to closed-ended questionnaires, open-ended interviews gave participants the time and space to explain their answers in detail, which shed light on their understanding of EI, its role, and meaning. In addition, the interviews allowed the researcher to observe participants' behavioural responses. Secondly, the interviews offered participants the opportunity to reflect on their responses, facilitating the articulation of the reasoning and thought processes underlying their behaviour. Thirdly, attempting to understand participants' behaviour required not only understanding participants' worldviews but also exploring the organisational context in which these behaviours took place. In this respect, the interviews offered participants the opportunity to provide contextualised explanations and examples to illustrate the influence of context on a behaviour. Fourthly, the organic nature of semistructured interviews had a twofold effect. On the one hand, it allowed the researcher to adapt to individual needs of the participants (i.e., provide tailored explanations of the questions/topics, adjust to participants' discomfort with participating in a study). On the other hand, it allowed for follow-up questions when further clarification was required. Fifthly, individual interviews were preferred over focus groups or joint interviews, as individual interviews allowed participants to present their views uninfluenced by others. In addition, individual interviews generally create a more confidential and anonymous atmosphere than focus groups and joint interviews. This was particularly relevant when touching upon sensitive topics (Zartler, 2010, pp. 177, 180). Lastly, interviews honoured the authenticity of the participant's voice, which was crucial for understanding multiple perspectives within a social constructionist paradigm.

Table 6. Rationale for individual semistructured open-ended interviews

Features	Properties	Relevance
Open-ended	Participants can provide in-depth answers	Explore the various meanings attributed to EI
	Participants can give reflective answers	Understanding reasons and thinking processes underlying participant's behaviour

	Participants can elaborate with contextualised examples	Elucidates the influence of context on a behaviour.
	Honours authenticity of participant's voice	In line with the social constructionist paradigm.
Individual	Allows observation of participant's behavioural responses	Enables adjustment of question wording and researcher's behaviour.
	Responses are not influenced by other participants (i.e., focus groups)	Crucial when seeking to understand multiple perspectives.
	Provides confidential environment	Relevant when touching upon sensitive topics.
Semistructured	Organic nature of interviews allows to divert from main interview questions	Enables researcher to adapt to participant's individual needs. Possibility for follow-up questions when further clarification is needed.

A semistructured open-ended interview was designed with the aim of comparing interviewees' responses while capturing their unique experiences (Barlow, 2010, p. 496). Interviews consisted of fifteen questions revolving around job satisfaction, ethical behaviour, the relationship between EI and job satisfaction, and the relationship between EI and ethical behaviour (see [Appendix B. Semistructured open-ended interview questions](#)). All respondents were asked the same questions in the same sequence. To minimise the risk of influencing responses, explanation of the questions was kept at a minimum. Explanations with examples in a different context (i.e., outside the workplace and not in the hospitality industry) were only given if requested by the participants. If answers remained unclear, follow-up questions were asked to ensure that the interviewer understood participants' logic and thought process.

Prior to the interview, participants were given an information sheet and consent form with background information about the research. In accordance with the University Research Ethics Committee's requirements, participants were asked to sign and return the consent form (see [Appendix C. Participant information sheet](#)). Interviews were conducted with two executive managers, four middle managers, and three nonmanagerial employees to gather information about business ethics practices and to assess their perceptions and understanding of:

- the meanings of ethical behaviour;
- the meanings of EI;
- how the firm's EI impacts job satisfaction; and
- how the firm's EI impacts ethical behaviour

3.7.2 Opening and ending interviews

A script was developed for the opening and closing of the interviews. Before the interviews began, the following points were discussed:

- Thank the participant for agreeing to participate in the study and taking the time to do so;
- Thank the participant for signing and returning the consent form;
- Confirm that confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained;
- Provide an overview of the purpose of the study;
- Provide personal background information (e.g., studies, work experience) that clarifies my positioning as an insider and outsider;
- Reassure the participant that there are only correct answers, as the interview is about understanding the participant's perspective; and
- Ask if the participant has any questions or comments and is ready for the interview

Upon closing the interview, the following points were addressed:

- Thank the participant for their contribution;
- Provide the participant's contact details; and
- Ask whether the participant is willing to be contacted for further questions if response requires further clarification.

The purpose of this script was threefold: to ensure that no information was omitted, to allay any possible concerns participants might have about confidentiality and anonymity, and to build rapport.

3.7.3 Pilot interviews

Prior to gathering primary qualitative data, pilot interviews were conducted with non-native English speaking lay persons to increase the likelihood that the interview questions would be unbiased and intelligible. This phase was crucial as the participants were from different hierarchical levels within the organisation and had different levels of understanding of the topic and the English language. It was, therefore, necessary to ensure that the wording of the questions was understandable to all participants, so that respondents could provide reliable answers. In addition to testing for ambiguity (Mackinnon, 2010, p. 55) and ensuring that the questions made sense to the respondents, pilot interviewing also allowed the interviewer to practice interviewing

skills and then focus on approaches to develop an interviewer-participant relationship that made participants feel safe with the interviewer to disclose their personal experiences (Knox and Burkard, 2009, p. 569).

3.7.4 Interview transcripts

As nationwide lockdown measures were in place during the data collection phase, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, interviews could not be conducted in-person and were, therefore, conducted online via Microsoft Teams. Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was audio- and video-recorded, with the exception of two participants whose webcams were switched off or not functioning.

Different theoretical and methodological perspectives and epistemological assumptions of researchers imply that a universal transcription format is inadequate for all qualitative data collection approaches (Lapadat, 2000, p. 207; McLellan, MacQueen and Neidig, 2003, p. 64; Davidson, 2009, p. 40; Clark *et al.*, 2017, p. 1754). The following protocol—derived from the findings of McLellan, MacQueen and Neidig (2003), Davidson (2009), and Trippas and colleagues' (2017)—was designed for consistency, transparency, and reproducibility:

Interviews and transcripts

- Online interviews were audio- and video-recorded with autogenerated caption
- Autogenerated caption files were exported in a WebVTT format and uploaded to Microsoft Stream (raw transcripts)

Transcripts downloading and cleaning

- Raw transcripts were extracted and cleaned (time codes, metadata, and extra lines were removed) with the web utility Microsoft Stream Transcript Video Text Tracks (VTT) File Cleaner and saved as a .docx Microsoft Word document
- Initially cleaned transcripts were proofread against the video recording for accuracy
- A metadata text box was inserted, including the participant codified identification interviewee subgroup (stakeholder group)—i.e., nonmanagerial employee, executive managers, middle managers, date, time, and duration of interview.

- Transcripts were maintained *verbatim* where possible
- Cleaned and verified transcripts were saved as .docx Word documents (see Appendix G. Export and clean transcripts)

Anonymisation

- As the focal organisation opted to remain anonymous, interview transcripts were anonymised in accordance with the University Research Ethics Committee's requirements. Names and organisation mentioned in interviews were pseudonymised, participant identifications coded, and locations "broadened" (e.g., France instead of Marseille). Whenever respondents provided names or information that could compromise any identification, these were also pseudonymised to mitigate the risk of confidentiality and anonymity breach (when a name was mentioned, their function was used instead—e.g., hotel manager, founder)
- Identification codes and original raw transcripts were stored separately.

Reformatting to allow usability for NVivo

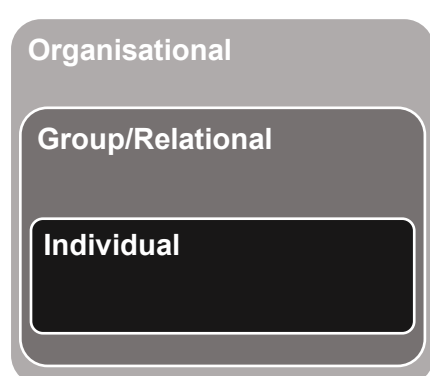
- Transcripts were reformatted into a Microsoft Excel document to allow autocoding in the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo (MAC OSX version)
- Autocoding was used solely for structuring purposes: codes were automatically generated to enable categorising the data corpus per main interview question (dataset interviews) as well as per interviewee (cases).

3.8 Data analysis: reflexive thematic analysis

As this research adopted an internal stakeholder approach to explore the meanings of ethical behaviour and organisational implications for EI, an **embedded case study design** was used for this research, meaning that it included multiple subunits of analysis (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2010, p. 839; Xiao, 2010, p. 867; Patton, 2015, p. 684; Yin, 2018, p. 51). To obtain as complete a picture of the phenomenon as possible, data were gathered from three embedded subunits that are

part of the larger unit (de Vaus, 2001, p. 220). The levels or subunits of analysis were 1) individual (intrapersonal); 2) relational (interpersonal); and 3) organisational (see [Figure 4. Subunits of analysis](#)).

“[E]ven though a case study might be addressed toward a single organization, data collection and analysis, as well as presentation of findings, occurs at multiple levels, including the level of the individual and of subgroups of individuals or/and strategic business units. The use of embedded units of analysis suggests that an equal emphasis should be placed on both the subunits of the study and the case as a whole”. (Fletcher and Plakoyiannaki, 2010, p. 839).



[Figure 3. Subunits of analysis](#)

In the context of multiperspective studies, Zartler (2010, p. 178) suggests following a stepwise process to make sense of the analyses. Firstly at the individual level (micro level), the data gathered from the interviews were analysed separately to identify the individual typologies of each participant. The aim was to find out how participants understand and perceive ethical behaviour and EI and to depict the variety of meanings that participants attribute to ethical behaviour and EI. Secondly at the group level (meso level), the predominant meanings of ethical behaviour and EI were scrutinised across stakeholders. The aim was to explore the interrelationships between stakeholders, identify patterns, connections, and differences in understanding, role, and impact of ethical behaviour and EI. Thirdly at the organisational level (macro level), it was explored how the first two subunits are interrelated within the organisation and what the organisational implications are for institutionalising ethics.

The data analysis process followed Braun and Clarke's (2022) six phases of reflexive thematic analysis and Saldaña's (2021a) qualitative coding methods (see [Table 7. Reflexive thematic analysis phases and coding methods](#)). The intrapersonal analysis followed the six phases of reflexive thematic analysis and included preliminary coding and a first and second coding cycle to develop topic summaries. The transcripts were analysed individually. The interpersonal analysis comprised phases two through six of the reflexive thematic analysis. The familiarisation phase was excluded as the researcher was already familiar with the dataset at this stage of the analysis. The

transcripts were cross compared to develop recurring themes across the transcripts. For the organisational subunit of analysis (organisational implications), coding was done simultaneously with the coding for the interpersonal analysis subunit. In preparation for topic summary and theme development, the interview transcripts were first coded in NVivo. The richness and complexity of the data required several iterations of the preliminary (initial) coding, first and second cycle coding. Because the focus was on understanding the perspectives and meanings of the participants, an inductive (data-oriented) approach to coding was adopted in this inquiry. However, pure induction cannot be achieved, as the paradigm of reflexive thematic analysis acknowledges and values the researcher's subjectivity, which shapes the researcher's engagement with the data. Therefore, the coding process was inductive in orientation rather than purely inductive (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 56). Eclectic coding—a combination of coding methods—was used in the first and second cycles. The following sections describe the coding and analysis processes in more detail.

Table 7. Reflexive thematic analysis phases and coding methods

Phases of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022)	Coding methods (Saldaña, 2021)		
	PRELIMINARY CODING		
Phase 1 – Familiarisation	First iteration	Initial coding	to gain a general sense of the data
	FIRST CYCLE CODING		
Phase 2 – Systematic coding	Second iteration	<i>In Vivo</i> coding	to honour participant's voice
		Structural coding	to create a question-based structure
		Simultaneous coding	to assign more than one code to the same datum
Phase 3 – Generating topic summaries or themes	Third iteration	Themeing categorically	to identify recurring topics or themes
		Versus coding	to capture dichotomies, incoherencies, dilemmas
Phase 4 – Developing & reviewing topic summaries or themes	Fourth iteration	<i>In Vivo</i> coding	to honour participant's voice
		Focused coding	to consolidate existing categories, codes
	SECOND CYCLE CODING		
Phase 5 – Refining, defining, and naming topic summaries or themes	Fifth iteration	Focused coding	to recode/refine existing codes and categorise data into topic summaries (intra stakeholder) or themes (inter stakeholder)
	Sixth iteration	Axial coding	to determine dominant codes within transcript (intra stakeholder) and across transcripts (inter stakeholder)
		<i>In Vivo</i> coding	to honour participant's voice and provide illustrations
Phase 6 – Writing up	No coding in this phase, as this phase represents the discussion of the findings		

3.8.1 Phase 1 – Familiarisation with the dataset

The familiarisation phase (Phase 1) corresponds to the first iteration of coding, otherwise known as preliminary coding. **Initial coding** was used and consisted of reading the transcripts one by one, without attempting to link the responses to the literature or the responses of the other participants but focusing on making sense of the participants' responses. This data-driven immersion process, to which Braun and Clarke (2022, p. 42) refer as the **familiarisation phase**, aimed to critically immerse

oneself in the dataset to make sense of the dataset as a whole and to gain preliminary insights into the participants' thinking process. As suggested by Saldaña (2021b, pp. 32–33), the following questions were kept in mind during the reading: “*what surprised me?*” (to monitor assumptions), “*what intrigued me?*” (to monitor positionality), “*what disturbed me?*” (to detect tensions within values, attitudes, and beliefs). Simultaneously, memos were maintained to address the above-mentioned questions and to gain a general sense of the data. This process proved tedious due to the researcher's own assumptions and perspective, as well as the unconscious cognitive process of interpreting and linking information to the research questions, literature, and other participants. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge our reflexivity to situate our positionalities throughout the research.

3.8.2 Phase 2 - Systematic coding

The systematic coding phase (Phase 2) corresponds to the second iteration of coding in the first coding cycle. Following the preliminary coding process, this phase consisted of **simultaneous coding**, that is, two or more codes were applied to a single datum (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2020). Simultaneous coding is particularly important in reflexive thematic analysis, as this approach requires codes to focus on singular ideas (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 52). Given the importance of context, it occurred that larger data excerpts were coded to maintain the response in context, resulting in one data excerpt relating to more than one idea/concept/topic or having more than one meaning (manifest and latent). As the main interview questions were the same for all participants, except for some follow-up questions, **structural coding** was used. The data corpus was categorised based on the main interview questions to facilitate exploration of differences, similarities, and relationships in subsequent iterations (MacQueen, McLellan-Lemal and Milstein, 2008, pp. 119–135). **In Vivo coding** was applied, in line with the social constructionist paradigm, to respect the participant's voice and gain a deeper understanding of the participant's discourse and worldview (Charmaz, 2014). Though *In Vivo* coding can help to capture the meaning of participants experiences, it can limit the researcher's perspective on the data. To mitigate this limitation, eclectic coding was used, mixing multiple coding methods (Saldaña, 2021b, p. 142).

3.8.3 Phase 3 – Topic summary and theme generation

This phase (Phase 3) corresponds to the third iteration in the first cycle of coding, where themeing of the data was done **categorically** in order to develop researcher-generated constructs by clustering related categories and assigning initial theoretical constructs/thematic categories. In the intrapersonal analysis, this method was used to identify recurring topics and generate candidate topic summaries. In the interpersonal and organisational analyses, this method was used to identify relationships, differences, and similarities between participants on a particular topic (Saldaña, 2021b, p. 267) and to generate candidate themes. Several dichotomies were identified when categorising the data. **Versus coding** allowed these ‘conflicts’ within, between, and amongst participants and concepts to be captured (Saldaña, 2021b, p. 92). Examples of dichotomies involved different perspectives on the same concept: “*common sense exists*” versus “*common sense does not exist*”; or similar viewpoints on two different concepts: corporate enterprises versus social enterprises; ideal versus practice; or dilemmas/trade-offs (e.g., reinvesting profits in charity or in the organisation).

3.8.4 Phase 4 – Topic summary and theme development

This phase (Phase 4) corresponds to the fourth iteration of the coding process of the first cycle, using *In Vivo* and focused coding methods. **Focused coding** consisted of revisiting the transcripts to identify additional data to consolidate the existing categories (Charmaz, 2014, p. 138). Once a candidate topic summary (intrapersonal) or theme (interpersonal, organisational) was generated, focused coding was applied by searching keywords related to the topic summary or theme to identify further related excerpts (e.g., for the candidate theme ‘teamwork’, keywords such as ‘team’, ‘teammates’, ‘family’). **In Vivo coding** was used to acknowledge the voice of the participant and to incorporate illustrations of the topic summary or theme in question.

3.8.5 Phase five - Topic summary and theme refinement and definition

This phase (Phase 5) corresponds to the fifth and sixth iterations in the second of cycle coding. For the intrapersonal analysis, the topic summaries were refined and

defined through focused and axial coding. In this phase, **focused coding** was no longer about generating new codes, but recoding and refining existing codes and categorising them based on topic summaries. **Axial coding** was used to identify and determine the dominant codes within each transcript in order to develop the main topic summaries. For the interpersonal and organisational analyses, a similar process was used as for the intrapersonal analysis, but instead of analysing the transcripts and corresponding codes individually, the analyses were conducted across transcripts to capture patterns of shared meaning around a central concept. Focused coding was used to recode and refine existing codes and categorise them based on recurring themes. **In Vivo coding** was used to honour the voice of participants and provide *verbatim* illustrations of the theme in question.

3.8.6 Phase six – Writing up

No coding was used in this phase (phase 6), as this phase represents the discussion of the results. An integrated approach was adopted to conduct the analyses, combining presentation and discussion of the results. After the presentation of the results, they were discussed in relation to the theory and the literature review. Throughout the six phases of data analysis, a reflexive journal was maintained to identify and acknowledge assumptions or facts taken for granted. Reflexive journaling allowed to step back and reflect on these aspects and to become aware of how the researcher's positionalities shape the data analysis process.

3.8.7 Approaches to reflexivity

Reflexivity is central to qualitative research and serves to articulate the researcher's personal values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences. In post/positivist paradigms, the researcher's subjectivity is seen as a source of bias that should be mitigated, as it can influence the research process and, thus, hamper its quality. Post/positivist research seeks to dissociate the researcher from the object of study and limit the researcher's role to collecting and interpreting data in an objective manner. In this context, the purpose of reflexivity is to enhance objectivity in the research process, which refers to the validity, reliability, and rigour of the research. However, reflexive thematic analysis should not disregard the subjectivity of the researcher but should be an integral part of the research. Braun and Clarke (2022, p. 8) consider the subjectivity

of the researcher as *“the primary tool for reflexive thematic analysis, as knowledge generation is inherently subjective and situated”*. In this regard, researchers need to develop a qualitative sensibility—to which Braun and Clarke (2022, p. 7) refer as *“a way to capture the values, assumptions, orientation and skills needed to conduct reflexive thematic analysis”*—in order to recognise and reflect upon the researcher’s own assumptions underlying data analysis.

In line with Braun and Clarke’s (2022, pp. 19–24, 270) approach to reflexive thematic analysis, a reflexive journal was maintained on the various facets of research, which included reflection on the interview process, the face-to-face meeting, coding, and writing. This journaling allowed for taken-for-granted assumptions to be illuminated and challenged. The reflexive approach to thematic analysis places particular emphasis on the researcher’s perspective, which is particularly appropriate in the context of this study as it adopts a multiperspective approach and consequently includes the researcher’s perspective.

3.9 Reflexivity

*“Things are because we see them,
and what we see, and how we see it,
depends on the arts that have
influenced us.” (Oscar Wilde, 1891b -
The Decay of Lying)*

Researcher subjectivity is valued in qualitative research. It is a key aspect of qualitative sensibility and an integral part of qualitative analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022). It is the researcher who develops a research question, engages with the literature, collects, analyses, interprets, and discusses the data. The way each stage of the research is conducted is influenced by the researcher’s identities, values, beliefs, assumptions, and experiences (Saldaña, 2021a). Reflexivity captures the role of the researcher by turning the lens on themselves to recognise and reflect upon their own positionalities within the research and how these may influence the research (Berger, 2015). To ensure trustworthiness (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) (Lincoln and Guba, 1982, p. 3), and in line with reflexive thematic analysis, a reflexive journal was maintained to acknowledge these influences and be aware of taken-for-granted assumptions. As such, qualitative research values researcher subjectivity, and good qualitative research challenges it.

Qualitative researchers need a schizophrenic mindset (from Ancient Greek *skhízō*, “to split” + *phrén*, “mind”). Not only do we need to demonstrate the ability to shift lenses and angles, but we also need to do so consciously by being aware of and reflecting on these shifts. In an effort to produce credible and legitimate research findings and minimise bias, we need to be critical and methodical about our schizophrenia. Rather than split hairs, researchers need the ability to split minds. Like a tilt-shift lens, we need to change angles and be conscientious and systematic about it, to get a clear picture of what we are focusing on. In a social constructionist paradigm (Berger and Luckmann, 1991), this ability is paramount. In our Sisyphean pursuit of making sense of the world, our realities are constructed and shaped by our experiences, values, (dis)beliefs, interests, and personality and character traits, resulting in individual overlapping and sometimes conflicting perceptions of one same situation. To make sense of this complexity, a reflexive journal was maintained throughout the research process, covering topics such as approaching the data, maintaining anonymity, engaging with the literature, the interview process, the writing process, assumptions, mental state, and positionalities.

3.9.1 Personal reflexivity

I was born in The Netherlands and emigrated with my mother to the United Kingdom, the United States, and France in the first eight years of my life. As my parents divorced when I was one year old, I lost touch with my Indonesian father for eighteen years and was raised by my Dutch-Indonesian mother and my French stepfather, whom I consider my father. To me, the divide between father and stepfather feels alienating. I lived in France for approximately twenty years before travelling back and forth between The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Bermuda, and France. Being of Indonesian descent, born in The Netherlands, raised in France, and having lived in several places, I know five languages, three of which I speak fluently, and identify myself as a global nomad or a third-culture kid (Useem and Downie, 1976), in that I feel at home everywhere and nowhere at the same time. My grandparents raised our family with unconditional familial bonds and tolerance towards other cultures. This has translated into my parents and their siblings having varying perspectives on life, ranging from married with four children to single with no children, practicing various

religious views, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and atheism, and living in France, Australia, The Netherlands, the United States, and the Philippines.

In view of this study, my multicultural and personal identities and values have shaped my approach to this study. I was able to empathise with the participants as they discussed the need to respect differences, and it made me aware of my assumption, in that the ability to live and work in a diverse environment cannot be taken for granted. My personal background also facilitated the interaction with the nine interviewees, who came from eight different countries, as I am familiar and comfortable with multicultural environments.

3.9.2 Professional reflexivity

I have worked in various industries (hospitality, tourism, landscaping, construction, education) at different levels of hierarchy (nonmanagerial employee, manager, sole trader). Approximately twenty-five years of my professional experience lies in the hospitality industry, where I have had the opportunity to work in a variety of departments (dishwashing, revenue management, restaurant, bar, room service, kitchen), countries (France, Principality of Monaco, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Bermuda), and types of establishments (hotel complexes, bars, nightclubs, fine dining gastronomic restaurants, pubs, beach resorts). I inherited my passion for the hospitality industry from my father, who owned a restaurant and spent most of his working life in the industry from the age of fifteen. Over the years I have witnessed and experienced questionable situations, some of which I only realised in retrospect. I consider ethical behaviour of utmost importance for the benefit of the employees, management, guests, the organisation, and the industry as a whole. Yet, the dynamics of the hospitality industry can make it easy to forget to maintain ethical behaviour at the forefront.

Upon reflection, my professional experiences and personal values have motivated me to explore the meaning of ethical behaviour from a workforce perspective and to understand how the workforce and organisations can ensure such behaviour. This standpoint may have influenced my choice of theoretical framework, more specifically the stakeholder theory, in the search for value creation through ethical behaviour.

3.9.3 *Academic reflexivity*

After a fifteen-year sabbatical, I decided to resume my education and completed my Bachelor of Business Administration in International Hospitality Management with the intention of increasing my chances of working internationally. However, my undergraduate studies sparked my academic curiosity and motivated me to pursue my studies and complete my Master of Science in Strategic Innovation Management and, subsequently, apply for this PhD. During my undergraduate studies, I was introduced to the concepts of sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, and intercultural management through the works of Geert Hofstede and David Pinto. During my postgraduate studies, I was introduced to business ethics. This elective course along with the dissertation tipped the scales in my favour to remain in academia to conduct research and explore ethics in the context of the hospitality industry.

4 FINDINGS

This section takes an integrated approach to intrapersonal analysis by combining findings and discussion. In this phase—intrapersonal analysis (micro level)—an aggregate analysis of each individual is produced without establishing links as yet, and data extracts are used illustratively (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 135). This phase provides the building block for the subsequent phases—interpersonal (meso level) and organisational (macro level) analyses—, which take a more analytic approach to discussing interrelationships between stakeholders and the implications at organisational level, to which Denzin (1978, p. 296) refers as interactive analysis and the collectivity, respectively. The analysis of each stakeholder's response is conducted in a random sequence to avoid potential influence or connection between stakeholders of the same hierarchical group (nonmanagerial employees [coded NM], mid-management employees [coded MM], executive management employees [coded EM]) or same department (frontline [coded F], backline [coded B]). Participants names are pseudonymised (see [Table 4. Overview of participants](#)). Following Braun and Clarke's (2022, p. 10) variations of reflexive thematic analysis, the orientation to the data, in this chapter, is predominantly inductive—where the intrapersonal analysis seeks to *give voice* to participants and is driven by the content of the data rather than informed by existing theories—, and the qualitative framework is experiential, as this analysis seeks to capture participants' perspectives and interpretations of ethical behaviour and ethics institutionalisation (EI) rather than already adopting a critical stance that seeks to develop common themes around the concepts of ethical behaviour and EI.

4.1 BMM1 - Adriana

Adriana discusses four aspects of ethical behaviour: 1) the organisation's purpose; 2) affective empathy; 3) communication; and 4) teamwork (see [Table 8. Adriana \(BMM1\) - Meanings & impacts of ethical behaviour and implications for EI](#)).

4.1.1 The organisation's purpose as ethical behaviour

The respondent makes a distinction between ethical behaviour at organisational level and at individual level:

"Being good is at the heart of our business and other people who are working for our hotel." (Adriana)

At the organisational level, ethical behaviour primarily concerns the organisation's social business model, in which it invests its profits in education in disadvantaged areas. The organisation's purpose also represents her main source of job satisfaction:

"The most satisfying aspect is the fact that we are a social business, we've got local community at heart, and we help children. [...] All the profits are going [...] to support education for underprivileged little souls, so that's the most beautiful part of this business, really." (Adriana)

She also discusses the organisation's various initiatives to support local communities and charity organisations, which, in the realm of ethics, is of virtuous nature. In ethical theories, charity, or benevolence and beneficence, play an important role. Saint Augustine (1999, p. 99) contended that the more charitable a person is, the better the person is. For Adam Smith (2010, p. 208), benevolence constitutes one of the four cardinal virtues, as *"[t]hose actions which aimed at the happiness of a great community, as they demonstrated a more enlarged benevolence than those which aimed only at that of a smaller system, so were they, likewise, proportionally the more virtuous"*. Similarly, Saint Thomas Aquinas (2014, p. 5375) maintained that the practice of charity is a virtue that brings one closer to God. For Kant (1980, p. 18), the duties of benevolence belong to ethics and are imperfect duties, which he considered duties of virtue. *"To fulfil them is merit [...]; but to transgress them is not so much guilt [...] as rather mere lack of moral worth [...], unless the agent makes it his principle not to submit to these duties."* (Kant, 1980, p. 49). Examples of initiatives cited by Adriana include collaboration with local councils to support people who are unemployed or experience homelessness, and with organisations that employ refugees. Other examples relate to developing business partnerships with local business and environmentally conscious businesses. For Adriana, organisational ethical behaviour is crucial:

“I think you're gonna breaking down if you are not ethical, if you are not kind, you start breaking down on every level, you know, with the staff, with the clients. It's a chain. [...] I won't do it to myself to work with people who are unkind, unmindful, you know, I love what I'm doing, I'm passionate, and I've got experience.” (Adriana)

Organisational behaviour means supporting vulnerable stakeholder groups such as refugees, unemployed, homeless, and the environment.

“We take all our responsibility to be mindful and kind um to all around us, you know, that's obviously, you know, in the long run it is being kind to the to the Earth as well.” (Adriana)

Though nature and the environment are non-human, they are considered stakeholders (Laine, 2010; Pérez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2014) and can be represented by a human proxy (Phillips and Reichart, 2000). In particular, there is a mutual impact in the hospitality industry, as seasonal establishments are reliant on weather and climate conditions (e.g., ski resorts, beach resorts) (Bicknell and McManus, 2006; Coghlan and Prideaux, 2009; Beaudin and Huang, 2014). Similarly, hospitality activities impact the environment and climate change (Kyriakidis and Felton, 2008). For Adriana, working in an organisation with an ethical purpose is critical; and this inclination may have been reinforced after her work experience in an environment where ethical matters are not a priority:

“My biggest chunk of my career is working for the corporate environment, and when I'm thinking about this now... How I was able to do that? I've got totally goosebumps, you know, I can't imagine to work in this environment ever again [...] you know, being ethical and from the start of the beginning, you know it is a totally different quality of life, you know, it is a totally different quality of life.” (Adriana)

The organisation's initiatives motivate Adriana to contribute to them, as she explains:

“As a project, I want to find a better way of minimising the food waste to a bare bare minimum. That's the bigger goal; it is kind of the bigger bigger project to not only the waste management, but generally, you know, like reusing, recycling, getting involved with different charities. If you've got stuff left over, you know, being able to give it and stuff like that.” (Adriana)

It is the social purpose of the organisation that seems to drive her engagement to contribute to that purpose. This finding is consistent with that of Chaudhary (2019, p. 642), who asserts that employees find greater meaning and purpose at work when the organisation engages in social responsibility initiatives. In addition to organisational ethical behaviour, the participant also mentions the importance of ethical behaviour at the individual level, discussed in the following sections.

4.1.2 The role of affective empathy in the workplace

At individual level, Adriana explains that ethical behaviour is about adopting a “kind behaviour”, a “mindful behaviour”, “being considerate”, and “being understanding”:

“I think this is absolutely essential, you know, the way you are treating people. This is the energy, the way you are treating people, the energy you are giving to them, you gonna get people on the same right path to deal with and I think that's bringing up the best results. Not the other way around, you know, like in [corporate] company.” (Adriana)

The aforementioned aspects refer to affective empathy, the recognition of another's feelings (Aaltola, 2014), and sympathy, the response to the wellbeing of another (Maibom, 2017, p. 23). Both empathy and sympathy are constructs present in the remit of ethics, particularly amongst sentimentalists, such as David Hume and Adam Smith, for whom sympathy is a source of morality (Aaltola, 2014, p. 77). If an organisation has a social or ethical purpose, Adriana indicates that internal stakeholders must have an inclination to affective empathy and sympathy for them to commit and engage with the organisation's initiatives, since they are the ones who implement those initiatives:

“[W]e start doing amazing things, you know. And there is project for many, many things. Not only working [with] the communities, there is a project of training for the apprenticeships, and so on. There's a lot of different project, there is a project for different waste management. That is, you know, the list is endless. The list is endless. But the key for it, is to being ethical, and mindful, and good.” (Adriana)

Although the respondent acknowledges the relevance of these inclinations, she also recognises the difficulty of applying such behaviour in practice. Especially in the

context of hospitality, characterised by a high employee turnover rate (AlBattat, Som and Helalat, 2013; Dwesini and Sisulu, 2019), this is both difficult and crucial:

“Obviously you’ve got big staff ratio [turnover rate], you got people changing all the time and you could see people coming and going and so on, but uhm, you know, considering people, personal circumstances like, I don’t know, you have family, children, health issues, you know, abilities, possibilities, and everything else.” (Adriana)

To mitigate these difficulties, she emphasises the importance of raising awareness of the organisation’s purpose as an approach to employee engagement:

“The difficult part of my job is managing people, you know. So, it’s great to be kind, it’s great to be understanding and considerate, you know to the person’s personal, you know, circumstances. However, um, in the end of the day, we’ve got business to run as well, so you know, being considerate, being kind, yeah, it’s a big juggle, but you know, I think, highlighting to people, you know, about our ethical approach and what does it mean, you know, for us, working as a team and being able to deliver that, I think that’s a big call in this aspect.” (Adriana)

In sum, Adriana associates individual ethical behaviour with aspects of affective empathy. Though such behaviour is crucial to her, she also finds it difficult to consistently put into practice in the workplace. To alleviate this difficulty, she points out to raising employee awareness of the role and importance of ethical behaviour as an approach to employee engagement.

4.1.3 Promoting awareness of ethical behaviour through communication

Raising awareness of an important issue, such as promoting ethical behaviour, requires communication skills. When asked whether the respondent feels responsible for encouraging ethical behaviour, she answers without equivocation: *“Yes, absolutely [...] 100%”*. She tries to promote ethical behaviour by involving her team members in her projects and explaining the context of her initiatives:

“My staff is aware of what we’re doing, for what kind of clients we’re cooking, what’s the client is dealing as well. They are also aware of the provenance of the food, and of the suppliers and everything else. The

suppliers are coming to us or I'm taking them to suppliers. They try the strangest stuff, tasting for the new menus. So, the whole picture is available for them, yeah.” (Adriana)

Prior studies have recognised the influential role of context in ethical decisionmaking, mainly because ethical issues are usually context-bound and, thus, impact the decisionmaking process (Treviño, 1986). Moreover, providing the context within which an activity takes place can enable its sensemaking and mitigate the risk of ethical blindness, defined by Palazzo and colleagues (2012, p. 324) as “*the decisionmaker’s temporary inability to see the ethical dimension of a decision at stake*”. As mentioned in the literature review (see [2.4.3 Making oneself understood](#)), effective internal communication has been associated with higher employee satisfaction (Tanković, Bilić and Brajković, 2022) and engagement (Brahmah, 2016; Uysal, 2020). In addition, Verbeke and colleagues (1996) found that internal communication improves ethical decisionmaking and cognitive empathy (perspective-taking), as individuals who interact with one another also learn about one another’s perspectives and incorporate these into their decisionmaking. Adriana also mentions the complexities of working in the hospitality industry:

“It’s not easy work, it’s a very fast and very demanding environment”. (Adriana)

“The hotel is a big complex. [...] So, this is all the health and safety, all the maintenance issues, all the clients ... the guest complaints and so on, you know. All the [due] diligence of the health and safety of the equipment breakdown... Everything like this is like complex, complex things, you know. So, there is a lot of things to think of and take on the board.” (Adriana)

Given the complexity, effective communication is key to ensuring that people are aware of the potential repercussions of decisions, taking into account the many factors that are at play.

Thus, the role of internal communication, according to Adriana, is to engage team members in her projects and provide the “*whole picture*” to attend to the complexity of a hospitality operation and promote ethical behaviour. Having discussed the role of communication, the following section examines the notion of teamwork, more precisely, the different attributes of teamwork the respondent has brought to light.

4.1.4 Elements of ethical teamwork

Effective communication is closely linked to effective teamwork (Mohanty and Mohanty, 2018). In this regard, Adriana highlights four features that determine the effectiveness of teamwork: mutuality, contagiousness, freedom, and responsibility.

Adriana discusses the aspect of mutuality in teamwork, mentioning that she feels responsible for investing time and effort to provide her team members with contextual knowledge that underpins her initiatives, and in return, she expects her team members to recognise and respect her contribution, because, as she remarks, *“it works both ways”*. Her expectation of mutuality extends to the organisation and relates to her previous experience in an environment where her experience and passion were exploited rather than recognised:

“I won’t do it to myself to work with people who are unkind, unmindful, you know, I love what I’m doing, I’m passionate, and I’ve got experience. So, I know exactly how the things supposed to look like, and I’m always open for a constructive criticism, and I’m more than happy to do whatever needs to be done to bring the money and make the business rolling. But yeah, then there has to be some standards to it as well.”
(Adriana)

In this vein, Barber (2011, p. 42) defines mutuality as a dynamic process of developing respectful relationships between team members through the sharing and understanding of values and attitudes. In the context of the hospitality industry, a complex environment involving many actors, mutual respect for the contributions of individual team members is important to enhance team performance and commitment (Folakemi, Anthonia and Dayo, 2017; Van Waeyenberg *et al.*, 2017).

Another significant attribute of teamwork is contagiousness. Adriana explains that if someone is not a team player or behaves unethically, it affects the whole team. Another example she gives clearly showcases how an ethical leader who leads by example can have an impact on morale and performance:

“I was working with a great manager. [...] He was the best, he was absolutely amazing [...], he was very passionate [...]. But the best thing was he was great human being. We created amazing things together. [...] He is a great human being. It is as simple as that. And when he left the company [...], everything went down.” (Adriana)

This necessitates team members to be aware of the role of ethical behaviour and the repercussions of (un)ethical behaviour, especially given the complex interdependencies between departments, in order to deliver a service consistent to the organisation's goals. Similarly, organisations must acknowledge the impact that teamwork can have on employee morale.

In addition to mutuality and contagiousness, Adriana discusses the notion of freedom and responsibility in teamwork:

“Everybody can bring something, and everybody has got a free way and free [...] to develop itself and progress, it's as simple as that” (Adriana)

The respondent made this statement with reference to team members' contribution to encouraging ethical behaviour. She also mentioned that, when dissatisfied about a specific situation, one has the freedom to choose; *“complaining about the things”, “being negative about things”, or “change it [...], sort it out”*. This leads to the notion of responsibility within a team, with Adriana explaining that each team member has the responsibility to be mindful and kind to everyone, including the earth. She also acknowledges that each individual has different responsibilities depending on the *“level of your status or position at work”*. Nevertheless, everyone is responsible for contributing to the achievement of the organisation's goals and for promoting ethical behaviour within the team. The concepts of freedom and responsibility resonate with Sartre's (2007, p. 29) statement: *“[M]an is condemned to be free: condemned, because he did not create himself, yet nonetheless free, because once cast into the world, he is responsible for everything he does.”*

4.1.5 The role of ethics institutionalisation

When asked how explicit EI initiatives (e.g., codes of ethics, ethics committees, ethics newsletters) influence ethical behaviour, the respondent stated they have little positive impact on her as it is the responsibility of the individual to behave ethically. She also stated that individuals would behave unethically even if there were explicit ethical standards. This latter statement suggests that (un)ethical behaviour is embedded in the individual and that explicit EI initiatives are unlikely to affect behaviour:

“Formal standards? Uhm, I think it’s seriously everything down to people. You can have mottos, you can have a motto of the company, and ethical view of the companies or however you work. But [...] at the end of the day, you gonna have an unethical person who wanna push you for the profit and stuff like that, then everything’s gonna get bust.” (Adriana)

However, earlier in the interview she states that she is open to constructive criticism provided that there are standards. This suggests that standards are set implicitly rather than explicitly.

When it came to the impact of explicit EI on her job satisfaction, the question elicited a sceptical response:

“I believe aaaall the companies, they’ve got ethics, they’ve got written statuses, they’ve got everything what needs to be done [...] in the corporate world [...] if you think about this, every single company, they’re like heaven made. [...] All the companies they’ve got amazing ethos. But down the line, everything is going to the profit. They will sell to the client they are using British meat and British chicken, while the only meat you can order is a frozen chicken breast from China. So, I don’t think there is any company who is going to have a bad ethos because, obviously, that’s not gonna sell to anyone. But, in the corporate environment, most of it is getting down to the profit.” (Adriana)

Such reaction alludes to the emergence of scepticism and distrust as a result of windowdressing practices (Stevens, 1997; Rahman, Park and Chi, 2015; Zhang and Hanks, 2017; Ying *et al.*, 2021). Her prior experience in the purely for-profit environment seems to be at the root of her antagonism to the ‘corporate’ environment:

“Working for corporate companies, most quite prestigious places, as I told you in the beginning, I would not like to do it again.” (Adriana)

The examples of explicit implementations she provides mostly relate to the social purpose of the organisation namely to support local communities and businesses, rather than internal measures to institutionalise ethics in the workplace. This points to the need for an EI approach that incorporates internal and external perspectives so that it simultaneously addresses internal and societal ethical demands (Jenkins, 2001; Robina-Ramírez, Isabel Sánchez-Hernández and Díaz-Caro, 2021).

In contrast, implicit EI (i.e., ethical leadership, ethical organisational culture, open communication) is a source of job satisfaction and is more effective than explicit EI in reinforcing employee engagement and ethical behaviour. This is consistent with the contagious aspect of teamwork, where a leader has a strong influence on employee morale and engagement:

“If there is no communication, and there’s no ethical and mindful doing of the business, it’s not working. You can have written down everything you wish to. However, if you don’t have someone who is ethically and kindly and mindfully executing this, it doesn’t work.” (Adriana)

She also points out that skills are less important than attitudes. This is reminiscent of the distinction between explicit and tacit knowledge, with technical skills falling into the realm of the former because they are easily recognised and transferred (Haldin-Herrgard, 2000). Attitude, on the other hand, refers to the latter, more specifically to cognitive tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is largely personal, develops through internal processes such as experience and reflection and is difficult to codify and, therefore, difficult to share (Nonaka, 1991; Haldin-Herrgard, 2000). Polanyi (1967, p. 4) posits knowledge as follows: *“I shall reconsider human knowledge by starting from the fact that we can know more than that we can tell.”* Cognitive tacit knowledge—as opposed to technical tacit knowledge, which comprises expertise about know-how—encompasses mental models, beliefs, and values (Gore and Gore, 1999).

In summary, Adriana’s response indicates that implicit features are more effective in developing ethical behaviour at both the individual and organisational levels. At the individual level, she considers attitude to be more important than skills, with attitude referring to affective empathy traits—such as kindness, mindfulness, and consideration—, as well as teamwork skills. At the organisational level, the respondent points to the influence of ethical leadership on her engagement and job satisfaction.

Table 8. Adriana (BMM1) - Meanings & impacts of ethical behaviour and implications for EI

	ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR			
	ORGANISATIONAL	INDIVIDUAL		
	PURPOSE	AFFECTIVE EMPATHY	COMMUNICATION	TEAMWORK
Meanings	- Supporting vulnerable stakeholder groups	- Understanding - Consideration - Kindness - Mindfulness	- Providing context - Raising awareness	- Mutuality - Contagiousness - Responsibility - Freedom
Impacts	- Gives purpose to employees	- Enhances employee commitment	- Enhances employee engagement	- Encourages ethical behaviour
Barriers		- Industry-specific pressures	- Internal complexity - Interdepartmental communication	- Different levels of engagement - Contagiousness of negative behaviour
Implications for EI		- Fostering communication - Raising awareness	- Ethical leadership style - Leading by example	- Ethical standards

4.2 BNM1 - Amelia

The respondent discusses ethical behaviour at individual and organisational levels. Individual ethical behaviour includes communication and teamwork. At the organisational level, she distinguishes 1) explicit forms of EI, namely the organisation's training programme, pseudonymised as the Case Study Hotel Training Programme (CSHTP), and internal 360 meetings, and 2) implicit forms of EI, namely the reward system and ethical leadership.

4.2.1 Interdepartmental and open communication

When asked about the most satisfying aspects of her job, the respondent mentions that she appreciates when customer comments are transmitted to her, suggesting a need for interdepartmental communication between back-of-house and front-of-house employees:

“Just seeing customers, you know, give you feedback on how good the food is. That puts a big smile on your face, you know, so that's the greatest aspect for me going into work. All the time just to put a smile on, you know, the guest face when they ordered a meal from the kitchen.” (Amelia)

Another aspect of communication relates to open communication within her team amongst colleagues and with her manager. Communication should be open and if a

problem arises, team members should avoid taking it upon themselves. Instead, they should share it with the rest of the team:

“My good values [...] is [...] informing your manager and stuff like that when anything, you know, is going wrong, or if you got a problem, you know, instead of taking it upon yourself on, you know, maybe getting upset and stuff like that so it's more of communicating. You know, communicating with your team around you and see if you can work things out. So, I think that's my good values for work”. (Amelia)

This statement suggests that communication contributes to the effectiveness of teamwork (discussed in more detail in the following section) and is congruent with Mohanty and Mohanty's (2018, p. 11) findings demonstrating that communication within a team and interdepartmental communication are essential components of teamwork effectiveness, to which Treviño and colleagues (2003) add that communication can guide ethical behaviour.

In sum, Amelia considers open and interdepartmental communication as important aspects of ethical behaviour, which are also a source of job satisfaction, as open communication positively impacts teamwork effectiveness and enables collaborative problem-solving, which is closely related to the following example of ethical behaviour, namely teamwork.

4.2.2 The role of integrity and solidarity in teamwork

When asked for specific examples of ethical behaviour, Amelia answers:

“I would say, to be honest, trustworthy, punctual. Yeah, that's a big part of it, you know, because, you know, that's the most important part of it, or you gonna be behind you know if you're not punctual on time and stuff like that, and just being honest with everything you know, and we just make a good team.” (Amelia)

Honesty and trustworthiness are dimensions of integrity according to Butler and Cantrell (1984), to which Chathoth and colleagues (2007) add the dimension of openness. Amelia also stresses the importance of being open and asking for help when a problem arises:

“Talking to your team, team member, or your manager, your line manager saying: ‘you know, I went wrong, can you help me?’”

These findings are in agreement with those of Jones and George (1998), who found that trust, confidence in others, and help-seeking behaviour enhance interpersonal cooperation and teamwork. In line with Ballard and Seibold’s (2006) findings, punctuality also plays an important role in effective teamwork and enhanced job satisfaction.

Besides the role of integrity in teamwork, she also mentions the importance of:

“Putting out the best. [...] looking after your teammates, [...] working [as] a team, [...] communicating with your team and see if you can work things out.” (Amelia)

This attitude towards teamwork has similarities with the Ubuntu principles, described in the maxim *“I am because we are”*, which promote social relationships and create a sense of solidarity within a team (Nicolaidis, 2020). Furthermore, the notion of *looking after teammates* and *working things out together* resonates with Lind & Skärvard’s (2018, p. 2) definition of a team, which states that *“a team has a common goal, they are integrated, engaged, and they have complementing competencies”*. This observation was also made by Lozovitskaya and Weerakit (2017), who stated that the value of teamwork is that team members collaborate towards a common goal and share their success.

Thus, Amelia identifies teamwork as an ethical behaviour, as team members need to show integrity—honesty, trustworthiness, punctuality—and support team members by being open about problems and showing solidarity to work towards a common goal and help each other in solve problems. To enable effective teamwork, the respondent explains that managers should display an ethical leadership style, as discussed in the following section.

4.2.3 Encouraging ethical behaviour through implicit forms of EI

In order to promote integrity and solidarity in teamwork, Amelia discusses the role of ethical leadership, defined by Brown and colleagues (2005, p. 120) as *“the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through*

two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making.” When talking about her manager and the general manager, she describes them as follows:

“They're very good with their ... looking after their staff, I mean, in a sense that, [...] most of us are trainees [...]. So, they make sure that, you know, we're treated all the same, you know, everyone is treated the same, you know, we, we learn our values, we treat our team members, you know, accordingly. You know, if you got a problem, we talk about it. You know, you can go to management”. (Amelia)

The dimensions of leadership that the interviewee addresses, relate to approachability, open communication, and equal treatment. Singh & Bhandarkar (1990, p. 120) describe approachability as a characteristic of the Karta leadership style, a form of transformational leadership in which leaders are available to their subordinates for information, guidance, and problem-solving. Brown and Treviño (2006) contend that ethical and transformational leaders share similarities in that they both care about others, act with integrity, consider ethical consequences in their decisions, and are ethical role models for others. Furthermore, Treviño and colleagues (2000, p. 132) argue that approachability—which they see as one of the pillars of ethical leadership—makes employees feel that they can talk to their leader about any issues. Open communication is consistent with Brown and colleagues’ (2005, p. 120) definition of ethical leadership, mentioned above. In strategic human resource management, two-way communication is otherwise known as a voice mechanism, more precisely, employee voice, which Delery and Doty (1996, p. 815) define as *“the degree to which employees are allowed to have input into their work and the degree to which the organization value their input”*. Brown and colleagues (2005) found that ethical leaders tend to listen to the concerns of their subordinates and support them in expressing their opinions. In this context, Avey and colleagues (2012) found a positive relationship between ethical leaders who encourage employee voice and employee job satisfaction. According to Noriega and Drew (2013), ethical leaders should also pay attention to the equal treatment of individuals. In line with previous research (Brown and Treviño, 2006; Neubert *et al.*, 2009; Kim and Brymer, 2011), ethical leaders play a crucial role in enhancing employee job satisfaction for Amelia.

The respondent discusses another dimension of ethical leadership that is a source of job satisfaction, namely the leader’s ability to ensure team ethics alignment,

which is consistent with the findings of Bouckennooghe and colleagues (2015) showing that ethical leadership positively impacts goal alignment between leaders and followers:

"I think that shows a good team leader because, we're all gonna be working, you know, feeling, you know, together knowing that we've all got the same ethics. So, it's gonna make you happy to come into work, you know, 'cause everybody may be on the same level".
(Amelia)

As the respondent mentions,

"the [general] manager, she always walks around, she tells you: 'you can always talk to me', you know that's ... I think ... I love it. It's just good, it's a good ... it's a good feeling, the good vibes that they give, that you're welcome to always have a talk if you've got a serious, you know, problem." (Amelia)

This behaviour is an illustration of leading by example, where the leader demonstrates the importance of open communication and approachability within the team. Such behaviour, in turn, boosts the respondent's morale. As Amelia explains, she considers open communication and supporting team members to be important ethical behaviours in teamwork, and the general manager's leadership style seems to positively affect the team dynamics. This finding is broadly consistent with previous studies in this area, which have linked ethical leadership to followers' ethical behaviour (Mayer *et al.*, 2009, 2012; Lu and Lin, 2014; Treviño, den Nieuwenboer and Kish-Gephart, 2014), and ethical leadership to employee job satisfaction (Walz and Niehoff, 2000; Koys, 2001; Pucic, 2015).

Another form of implicit EI that the respondent considers influential is the reward system:

"You should reward them with at least a bit of... something, nothing like material like you know, but let them know, by word-of-mouth that you've been showing all these good ethical signs. You have to let them know because at least it will pass it down to the other staff, the other team members to know that this is what our hotel is expecting for me." (Amelia)

The respondent agrees that ethical behaviour should be publicly rewarded, without there being a material form of reward *per se*. This suggests that ethical behaviour

should not be motivated to receive a material reward. Instead, rewarding ethical behaviour informs employees about the norms and values of the organisation. It also serves as an example to others and encourages ethical behaviour. These findings are consistent with previous studies which have found that reward systems demonstrate concern for ethical behaviour (Hunt, Van Wood and Chonko, 1989), clarify organisational expectations and encourage ethical behaviour (Treviño, Brown and Hartman, 2003) and discourage unethical behaviour (Jansen and Von Glinow, 1985; Carlson and Perrewe, 1995).

4.2.4 Explicit EI as a development opportunity

In terms of explicit forms of EI, the respondent mentions the hotel's training programme (CSHTP) and the departmental 360 meetings. Both initiatives, she explains, are sources of job satisfaction and represent development opportunities in terms of technical skills and ethical conduct.

When asked how explicit EI initiatives influence job satisfaction, the respondent explains:

"I'd love to start off with the training programme, because [...] they do a training programme looking for people that were ... I've been unemployed for long time, you know, can't get into proper job. So, the training programme helps them to, you know, get to the level that they really want; if you want to be an F&B staff, you wanna be a manager, or a kitchen staff, you know, they help you towards that, you know, with the training for 6 weeks and sometimes you go on ahead and you go up to a different, you know, keep going up to different levels. As I said, I did, you know, so that's the explicit part which, I think, the training programme is very good." (Amelia)

This training programme is part of the organisation's educational initiative, which aims to support the long-term unemployed by providing them with hospitality training courses and a career opportunity. As a former trainee, she explains that the programme represents a major source of satisfaction, as she has developed both skills and passion for the profession:

"I'm there, it's just my passion, and I'm in my element." (Amelia)

Explicit EI initiatives, thus, enhance the respondent's job satisfaction:

"Well, it makes you, it makes you as a person, you know, feel good to get out of bed and go, you know, go to that job knowing that, [...] if you need to move on to something else, you know, at least you've got [...] those people, the training and everything to move on to a higher level, you know, that's how I see it."
(Amelia)

This result contrasts with previous studies reporting that explicit EI has no impact on employees' quality of work life (QWL) (Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2010), and more specifically no impact on higher-order QWL such as knowledge needs (Koonmee *et al.*, 2010). QWL is defined by Sirgy and colleagues (2001, p. 242) as *"employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace."* Koonmee and colleagues (2010, p. 21) distinguish between lower-order and higher-order QWL, with the former referring to health and safety needs and economic needs, whilst the latter include *inter alia* knowledge needs. This discrepancy in results may be explained by the organisation's educational business model, which requires an explicit institutionalisation of ethics to provide clear guidelines to trainees, which corroborates with Yeh's (2012) findings that the inclusion of ethics training for hospitality employees and students promotes ethical behaviour and is an essential component of business success. Though the content of the training programme may not be specifically ethics-oriented, it is the fact that the organisation provides training and a career opportunity which constitutes an ethical act. Nevertheless, the organisation's ethical values and expected conduct are communicated during the monthly departmental 360 meetings:

"The basic routine, letting us know these things are not allowed inside the hotel, you know, this is not accepted. If you got a problem, you know who to talk to. [...] Just keeping up the values and doing good. [...] 'Cause that's what our values are; doing good, you know." (Amelia)

The respondent recognised these meetings as a developmental opportunity where she was made aware of the role and importance of ethical behaviour.

In sum, at the individual level, the respondent indicated communication and teamwork as essential ethical behaviours. Communication encompasses interdepartmental communication for the purpose of receiving feedback from guests,

which is a source of job satisfaction. Open communication within her team is also an important component of ethical behaviour as it facilitates effective teamwork. Effective teamwork is about integrity—honesty, trustworthiness, and punctuality—which enables team members to rely on one another and work as a team, where solidarity means looking out for one another and collaborative problem-solving. At the organisational level, the respondent discusses implicit and explicit forms of EI. Implicit EI includes ethical leadership that encourages bilateral communication, supports equal treatment, leads by example, and ensures goal alignment between leader and followers. Another implicit form of EI refers to a reward system that clarifies the organisation's values and expectations and serves as an example of ethical behaviour to others. Lastly, explicit EI includes the hospitality training programme and the departmental 360 meetings, which are seen as opportunities for knowledge development (see [Table 9. Amelia \(BNM1\) - Meaning & impacts of ethical behaviour and implications for EI](#)). She also points out that explicit and implicit EI reinforce each other, as explicit EI provides clear guidelines on what is considered (un)ethical, what to expect and what is expected of her. Implicit EI, on the other hand, is a reflection of how one should behave. It is important to note that she also stated that implicit EI legitimises explicit EI initiatives:

*“If you only have training and the management does not do it, it’s just a face, because it has go in one way.”
(Amelia)*

This result was also reported by Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, and Kish-Gephart (2014), who confirm that when organisations deploy explicit EI initiatives such as codes of ethics codes, compliance with the codes must be reflected in organisational routines and management performance, as otherwise employees may view codes of ethics as windowdressing.

Table 9. Amelia (BNM1) - Meaning & impacts of ethical behaviour and implications for EI

	ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR					
	INDIVIDUAL			ORGANISATIONAL		
	COMMUNICATION		TEAMWORK	IMPLICIT EI		EXPLICIT EI
Meanings	- Open communication	- Interdepartmental communication	- Integrity - Solidarity	- Reward system	Ethical leadership: - Two-way communication - Approachability - Equal treatment	- Training programme - 360 meetings
Impacts	- Teamwork	- Job satisfaction	- Engagement - Reliability	- Clarification of organisational expectations	- Job satisfaction - Legitimises explicit EI - Goal alignment	- Knowledge development - Job satisfaction
Barriers			- Taking upon oneself - Negative behaviour			
Implications for EI			- Ethical leadership - Open communication			

4.3 FEM2 - Elena

On an individual level, Elena draws a distinction between 1) ethical behaviour in oneself, 2) ethical behaviour in others, and 3) ethical behaviour in general. This distinction can be regarded as an analogy for effective ethical relationships, where ethical behaviour in oneself is related to her interpretation of ethical leadership, ethical behaviour in others is related to the way she expects followers to behave (ethically), and ethical behaviour in general is related to behaviours that moderate the effectiveness of ethical leader-followers relationship and its outcomes (see *Figure 4. Elena (FEM2) - Effective ethical leader-follower relationships & its moderators*).

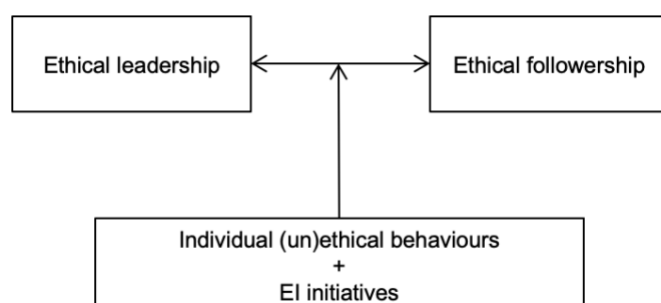


Figure 4. Elena (FEM2) - Effective ethical leader-follower relationships & its moderators

4.3.1 Ethical leadership

Elena states that she demonstrates ethical behaviour by “leading by example”, “empowering people so they can make their own decisions”, “encouraging others to come up with their own ideas”, and “helping others”. The frequent use of the pronoun “them” is an indication that these behaviours apply to herself: “encourage them”, “help them”, “guide them rather than tell them”. The respondent mentions the importance of **leading by example**, which, in line with ethical decisionmaking theory, can influence the ethical decisionmaking of employees (Schwartz, 2016; Schwepker and Dimitriou, 2021).

“Ethical is just leading by example and just do best you can. [...] I think it’s really important for me to [...] literally act by example. It’s really important. [...] If I don’t act by example, then, you know, how can I have expectations from others? It just won’t be right.”
(Elena)

The ethical leader becomes a role model, which is a key process by which followers learn to make sense of events by observing the leader’s behaviour and its outcomes (Bandura, 1986; Bouckennooghe, Zafar and Raja, 2015), with leaders influencing values and actions of their followers by setting a personal example of behaviour (Avey, Wernsing and Palanski, 2012).

“Because values are normally a word that could be like one of the words, let’s say ownership. So, what really ownership means to me? You know, just give examples, and show them”. (Elena)

In addition, the respondent states that she cannot set expectations for employees without being a role model. This fits with the notion of **reciprocity**:

“What’s ethical? It’s just the good thing. It’s the way you want to be treated. I want to give you what I expect from you.” (Elena)

In this context, Srivastava and Madan (2022) found that employees tend to adopt their leader’s values and reciprocate with similar acts. Other aspects that Elena considers important are related to **being approachable** and **giving employees voice**. In relation

to being approachable, she gives an example of a previous employment, where her manager at the time was not approachable:

“The culture or the leadership, I think, people have to be really accessible, easy to talk. I told you, I hate it when [...] it felt like the queen was passing. I was like, it’s just not right.” (Elena)

This finding mirrors that of Miao and colleagues (2013), who found that leaders are only perceived as ethical if they are approachable to their employees, are ethical role models for them, and consequently guide their employees to behave ethically. In terms of employee voice and ethical leadership, ethical leaders typically emphasise the importance of ethical standards through explicit communication (Treviño, Brown and Hartman, 2003; Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005), and because such leaders are role models, their followers tend to emulate them (Javed *et al.*, 2018). Elena values giving employees a voice:

“Yes, we have to have a SOPs, or standard operational procedures, and all things, but I like people to be heard. I think when you involve and give ideas, and this idea becomes your project, and you develop, you start owning, and then proud of it”. (Elena)

For Elena, it is important to give employees a voice so that they can learn, engage in decisionmaking, and take ownership of a project. Consistent with the present findings, previous studies have shown that managers who encourage employee voice are associated with positive team learning outcomes (Edmondson, 1999) and increased employee job satisfaction (Taylor *et al.*, 1995). However, studies have found that employees tend to withhold their opinions on improving work processes (Detert and Treviño, 2010) or are reluctant to inform leaders of their mistakes to avoid being blamed (van Dyck *et al.*, 2005). To counteract this reticent behaviour, studies have found that leaders who tolerate mistakes and encourage open communication about mistakes give employees a sense of security and support to learn from their mistakes (van Dyck *et al.*, 2005; Erdogan *et al.*, 2018).

“People, if they make mistake, they need to understand that it’s OK, but they need to understand what went wrong and why. [...] I say quite often, [...] you know, admitting a mistake, it just takes you a long way and it’s OK to say that: ‘Look, heads up, I made a mistake’. It’s fine, it’s absolutely fine. Then we help you

how not to do it, and overcoming, and resolve it together. But trying to lie I think it is not good. Lies, it just complicates things sooner or later.” (Elena)

This lines up with the following ethical behaviour she describes; **empowering others**. The participant discusses the importance of empowering others by leading by example, encouraging team members to engage in the organisation, make their own decisions, and take ownership of their acts. In line with the educational aspect of the organisation’s purpose, the participant believes it is important to train team members to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and capabilities (hereafter SKCs) to perform their tasks and to encourage employees to take ownership.

“I think when you involve and give ideas, and this idea becomes your project, and you develop, you start owning, and then proud of it”. (Elena)

“Empowering, this is exactly the word. This is very important, to be empowered, to empower people to make decisions and to guide them rather than tell them obvious.” (Elena)

There are similarities between the role of empowerment described by Elena and the role described by May and colleagues (2004) that ethical leaders who empower their employees and take into account employees’ development needs help employees develop a sense of purpose in their work. In addition, studies have found that ethical leaders who promote follower empowerment enhances work engagement (Rantika and Yustina, 2017) and improve employee moral identity, which refers to the extent to which an individual identifies as a moral person (Zhu, 2008).

The importance of leading by example—being approachable, giving employees a voice, and promoting employee empowerment—may be associated with the educational aspect of the organisation’s purpose, which is to provide training to long-term unemployed community members. In parallel, the ethical behaviours she expects from others are related to ethical followership.

4.3.2 Ethical followership

Leadership and followership are closely related concepts, for leaders must lead willingly and effectively, just as followers must follow willingly and effectively. Both leaders and followers are responsible for making valuable contributions to the

organisation's goals (Daft, 2018). This distinction is also evident in the respondent's distinction between ethical behaviour for herself and ethical behaviours in others. For employees to become autonomous (i.e., take ownership of their own acts and make their own decisions), leaders need to promote empowerment (grant ownership) of employees by providing them with the necessary SKCs and leading by example. When the interviewee mentions that she thinks it is important to give employees a voice, it is to encourage employees to participate in decisionmaking by contributing their own ideas and expressing their own views and interpretations of the organisation's values. Being approachable and allowing mistakes is a way to give employees a sense of safety for them to make mistakes and use these moments as learning opportunities to develop their SKCs and critical thinking.

"Sometimes they don't make the right choice, and that's OK because unless you make mistakes, you'll never learn, right? [...] It's part of the process, so I would encourage them to come up with ideas and different things. I think it's super important for everyone's development." (Elena)

"What being curious means for you? So, you know, get their interpretation of this. And you know, how can you be curious? [...] This is sort of things of being curious of how things are done and wanting to, you know, grow in their career. Again, it's rewarding, it's good, learn a new skillset, being curious, you learning. So, this sort of things." (Elena)

The aforementioned concepts contribute to employees' ability to take ownership and pride in their work, which are important ethical behaviours for the respondent:

"I like people taking ownership, I think it is quite important. [...] I always believe that a business will only be successful if you run it like your own." (Elena)

For Elena, developing a sense of ownership enables employees to take responsibility for their acts and develop a sense of purpose in their work:

"So, what really ownership means to me? You know, just give examples, and show them, and you know, ownership is, yes, coming up with an idea. Great, fantastic, we love ideas. But then, you know, we start a project, you need to finish it. Don't just hang [hand] over to someone. You know, once you start something you see it grow yourself, then you involve. Having that sense of purpose, you know, becoming ethical and

understand what this company is all about. They have purpose, so I think it's important.” (Elena)

In sum, ethical leadership and followership are closely linked, with the aim of Elena being to develop ethical leader-followers relationship and yield positive outcomes. In this regard, leadership is about leading by example, giving employees a voice to stimulate followers to contribute their own ideas and contribute to decisionmaking. Elena also discusses the importance of being approachable and allowing for mistakes so that employees develop a sense of safety to make mistakes, learn from them, and develop their skillsets and critical thinking, which is reinforced by the leader encouraging empowerment so that followers assume ownership and take responsibility for their acts and become accountable. To facilitate such a relationship, the respondent discusses several factors at both the individual and organisational levels.

4.3.3 Individual (un)ethical moderators

The participant provides several examples of ethical behaviour that she considers crucial for the hospitality industry: kindness, openness, honesty, genuineness, respect, *“smiling”*, *“being good with neighbours”*. She emphasises the importance of such behaviours in relation to facilitating viable relationship-building, whether with colleagues (internal stakeholders) or external stakeholders such as guests and competitors.

“As I say, consider others. You know, we are in hospitality. Hospitality is a business for people, for humans, for our kind. So, if we're not kind to each other, how can we be kind for our guests?” (Elena)

“I think a conversation... open conversation it always going to take you big way” (Elena)

“It's about open and honest and even with a guest like what I'm saying faking a smile, I think there's nothing worse than faking a smile. It needs to be genuine and being genuine it is a big thing. So, being honest, being genuine, being open is super important. It's just who you are.” (Elena)

Elena argues that ethical behaviour refers to developing relationships based on honesty, both with others and with oneself. Honesty with oneself and a willingness to

admit mistakes requires courage and demonstrates openness that enables team members to recognise each other's honesty, thereby reducing the risk of deception and enhancing trustworthiness. Examples of ethical behaviour relate to the development of sustainable relationships - seemingly related to ethical values in teamwork, to which Elena refers as *“good team understanding”*—so that team members respect and value each other and can rely on each other, meaning that team members can be accountable because of their openness, honesty, and genuineness.

“Being honest, being genuine, being open is super important [...]. It's all about relationship, and relationship can only be built on trust and honesty.”
(Elena)

“Ethical behaviour, it's like how would I like to be treated, and that is always what I tell to the team. Like just, everyone needs... has the right to feel good and to be treated with respect and dignity.” (Elena)

“That's ethical and right thing to do. That's the good thing, you feel valued, and you know, no matter whatever if it's a customer, whatever, it's a staff member, it's a neighbour. You need to be valued.”
(Elena)

This can lead to an improvement in morale (job satisfaction), which, in turn, is reflected in the ambiance and atmosphere of the workplace. Promoting what Elena calls a *“happy place”* will subsequently promote guest satisfaction and retention. In sum, ethical behaviour has a positive ripple effect on relationships, employee morale, and therefore the atmosphere of the organisation, which in turn increases guest satisfaction and loyalty.

Another theme that recurs in the participant's narrative is the importance of *“understanding”*. Elena highlights three complementary facets of understanding: 1) seeking to understand the other; 2) making oneself understood; and 3) displaying understanding (consideration). Seeking to understand the other is an essential ability and ethical behaviour that involves wanting to understand the other's perspective and trying to make sense of it without judgment. This behaviour is related to cognitive empathy, discussed in the literature review (see [2.4.2 Cognitive empathy: understanding the perspective of the other](#)), which refers to the ability to recognise the other's internal mental state or perspective (Blair, 2008, p. 159; Aaltola, 2014, p. 76).

A behaviour may appear negative or unethical if one is not informed about the context or reasons underlying such behaviour.

“We need to know what is going on and why it’s going on”. (Elena)

Seeking to understand requires a degree of self-understanding. The participant discusses the importance of understanding what impact one’s behaviour can have on others. This is especially important in the setting of a diverse team (i.e., background, language, age). The participant illustrates the risk of humour in a team where not all team members are native English speakers. If misunderstood, humour can be offensive and have an adverse effect.

“[T]here might be a situation where somebody just jokes, it is their way of joking but [...] the other person doesn’t feel good about it. [Y]ou need to encourage people to be open to talk and get them to agree, really, understand that it’s not OK. It might be joke for you, but the other person is not feeling good so that needs to stop.” (Elena)

Seeking to understand the other is considered ethical behaviour, as it shows a willingness to understand other points of view:

“You need to believe in the good, that they are actually honest, and you need to understand their point of view, you have to put yourself in their shoes. So, this is a good ethical thing.” (Elena)

Elena explains that seeking to understand others:

“makes them valued and important and give them the chance to tell me from their perspective what’s going on and what is wrong”. (Elena)

Seeking to understand, thus, requires a certain level of self-understanding of how one’s own behaviour can affect the behaviour of others. Apart from making sense of other people’s perspectives, seeking understanding can also make the other person feel heard and valued. This is related to the concept of displaying consideration, which refers to affective empathy, the ability to infer another’s feelings (Davis, 1983; Ickes, 1997; Decety and Cowell, 2014). Giving the other person the time and space to explain themselves and make themselves understood is another aspect of ethical behaviour that, according to Elena, is an integral part of good practice in the hospitality industry.

Consideration can enhance employee morale and, subsequently, reflect in the workplace, which Elena terms a “*happy place*”.

“[C]onsider others. You know, we are in hospitality. Hospitality is a business for people, for humans, for our kind. So, if we are not kind to each other, how can we be kind for our guests?” (Elena)

“You need to be considerate; you need to be nice and open with them.” (Elena)

Similarly, understanding is also about enabling the other person to make sense of one’s own perspective. Making the reasons for a behaviour or decision explicit can reduce ambiguity and conflict, creating a positive/ethical workplace culture, which in turn, can improve employee morale. Amongst subordinates/team members, the participant suggests that making oneself understood can mitigate the risk of conflict.

“[I]f a person doesn’t understand, let’s say a basic example with housekeeping—if front office reception doesn’t understand how housekeeping operates and what might go wrong, you know, there will be conflict”. (Elena)

Between subordinates and manager, the participant emphasises the importance of understanding subordinates’ needs in order to address their issues and make them feel valued.

“I think that makes them valued and important and give them the chance to tell me from their perspective what’s going on and what is wrong.” (Elena)

4.3.4 The role of EI in developing ethical relations and behaviours

In discussing the initiatives that Case Study Hotel has taken to institutionalise ethics, Elena mentions that the organisation operates in accordance with a set of organisational values (Behaviours), which are also part of its brand. The organisation communicates the importance of these (ethical) Behaviours through various communication channels: onboarding sessions, during day-to-day operations, the Value of the month reward system.

“We have our values and behaviours and the things that we stand for. [...] And I think, this, you know, becomes with our branding, talking about that, it’s very very important, and giving examples. Obviously, it’s

very easy to forget all of that, so us as managers, [...] how do we get people to understand the behaviours and why do we need to have behaviours, we [...] plan to do every six months, [...] but we have this kind of onboarding sessions where we talk about who we are, what we do, why we do it, what our values are, and what we stand by.” (Elena)

Onboarding sessions are usually held biannually. During these, workforce is reminded of the purpose of the organisation and how team members contribute to that purpose. Though often overlooked in the hospitality industry, onboarding plays a critical role in employee retention and employee alignment to the organisation’s culture and environment (Ghani *et al.*, 2022, p. 16).

“It is super, super important and then to kind of to keep that going and engage, we do a value of the month, where they will come up with a quote of what that means. The idea is to celebrate that. So, every time someone does something that shows our value, let’s say a manager, or some colleagues who witnessed that scenario would write a card and say the story what they have done, and they get awards.” (Elena)

To appraise employee performance and interpretation of each Behaviour, the organisation has adopted a reward system: Value of the Month. In this vein, numerous studies have shown that organisational reward systems influence ethical behaviour (e.g., Hegarty and Sims, 1978; Treviño, 1986; Treviño and Youngblood, 1990; Tenbrunsel, 1998; Ashkanasy, Windsor and Treviño, 2006). This reward system serves as a ‘tool’ to monitor and stimulate employee behaviour. Employees are asked to provide an interpretation/application of the Value of the Month, and other colleagues then vote on the best interpretation/behaviour based on their personal opinion and on guest reviews. Elena explains that employees can be as creative as they like to demonstrate their understanding of the Value of the Month. This form of challenge and competition is analogous to gamification techniques, to which Deterding, Khaled, and Nacke (2011, p. 2) refer as: *“the use of game design elements in non-game contexts”*. Gamification is a playful technique that encourages employees to creatively interpret and present their understanding of the Value of the Month. Other employees can then nominate the employee or team they think is the best. As Elena explains, employees tend to be forgetful and need to be reminded of the organisation’s values. Gamification techniques, such as Value of the Month reward systems, can encourage employee

engagement (Robson *et al.*, 2016, p. 5). According to Danthanarayana, Rajapaksha, and Madhusankha (2019, p. 1), gamification can stimulate ethical work behaviour and enhance open communication and social interaction.

Elena mentions two explicit EI initiatives—onboarding sessions and Value of the Month reward system—and one implicit initiative which concerns herself; ethical leadership (see *Table 10. Elena (FEM2) - Meaning & impacts of ethical behaviour and role of EI*). As mentioned in the previous section, she demonstrates ethical behaviour by leading by example, which is important in the context of an educational organisation and which Elena links to empowering others to assume ownership. Though she does not explicitly label her leadership style as ethical, it closely follows Brown, Treviño, and Harrison's (2005, p. 120) definition of ethical leadership *“as the demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making”*.

Table 10. Elena (FEM2) - Meaning & impacts of ethical behaviour and role of EI

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR				
ETHICAL LEADERSHIP: LEADING BY EXAMPLE				
Meaning		- Give employee voice	- Encourage empowerment	- Allow mistakes - Be approachable
Meanings & impacts	ETHICAL FOLLOWERSHIP	= - Engagement & involvement	- Taking ownership	- Learning & development
Individual barriers	Negative behaviours: lying, bullying, prejudging			
Individual facilitators	Positive behaviours: openness, honesty, kindness, genuineness, consideration, respect, cognitive and affective empathy			
Organisational facilitators (EI)	Reward system, onboarding sessions, daily communication			

4.4 FMM4 - Joana

4.4.1 Individual and organisational ethical behaviour

Joana expresses her thoughts on ethics as follows:

“I don't want to sound naive, and I know it's not perfect like colourful world, but talking about ethics, I think, this is what guides us all, what should guide us all; like our values, and morals, uhm just like how we live life, and I do believe in boundaries, like making sure we

live in a community. [...] I think it's just like basically living in a community". (Joana)

Joana points out that ethics refers to values and morals that facilitate living in a community. Though, this explanation refers to life in general, it can also be applicable to the workplace, where employees develop a sense of community and interconnectedness. In this vein, several scholars argue that morality facilitates living in a community by developing norms of behaviour that seek to regulate social relationships and personal behaviours (De Waal, 1996; Haidt and Joseph, 2004; Hauser, 2006; Haidt, 2008; Krebs, 2008; Janoff-Bulman, Skeikh and Hepp, 2009). In terms of personal behaviours, the respondent mentions several behaviours that are important in the hospitality industry. Honesty and transparency towards guests, co-workers, and suppliers are important aspects of ethical behaviour. She states that such behaviours are about

"Not only saying what you do, but also saying what you can't do", and "doing what you say you do". (Joana)

This statement resonates with the expression *walking the talk*. In the context of ethical leadership, studies have found that followers have higher levels of trust and respect for leaders who *walk their talk* by putting internalised values into action (Mihelič, Lipičnik and Tekavčič, 2010). In contrast, leaders who fail to *walk their talk* are perceived as hypocritical, unpredictable, and untrustworthy (Simons, 2002). When the respondent states that one should be honest about what one cannot do, it is about knowing one's own limits and informing others of those limits. This contributes to the person's accountability as others know what to expect from the person.

Uhm, so being accountable to what you promise, and what you've been preaching. But also, [...] making sure that you are [...] not lying, is being accountable to what you promise [...] [towards] internal and external stakeholders. So, all uh the environment of people that is around your business. So, that is your guests, that is your team, that is your suppliers, your investors. So, it's just making sure that... you're just being clear and transparent with this communication, with your actions, and that you're not misleading anyone into anything." (Joana)

Joana points out the importance of not making assumptions, in relation to the notion of common sense, which she contends does not exist:

“Common sense doesn’t exist. What is common for me is not common for another person. So, let’s not assume anything. But for me, it is just like making sure that whatever you do is not impacting negatively at least your neighbour.” (Joana)

The respondent’s statement resonates with that of Singer (1986, p. 240), who argues in the context of common sense in ethics that *“the common sense of one community is not necessarily the common sense of another. Common sense can vary from one community to another as it varies over time.”* This notion joins the relativist principle—discussed in the literature review (see [2.1.5 Relativism](#))—stating that the rightness of an act is relative to each individual (individual relativism), or relative to cultures and societies (cultural relativism) (Shafer-Landau, 2012). Therefore, as Joana explains, it is important to be transparent and not make assumptions. This is especially important in diverse teams, as is common in the hospitality industry.

On an organisational level, the participant identifies aspects of ethical behaviour that have similarities with individual ethical behaviour, namely transparency and honesty. She also mentions aspects related to communication and human resources practices. Transparency pertains to clear communication with both internal and external stakeholders:

“So, all uh the environment of people that is around your business. So, that is your guests, that is your team, that is your suppliers, your investors. So, it’s just making sure that... you’re just being clear and transparent with this communication, with your actions, and that you’re not misleading anyone into anything.” (Joana)

Communication should be honest, including about the limitations of the organisation in terms of its contribution towards its purpose, as long as the organisation is actually working towards that purpose.

“I don’t believe in doing everything. I know it’s not possible [...] as businesses to do everything like sustainability wise, for example, uh, but I do believe that once, once you preach to be a social business, or sustainable, and you’re taking care of the environment, you are effectively making changes that will support that. That it is ... that it’s happening.” (Joana)

Communication about the purpose of the organisation and how the workforce contributes to that purpose should be clear and concerns

“not only training, but also clarification and having someone just making sure that the [...] questions are being answered”. She further states that “we can tell over and over what are our values, and what we stand for, and that is just not a normal business”, but the organisation should also be explicit about “why we are all here, why we should all be here, [...] without romanticising.” (Joana)

Since the employees could work in any other establishment, the organisation should emphasise why they should choose this organisation rather than another by explaining how the employees contribute to the organisation’s purpose, so that they develop

“this feeling of belonging of, like, being an agent of change and, just like, the passion for the social business”. (Joana)

This indicates that the respondent expects the organisation to be explicit about its purpose to give employees a stronger sense of purpose. In terms of ethical behaviour in the context of human resources practices, she attaches great importance to work-life balance. Deery and Jago (2015) have found that this is a key variable when it comes to employee retention issues. In addition, she considers an impartial recruitment system to be an ethical human resource practice, in line with the shifting societal values around equal opportunities and employees’ rights, which have led to a review of UK legislation, as discussed in the literature review (see [2.5.4 \(Multi\)stakeholderism](#)).

In sum, at the individual level, Joana mentions several aspects of ethical behaviour, including honesty and transparency to ensure accountability and avoid the assumption that one’s common sense can be generalised. At the organisational level, she also mentions the role of honesty and transparency, in this case to ensure accountability and not to mislead anyone, and to make clear to employees the purpose of the organisation and how employees contribute to it, in order to develop a sense of purpose amongst employees. Other aspects of organisational ethical behaviour relate to human resource practices that reflect societal values and needs, such as attention to work-life balance and impartiality in recruitment.

4.4.2 Explicit EI as a source of transparency

The explicit EI initiative that Joana mentions is the organisation's "*book of ethics*". She goes on to explain that explicit EI serves to set clear guidelines and boundaries, provide a clear picture of the organisation's goals, and improve transparency:

"It is like [...] the rules of the game. So, if you know the rules of the game, you know how to play the game, and you know how to succeed. If you don't have the ground rules set, then it's a bit everyone everywhere, and there are no clear goals, no clear expectations so that I think that generates a lot of frustration. So yeah, it's basically the guidelines, it's the rules of the game and once you have the rules you know what is your objective, or what is, like, your aim, what you have to do. So, I think that means really minimise frustration and just issues within the team and everyone."
(Joana)

In line with previous studies, Joana states that the function of explicit EI is to clarify the organisation's value system (Carlson and Perrewe, 1995) and provide clear guidelines for ethical decisionmaking (Jose and Thibodeaux, 1999; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007). She explains that clear guidelines and boundaries provide employees with the knowledge of what is expected of them and how they should to act.

"There are limits and boundaries and that is the rules of the game. So, having it explicit and making sure that that is being followed is just making sure that they are also accountable for their own actions". (Joana)

The emphasis on boundaries suggests a proscriptive approach to ethics, which Janoff-Bulman and colleagues (2009, p. 522) define as a system that focuses on what not do and punishing unethical behaviour. For Joana, explicitly informing employees of boundaries renders them accountable for their actions. Employees have the freedom to express their personalities as long as they operate within the given rules and boundaries:

"Here in the hotel, we also don't believe in putting people in boxes. So, we don't want everyone to have the same speech when dealing with guests. We don't want robots. We want people to act as themselves, but there are guidelines." (Joana)

This statement may relate to the respondent's belief that there is no such thing as common sense, especially in a diverse team; and setting rules and boundaries can be understood as an approach to defining what constitutes common sense within the organisation. Furthermore, Joana argues that the explicit institutionalisation of ethics is a source of job satisfaction as it reduces uncertainty and ambiguity—which are otherwise sources of frustration in teamwork—which, in turn, contributes to what Joana calls a healthy team. Clear guidelines provide employees with a framework that gives them a sense of safety:

“Cause you know that what you're doing is good, that you are backed up by, like, your business model or your, [...] internal guidelines, the rules, and agreements. So, I think that is the best, um, the best benefit. It's just knowing ... you just rest assured that things are right.” (Joana)

Another aspect of explicit EI that Joana introduces, is that it gives a clear picture of the goals towards which employees are working:

“Once you have the rules you know what is your objective, or what is, like, your aim, what you have to do.” (Joana)

This can help develop a sense of purpose in the workplace, as explained in the previous section. Thus far, the impact of explicit EI discussed concerned the workforce. However, Joana also points to an impact on the organisation itself. She indicates that explicit EI increases the transparency of the organisation's practices:

“For the business [...] there will be no way around, like, trying to mask anything, but I don't even think that's bad. I think that's actually very good,” (Joana)

This statement implies that the organisation, like the employees, becomes accountable for its actions.

Thus, the roles and impacts of explicit institutionalisation of ethics are manifold. Firstly, it provides clarity on policies and boundaries, holding employees accountable for their actions, and it contributes to healthy teamwork by reducing ambiguity and uncertainty. Secondly, it provides a clear picture of the organisation's purpose, which can lead to a sense of purpose in the workplace. Thirdly, it increases transparency of the organisation's values and practices for which the organisation can be held

accountable. The following section discusses the respondent's perspective on the meanings and impacts of implicit EI.

4.4.3 Implicit EI as a source of regulation

The participant identifies three aspects of implicit EI: the organisation's purpose, the leadership style, and the incentive system. Though EI generally refers to ethical matters internal to the organisation (Sims, 1991; Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007; Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010), the respondent identifies the organisation's social purpose—supporting communities in need—as an implicit feature of EI that gives meaning to her work:

"It comes [...] to the [...] personal feeling of knowing you are in a good place. [...] I know that even if I'm stressing if I have to handle, like, tight deadlines and very boring things that I don't enjoy doing, there is a meaning behind it. So, we all have to do things that we don't love in every single position [...]. But understanding that there is a reason behind it, and that the end goal is really nice, it changes a bit. It doesn't change how stressed you will get, probably, but it does put some meaning to your stress." (Joana)

Another implicit aspect relates to the leadership style, which should be about

"leading by example. So, it's how we act and how we respond to situations [...], it sets the tone to everyone else." (Joana)

Consistent with the present finding, Brown and Treviño have noted that leading by example is an essential component of ethical leadership, because *"ethical leaders do not just talk a good game—they practice what they preach and are proactive role models for ethical conduct"* (2006, p. 597).

Lastly, the interviewee addresses the role of the incentive system. The question of whether ethical behaviour should be rewarded presented her with a dilemma:

"That is very tricky. [...] I think my first answer would be, um, we shouldn't. Because this is just what we do, because that's what we have to do. Just like someone that finds a bag full of cash in the street and the person finds the owner and gives the cash back [...]. We shouldn't praise, I mean, I think it's good praising, yeah, [...] I, I think my answer is, I don't have a fixed answer, [...] but at the same time is good for

examples. Making [...] this person, just like, connected and seen and that it is really appreciated, and that being good pays off. So, I, yeah, I I'm in between the two. Yeah, [...] each case is a different case, and the situation is different. So yeah, I'm afraid I don't really have a clear answer for this one.” (Joana)

On the one hand, she thinks that ethical behaviour should not be rewarded because it is a duty to behave ethically. The notion of ethical behaviour as a duty joins the deontological ethical theories, which posit that it is people's duty to obey moral rules or principles (Breed, 2017, p. 20). On the other hand, rewarding ethical behaviour can serve as an example to encourage ethical behaviour in others. In contrast, her view on punishing unethical behaviour is clear. Despite the different types of unethical behaviour, she believes it is necessary to punish it:

“Of course, that are [...] different levels of unethical behaviours, uhm, but [...] I think we should do it. [...] We are all [...] grown-ups and we all need to understand that all of our actions, uhm, have reactions. So, it's just making sure that you are being held accountable for your own actions. And that could go from very small things, like a warning, to bigger thing. It's just like, this is our boundary, this is not nice, this is not ethical, and this cannot happen again. Like setting boundaries”. (Joana)

Punishing unethical behaviour serves to show that such behaviour is not accepted and that employees will be held accountable for their actions. She also discusses the contagious aspect in teamwork and gives an example from her previous experience in education:

“I was teaching, um, little kids, mainly. And then one thing I learned is that they will copy not only the teacher, but also the friends. And I thought when I was younger that that was, uhm, something that only kids did, but it is not. We all do it. So, if you are in a team and you have someone constantly being unethical or not following something, that will contaminate the peers.” (Joana)

Hence, it is important for a leader to be a role model and for the organisation to ensure that the leader is an ethical role model:

“We have to be good examples, but people also lead by bad examples. So, it is just making sure that we set

the boundaries and that each person is responsible for its own actions". (Joana)

Setting the right example is even more so important in an organisation that provides training programmes, as Bandura (1986, p. 344) noted: *"if models do not abide by what they preach, why should others do so?"*

Overall, the respondent inclines towards a proscriptive approach to EI, which is duty-based and focuses on avoiding and punishing unethical behaviour (Janoff-Bulman, Skeikh and Hepp, 2009). Rewarding ethical behaviour is not a priority for her as she sees it as a duty. For Joana, EI is about clarity of guidelines and boundaries (1) to inform internal stakeholders about what constitutes ethical behaviour and (2) hold them accountable for their actions. Accountability also applies to the organisation, as explicit institutionalisation of ethics increases the transparency of the organisation's values and standards, which the organisation is expected to uphold. The organisation's social purpose is considered an aspect of EI and serves to develop the sense of purpose in the workplace (see [Table 11. Joana \(FMM4\) - Meanings & impacts of ethical behaviour and role of EI](#)).

Table 11. Joana (FMM4) - Meanings & impacts of ethical behaviour and role of EI

	ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR		
	INDIVIDUAL	ORGANISATIONAL	
	LIVING IN COMMUNITY	TRANSPARENCY & HONESTY	HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES
Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Honesty - Transparency - No assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear communication - Clear purpose - Attend to stakeholders needs (internal & external) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work-life balance - Impartial recruiting system
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances accountability - Deepens sense of purpose 	
Role of EI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide clear guidelines & boundaries - Develop organisational common sense - Control unethical behaviour - Lead by example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide clear standards & practices - Clarify organisation's purpose 	

4.5 FNM2 - Ike

4.5.1 Representation and prioritisation as ethical behaviour

Ethical behaviour relates to representing the brand and prioritising the needs of guests and co-workers. When asked what ethical behaviour means to him, the respondent employs the term “*representation*” and explains that it is about:

“how you sort of carry yourself, you know, as a person and how you represent, you know, the business, [...] the, sort of, brand you’re working for. [...] It’s how you represent the hospitality business, that’s how I see it.”
(Ike)

As an illustration, he mentions:

“promoting what’s on our, like, menu. Because I was working in the F&B section for like a year or two years now, it just like promoting [...] chef specials [...], just upselling as well, you know, stuff, drinks, that other businesses may have, in terms of special cocktails and stuff.” (Ike)

For Ike, ethical behaviour involves representation of the organisation’s brand and implies organisational commitment, which Buchanan (1974, p. 533) defines as “*affective attachment to the goals and values of an organization, to one’s role in relation to goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth.*” Employee brand commitment is critical in the hospitality industry. Given the inherent characteristics of the service sector (i.e., intangibility, perishability, simultaneity, and heterogeneity), guests’ expectations of the brand are largely shaped by employee behaviour (Morhart, Herzog and Tomczak, 2009). Service employees are the face of the organisation, and their behaviour brings the brand to life (Ind, 2001; Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler, 2013). The participant identifies the organisation as a sociable business that strives to foster a sense of community:

“we are quite different to, like, other hotels such as the Ibis, you know, and other big brands such as Novotel, with our hotel brand, we, sort of, run a more sort of sociable like business and, you know, that’s why, you know, there’s no TVs in the room, it is more like a community sort of environment, you know. And how we approach to our guests, you know, more sort of interact with them.” (Ike)

A culture of community, as he mentions, affects the way employees interact with guests. Employee–guest interactions tend to be less formal relative to organisations that are more business-oriented:

“that’s what the hotel specialises in where we are working; being social and doing good. Compared to the other ones, like Ibis, these are different ones. Because I think these are a bit more business-related, in terms of their brand. But with this one, it’s different, because again there are no TVs in the rooms, [...] we are able to talk to guests, they have this display board where it has information about the hotel, where the guests can have a look at, we are able to talk and elaborate more about the hotel, where it started, when it opened, who the CEO is.” (Ike)

The participant has a strong orientation towards the organisation and its performance. For instance, one source of job satisfaction is to ensure

*“things, sort of, run smoothly within the business”.
(Ike)*

He also states that ethical standards should be understood and followed

“to help push on and promote, you know, and keep [...] the business running smoothly”. (Ike)

Otherwise,

“it can sort of bring, you know, things down. [...] Business will not be running smoothly.” (Ike)

As previously mentioned, he also argues that ethical behaviour is about

“how you represent, you know, the business of the, sort of, brand”. (Ike)

Furthermore, the importance of communication pertains to sharing ideas in an effort to improving service quality. Lastly, he points out that ethical standards benefit the organisation in that

“it just, like, improves their business, really, the company’s reputation, you know, especially within your staff”. (Ike)

His account suggests that ethical behaviour is about maintaining organisational wellbeing/performance as a central tenet for decisionmaking and behaviour.

Another recurrent theme revolves around “*prioritising*” others:

“it’s just, you know, putting others before me, like prioritising; this is sort of like guests and staffwise as well”. (Ike)

The interviewee discusses characteristics of ethical behaviour that include putting others—both guests and co-workers—before himself by placing importance on attending to the needs of others. In relation to his co-workers, these characteristics include “*positivity*”, “*awareness*”, “*approachability*”, “*helping others*”, and “*punctuality*”.

For Ike, a positive attitude is important to be able to cope with work-related pressure:

“Positivity [...], despite any major issues, you know, if we have, like busiest days, you know, and events, you know, [...] keeping a positive mind and focus”. (Ike)

As an illustration of positivity, he gives the following examples:

“If there’s like a problem with the senior management, don’t get involved, but be sure that you’re doing your own thing and that it’s done in a positive way. Because if you feed off their negative energies, it is gonna. like sort of, spoil the cycle within your daily shift. That’s how I see it.” (Ike)

Another way to ensure positivity in the team is by

“passing on positive message towards your chef or your fellow colleagues or whoever is on duty that day”. (Ike)

The other aforementioned characteristics facilitate effective teamwork, where awareness refers to the being aware of the needs of colleagues, and approachability implies the willingness to help team members

“so things sort of run smoothly within the business”. (Ike)

When Ike discusses putting guests before himself, similar to with his co-workers, he mentions:

Awareness [...] of the surroundings, or anything. It could be anything what your guests may want, basically.” [to ensure] “you’re exceeding expectations” [and] “going, like, the extra mile”. (Ike)

In sum, individual ethical behaviour involves employees' representation of the brand, which is crucial in the hospitality industry due to the inherent characteristics of the service sector. Ethical behaviour is also about prioritising others, both guests and co-workers. The following section discusses organisational ethical behaviour.

4.5.2 The role of EI

The role of EI is primarily to facilitate internal stakeholders perform their tasks in line with the organisation's objectives. As for ethical behaviour, he argues that it is one's own responsibility. Although promoting ethical behaviour is, to some extent, the responsibility of the team, he sees himself as the main person responsible for ensuring that he behaves ethically. He mentions that managers can also be responsible for promoting ethical behaviour, although, he argues that they are not exempt from behaving unethically,

"because it's just very easy to be sucked into [...] doing this the wrong way." (Ike)

This ties in with the notion of ethical blindness, where the decisionmaker is temporarily unaware of the ethical dimension of a decision, which may be due to situational pressures (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012, p. 324) such as time pressure (Sonenshein, 2007). He contends that it is the responsibility of each individual to ensure ethical behaviour.

"Generally, I think it's you, it's your own responsibility mainly. I put mine first, but team second. You first, because the boss can get a lot of things wrong as well." (Ike)

Explicit institutionalisation of ethics refers to the communication of clear requirements and standards that internal stakeholders must understand and follow. These standards provide employees with the necessary SKCs to perform their job so as

"to help push on and promote, you know, and [...] keep the business running smoothly [and] to make sure you're exceeding [guest] expectations as well and staff's are met as well." (Ike)

In relation to implicit EI, he mentions that the organisational culture shapes the way he interacts with guests and ensures that

“That one plays a part as well, especially when you are talking with guests and staff as well. That’s how I see it. [...] It has a bigger impact because you’re constantly, you know, talking to people. [...] You know when you’re with guests you are constantly sort of representing the brand”. (Ike)

Another implicit initiative relates to communication, which plays a twofold role. On the one hand, he suggests that encouraging employee voice enables them to participate in decisionmaking and—on the premise that each individual has different skillsets—to contribute to improving workplace practices:

“sharing each other’s ideas, you know, so [...] our businesses can meet [...] higher like sort of demands and expectations for instance, [...] just putting in your own ideas, [...] it’s just you know about just sharing each other’s ideas, you know, especially because, sometimes, whoever is in charge or your GM haven’t the best sort of idea, you’re just putting in your own ideas.” (Ike)

On the other hand, clear and open communication is central to teamwork, especially in labour-intensive industries such as hospitality (e.g., long and irregular working hours, daily work peaks, seasonality). The interviewee underlines the importance of inter-shift handovers, without which employees are required to improvise:

“especially on the days I’m off, and if I’m working the next day, I might not have a clue what has been going on”. (Ike)

Another aspect of communication concerns the organisation’s marketing communication. The respondent states that the information and promotions communicated by the organisation should reflect what the organisation actually offers. This could be related to the fact that he values representing the brand, and, therefore, must be aligned with the external communication.

As for the reward system, he sees it as a means to boost confidence and motivate to improvement. He explains that rewarding ethical behaviour is about transmitting positive guest feedback:

“The rewarding is sort of something that the duty managers do, [...] it’s a good thing because it gives you confidence, you know, to perform better, you know, and exceed, you know, to have better high

standard. You know we could be in a better position, you know, if we continue. It gives them a boost.” (Ike)

Whereas punishing unethical behaviour about transmitting guest complaints:

“Basically, just giving them, you know, honest feedback from the guests: ‘they didn’t like this’, you know it’s just ways you can improve, you know, to be better. [...] That’s how I see punishing behaviour, just being better, you know, I don’t take it as a sort of like bad bad thing, I just see it as a way to fix, to repair. It’s just tweaking few things you know that’s how I see it. [...] Obviously, we can’t change the past, but we can fix the future.” (Ike)

In sum, according to Ike, explicit EI involves providing clear standards that equip internal stakeholders with the necessary SKCs to perform their jobs. Whilst implicit EI serves to shape employee–guest interactions, boost employee confidence to continuously strive for better performance and improve workplace practices (see [Table 12. Ike \(FNM2\) - Meaning of ethical behaviour and role of EI](#)).

Table 12. Ike (FNM2) - Meaning of ethical behaviour and role of EI

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR			
	BRAND REPRESENTATION		PRIORITISATION
Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promoting - Upselling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exceeding guest expectations - Developing sense of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Positivity - Awareness - Approachability - Punctuality
Role of EI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop reward system - Provide clear standards - Ensure non-deceptive external communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop reward system - Foster ethical culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop reward system - Encourage clear & open internal communication

4.6 BEM1 - Jane

4.6.1 Ethical behaviour

“I think ethical behaviour is behaviour that is non selfish, that is thinking about the greater good, you know, when you make decisions or take actions, you’re really consciously thinking about what are the consequences and evaluating the positive and the negative and thinking, not just about what is the positive and negative for me, but also thinking of the positive and negative for the other people around you

that might be affected by those decisions. That for me, comes in. And so unethical behaviours would be purely self-interested, you know, making decisions that will harm other people as part of the consequence. That would be unethical behaviour to me.” (Jane)

The respondent’s interpretation of ethical behaviour resonates with the utilitarian principle of greatest happiness introduced by Hutcheson (2008, p. 125), which states *“that Action is best, which procures the greatest Happiness for the greatest Numbers”* (see [2.1.1 Teleology](#)).

“If I know that the end goal is something positive and ethical, then I feel good.” (Jane)

When discussing ethical behaviour in the workplace, she maintains a predominantly external focus, in that ethical behaviour of internal stakeholders is behaviour that keeps the purpose of the organisation in mind. For Jane, ethical behaviour is primarily about giving back to charity and collaborating with local communities. Giving back to charity means reinvesting as much of the profit as possible into the charity fund of the organisation and other charity partners. Engaging with local communities encompasses 1) providing hospitality training programmes for long-term unemployed local communities, 2) collaborating with local authorities, charities, or organisations with an ethical purpose, and 3) providing discounts to local residents. Her interpretation of ethical behaviour is to make an “impact in the world”. The organisation’s social purpose is also the main source of job satisfaction:

“To me that is a great satisfaction of being a part of an organisation that is truly trying to do things differently. I think there's something exciting and fulfilling, feeling like you are a part of a trailblazer, you know, that we're kind of breaking with the status quo and trying to do things in a different way. I think that is really exciting for me, you know, personally, professionally, and socially. You know, there is a social credit which comes with being able to talk about: ‘Oh, I'm working with this organisation, and they're really cool because they do this way and they're trying to achieve this’, and I think that gives you really good social currency. I think that's quite exciting. Secondly, is, you know, the very nature that we are trying to be [...], you know, we are exploring what it means to be a social business and what that looks like.” (Jane)

4.6.2 *Meaning and impacts of EI*

For Jane, explicit institutionalisation of ethics comprises traditional and digital marketing strategies, company slogans, the apprentice training programme, new employee induction, and the employee handbook. She refers to these initiatives as a means to convey the organisation's social purpose. She also briefly mentions the organisation's key values, which refer to the workplace behavioural values against which employees are monitored and reviewed. She recognises the founder of the organisation as the main source of implicit EI, who plays a role in reminding internal stakeholders of the organisation's social purpose.

“Our CEO is also our founder. So, having him and his story, you know, still to be at the pinnacle of our leadership. And you know, he tries really hard to engage with the teams on a local level as well, and you know, listens to the team and speaks to the team and he's known, and he is that example and reminder to the team, I think, in terms of why this thing started and, you know, where it's going. [...] So, hopefully that makes it clear to everyone who we are, why we're here.” (Jane)

It seems that she associates the concept of EI with the social business model or purpose of the organisation and the various initiatives (explicit and implicit EI) as a means to ensure that internal stakeholders are aware of this purpose and to remind them that and how they contribute to the organisation's purpose, considering the latter as ethical behaviour. This interpretation of EI evokes an external stance towards ethical behaviour and EI. Ethical behaviour, in this case, focuses on behaviour that contributes to the social purpose of the organisation rather than ethical behaviour or practices within the workplace. Thus, when discussing the impact of EI, she mainly addresses the impact of the social purpose of the organisation, the training programme, and the leader. For Jane, the organisation's purpose has a threefold impact. Firstly,

“the strongest benefit, I think, is brand loyalty. I think people tend to stay [...] for a long time, because of that sense of passion, you know, purpose, because of that sense of mission, and I think that's probably the strongest thing, in terms of a business benefit that we, kind of, keep and retain talent overtime because we're invested personally.” (Jane)

Secondly, the purpose of the organisation to reinvest profits in the charity influences financial decisionmaking

“I think [...] it does affect our behaviours in terms of what we do with our money at the end of the day. Making those decisions for spending within the business is always in the context of, you know, thinking about what is that going to do to the money that we can give back at the end of the year. So, I think, it definitely... the charitable donation piece really is a lens that we are applying every day on expenses for the business about what, what ... how does that affect that story. Because we never want it to, you know, come to the end of the financial year, and we don't have anything to give back. Like, that would be a catastrophic failure for us. [...] I think in terms of making financial decisions, we're always thinking about profit and trying to maximise our profit for good.” (Jane)

Thirdly, a social business model increases the complexity of decisionmaking, as decisionmakers are often faced with a dilemma between reinvesting profits in the business or in charity:

“Sometimes that can be hard because [...] when we've got this dual aspect of trying to create as much profit as we possibly can to give back. That balancing act of investing in our charitable endeavours and investing in the company is sometimes [...] hard to navigate. [...] It's that constant trade-off of, like, the decisions that we make and trying to justify it. So, it's a war with each other. [...] It's difficult to balance that and to do it right when you are so focused on ethics. If you are just bothered about profit and loss, it would be very easy, but when you're also trying to apply that lens of ethics, [...] when that comes into your business conversation, you know, it makes it infinitely more complex. [...] So that's what it is. It makes decisionmaking harder.” (Jane)

As for the effects of the training programme, it is, as she states,

“a high-risk thing. When we, kind of, started to implement the work experience part, we've got young people and old people with various different backgrounds and sometimes extremely low skill sets interacting with our customers, you know, throughout the year. And it's kind of like wow. And we have to do a really good job of, like, managing that with our

customers and making sure it's super clear that people know that people are training with us. So, I would say that does kind of affect, yeah you know, the way that our day-to-day managing of the team, because all team members become mentors when we've got [the training programme] going on. So, they have to manage their daily duties alongside looking after a vulnerable member of staff, and with our engagement with customers. So yeah, in that it definitely affects behaviour.” (Jane)

In discussing the impact of the training programme, she addresses the impact of on-site training, which she describes as a risk-laden initiative. Due to the different skillsets of the trainees, experienced employees need to act as mentors and closely monitor the trainee-guest interactions. The delivery of training impacts daily practice in that it is an additional responsibility for employees. Studies on mentoring in the hospitality industry have found that mentorship can have vocational and psychosocial benefits for both mentors and mentees. The former relates to enhancing career development, with mentors developing mentoring and leadership skills, and mentees developing industry-specific SKCs. The latter refers to the development of confidence, competence, friendship, and recognition (Eissner and Gannon, 2018; Scerri, Presbury and Goh, 2020). However, mentor–mentee relationships play a critical role in mentoring experiences and outcomes (Eby *et al.*, 2010). The effectiveness of mentoring also depends on management support (Parise and Forret, 2008) and formal mentor training (Allen, Eby and Lentz, 2006). Another impact of EI relates to the strong presence of the leader. Jane identifies CEO leadership as the main source of job satisfaction and inspiration, especially in difficult times.

“He influenced me in a big way. And I would imagine, and I know anecdotally than a lot of other team members feel the same way that that is inspiring, and helps remind us what we're doing, and why we're here, and what's the point of it all, you know, even on those darker days.” (Jane)

In sum, the participant takes an external approach to ethical behaviour, as ethical behaviour is about supporting local communities and contributing to the social purpose of the organisation. EI relates to reminding of the social purpose of the organisation and serves to develop a sense of purpose in the workplace. Other impacts of EI are that decisionmaking is focused on contributing to the social purpose of the

organisation, which makes decisionmaking more complex (see *Table 13. Jane (BEM1) - Meaning & impacts of EI*).

Table 13. Jane (BEM1) - Meaning & impacts of EI

ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION					
	PURPOSE	EXTERNAL BRANDING	INTERNAL BRANDING	TRAINING PROGRAMME	CEO / LEADERSHIP
Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving back to charity - Supporting local communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marketing strategies - Company slogans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Induction - Employee handbook - Key values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hospitality training programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong presence - Engagement with local teams
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives sense of purpose - Makes decisionmaking more complex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conveys social purpose - Gives meaning to guests visit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conveys social purpose - Reminds stakeholders of their contribution - Gives sense of purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conveys social purpose - Risk-laden initiative - Adds responsibility to employees' daily duties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reminder of purpose - Source of inspiration - Source of job satisfaction

4.7 BMM3 - Karolina

4.7.1 Ethical behaviour

The interviewee distinguishes between ethical behaviour 1) on a societal/community level, 2) on an individual level, and 3) in the context of hospitality. In discussing the first two levels of ethical behaviour, her narrative resonates with cultural relativism—the belief that the rightness of a moral norm is relative to cultures and societies—and individual relativism—the belief that the rightness of a moral norm is relative to each individual, describing cultural relativism as follows:

“I believe ethical can be view from the moral perspective and the value. They are probably common ethical behaviour related to being a part of a community or the part of society regardless of the cultural background.” (Karolina)

She depicts individual relativism as:

“But also, this ethical behaviour can be related to the individual morals. It can be dictated by their religious beliefs or the kind of family environment.” (Karolina)

In order to facilitate ethical behaviour within a community with members from different backgrounds, she suggests that there need to be certain standards that apply to all members of that community:

“what I think, if you do work in, for example, in UK, and you work with multicultural environment, people from

all parts of the world, you are part of a community and you mention a standard behaviour are expected from you, based on the community you are in.” (Karolina)

With regard to ethical behaviour in the hospitality industry, she states:

“hospitality is a teamwork” (Karolina)

and identifies the following elements as crucial for the hospitality industry:

“Definitely effective communication, and honesty, and transparency, and respect. Respect to, not only, guests and clients, but to the team members. [...] I think respect plays a very important part as you dealing with many people from different backgrounds, different cultures, different parts of the world. So, respect different views, opinions, cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs is important.” (Karolina)

She also mentions the importance of trustworthiness, because:

“Most important is people do business with people who they trust. For me, building relationships and partnerships with different clients means being transparent and trustworthy.” (Karolina)

In sum, the meaning of ethical behaviour varies depending on the context—individual, community, and hospitality. In the hospitality remit, the dimensions of ethical behaviour relate to facilitating effective teamwork and relationship building—effective communication, honesty, trustworthiness, respect, and transparency.

4.7.2 The meaning, role, and impact of EI

The respondent mentions moral codes, company values, and team meetings as explicit approaches to EI. She discusses leadership and the reward system as implicit EI (see [Table 14. Karolina \(BMM3\) - Meaning, role, and impacts of EI](#)). Explicit institutionalisation of ethics provides clear guidance to employees on what constitutes ethical behaviour in the organisation. Providing clear guidelines plays an important role for the respondent. A possible explanation for this could be that, as mentioned previously, she interprets ethical behaviour according to context—community, individual, hospitality. In a diverse team, clarity is even more so important.

Karolina identifies the following moral codes:

“We do have our own moral codes, [...] respect, integrity, trustworthiness, [...] teamwork and fairness. These are our values that we try to embed in our everyday work and trying for new team members to understand and for the team members who have been with us for a long time, being mindful and remind them about what we stand, what are our values.” (Karolina)

For Karolina, team meetings serve to remind internal stakeholders of the company values:

“there is always a team meeting twice a day and there is always a reminder of our values, and who we are as an organisation, and what do we value, and what do we stand for.” (Karolina)

With regard to implicit EI, she discusses the reward system. She supports the concept of rewarding employees, on the grounds that recognition can boost motivation. However, she considers ethical behaviour as a norm that does not need to be rewarded:

“This is a difficult one. I’m 100% supporting the idea of rewarding team, because everyone likes to be recognised, and I think it’s important for the motivation. But I’m not sure if this recognition should be given for being, actually ethical, because I think everyone should be ethical and everyone should stand by the values. [...] I don’t think people should be rewarded for, obviously, being polite or being honest because this should be a kind of a norm to act this way. Not that I am being transparent or being honest or acting with integrity, and I am going to be rewarded for this.” (Karolina)

Karolina discusses leadership as another important approach to implicit EI. In discussing who is responsible for promoting ethical behaviour, she states:

“Well, always, the example should come from above. Maybe this is going to be funny what I am going to say here, but this is kind of like in a family. If the parents are not teaching children good manners or if the parents are not showing the kids kind of how to behave and how to have this moral or ethical behaviour - if they do not lead by example – as I am saying, I think this should come from above, definitely, from the top people in the organisation and then cascade down to general manager and then the senior team members.” (Karolina)

Likewise, she feels responsible for promoting ethical behaviour in her team by leading by example:

“As I am a part of a team, I am kind of feeling responsible to be part of the organisation, not only inside, but because of my role I am representing the company outside. So, I need to act with integrity, and I need to encourage others to do the same inside the organisation. So, I don’t really have any problem to address directly if I can see that something is not right, or someone is kind of not acting with company values.” (Karolina)

She also stresses the importance of leadership and management reflecting the values of the company in order to encourage ethical behaviour in others:

“If the team members are seeing their management and leadership who is kind of following the company values in practice, this will kind of be very positive and influence the behaviour. [...] This is very clear, and this can definitely influence behaviour, especially when the management and organisation talks about it and reminds everyone to kind of act in this matter [manner] every day. So, this can influence the behaviour as well.” (Karolina)

The role of explicit EI—moral codes, company values, and team meetings—is, thus, to provide guidance and make clear what is meant by ethics, ethical behaviour, and the values of the organisation. However, management and leaders need to regularly communicate and remind employees of the organisation's values by leading by example and behaving according to these values in order to promote ethical behaviour in others.

“You have to kind of follow what you preach or what you teach.” (Karolina)

Though Karolina considers explicit and implicit EI to be equally important, she also emphasises their complementarity, since implicit EI, such as leadership style, must reflect explicit standards for them to be legitimate:

“Many companies are claiming that they do put people first, so it’s not really unusual, and it is not new. I’ve been working for many big hospitality chains, global worldwide known, and it’s kind of a slogan to be honest: “we put people first”. But it doesn’t really mean anything until, unless it’s really brought to life on a day-

to-day basis. [...] [Case Study Hotel] definitely stands out [...] I can definitely say I can see the difference and it is genuine, it is not a slogan.” (Karolina)

This finding is consistent with that of Treviño, den Nieuwenboer, and Kish-Gephart (2014), who found that the explicit institutionalisation of ethics through ethics codes or programmes needs to be reflected in leadership and workplace practices, especially because leaders are the ones who should demonstrate and promote ethical behaviour and, thus, influence employee behaviour. If the organisation explicitly institutionalises ethics and leadership does not behave accordingly,

“you have this on a wall, [...] the company values, but then in practice, it’s totally opposite then it doesn’t make sense”. (Karolina)

Likewise, if the organisation institutionalises ethics implicitly without explicit standards,

“there will be no guidance, no company values presented, then everyone could act as they wish, and that’s kind of not good at all for behaviour”. (Karolina)

It is, thus, explicit EI that clarifies and guides ethical behaviour, but it is only in conjunction with the implicit EI that EI is legitimised, and that ethical behaviour can be influenced. Furthermore, Karolina argues that placing ethics at the centre of the organisation by institutionalising ethics implicitly and explicitly strengthens employee morale and ethical behaviour, which in turn has a positive impact on external stakeholders, who in turn have a positive perception of the organisation:

“Benefits are easy to see by the team working at the hotel and by guests if you have high ethical behaviour and high morale and you are acting with enthusiasm, fairness, integrity; this translates to how the people see you as organisation. Everyone is benefiting from it if everyone are behaving in the ethical way.” (Karolina)

EI also contributes to the effectiveness of teamwork by facilitating conflict management and problem-solving:

“I think, the company is a much happier place, people are not really daunting to come to work, they actually happy to be a part of the organisation who has these kinds of values, and the team members are cherished, and the guests can see that team members are happy and this translates to all kinds of aspects of the organisation. Even if you do have some kind of

conflicts or some little frustration, these are dealt—if the organisation is carrying ethical behaviour—with fairness, and it's been quickly resolved, and it doesn't have a bad impact and bad effect on the organisation, on the team, people working at the company, or guests or clients themselves.” (Karolina)

Lastly, an organisation that fosters and values ethical behaviour can contribute to employee satisfaction and retention:

“I have no doubt that the job satisfaction and the job retention will be good, that people would like to stick to the company and people will find satisfaction within the organisation.” (Karolina)

Overall, Karolina considers ethical behaviour in the workplace important for teamwork and for employee satisfaction and retention. She also mentions that what constitutes ethical behaviour depends on the individual and their culture. This leads to the importance of EI and the complementarity of explicit and implicit components, with the former providing a clear guideline—paramount in diverse teams—without which, “everyone could act as they wish”, and the latter serving to translate explicit ethical standards into ethical behaviour. Implicit EI should reflect explicit EI, as otherwise “it doesn't make sense”.

Table 14. Karolina (BMM3) - Meaning, role, and impacts of EI

ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION				
EXPLICIT ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION		IMPLICIT ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION		
	MORAL CODES, COMPANY VALUES	TEAM MEETINGS	LEADERSHIP	REWARD SYSTEM
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Respect - Integrity - Trustworthiness - Teamwork - Fairness - Mindfulness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss organisation's social purpose: “who we are as an organisation, and what we value, and what we stand for.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leading by example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes, but... Yes, ethical behaviour should be rewarded “because everyone likes to be recognised”, but ethical behaviour should be the norm.
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind of organisation's values and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure ethical behaviour in workplace - Represent the organisation outside 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boost motivation
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances employee morale, satisfaction, and retention: “the company is a much happier place” - Facilitates teamwork effectiveness (problem-solving, conflict management) - Enhances the organisation's image 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Explicit EI and implicit EI are equally important and complement each other, but it is primordial that implicit EI reflect explicit EI 			

4.8 BNM3 - Izabel

4.8.1 Common sense, respect, and communication as ethical behaviour

For Izabel, ethical behaviour is an essential part of her work. When asked for her interpretation of ethical behaviour, the participant refers to it as common sense:

“For me, this is common sense [...], be on time, be respectful with your colleagues, [...] respect everyone.” (Izabel)

The examples of ethical behaviour given by the respondent refer to respect:

“everything is integrated, [...] it's related with the others”. (Izabel)

For instance, punctuality is a sign of respect for the rest of the team, because lateness affects morale and makes the latecomer unreliable:

“To come on time, [...] this goes [...] to respect as well. Because if we are late, [...] they are harming the colleagues because they have to stay longer, because the other colleague didn't come on time [...]. And so, the colleagues were waiting [...] for the person that never arrived. And this is bad for, uh, the colleagues, [...] and this is for me [...] the lack of respect for other colleagues. [...] So, it's [...] a lot of things connected together.” (Izabel)

Respect is an important aspect of ethical behaviour that improves the climate in the workplace:

“So, the first for me, is respect [...] even if [...] sometimes people do things wrong, [...] and, uh, maybe we [...] cannot solve the problem. [...] We spend more time at work than at home. [...] If we don't have a good environment at work, [...] we are not happy [...] so we need to have a healthy environment.” (Izabel)

“We cannot be friends with everyone, of course, [...] but we can live together and try to respect everyone. So, as long as everyone do[es] this, the environment will be good, and the team will be good. If [...] everyone is gossip[ing] around or doing the bullying [...] trying [...] to make worse. [...] We are going home [...] not happy and we are frustrated, and we don't have motivation [...] to come the next day to work. So,

it's very important that we keep all the team motivated". (Izabel)

Another aspect of respect is showing understanding for differences:

"Respect all the team [...] members, even [...] if someone is more weak, or [...] they don't work the same way as we do, but we need to understand each other and respect. Everyone is different. And we need to respect the differences." (Izabel)

This type of understanding coincides with cognitive empathy (perspective taking), which, according to Eisenberg and Miller (1987) is related to prosocial behaviour, whereby individuals who make an effort to take another's perspective are more inclined to help the other person. Other examples of ethical behaviour include treating guests with respect and building a rapport with them:

"For example, [...] to come to work with [...] the right uniform and to be nice to the guest, to always be patient and hear the guest." (Izabel)

"Guests are always right, so we need [...] them [...] [to] come again to our place because we don't want [...] guests [to come] only once, [...] we need to have regular customers, so we need to have [...] a good relationship with everyone. So, and ... it's not only be nice, of course, we have to be nice, but we need to go further. We need to welcome well and if you see the same guest that is coming for the second time, third time, we need to address them and say: OK, welcome back again, it was good to see you. [...] In the hospitality we have [to] welcome [...] our guest. Because we [...] only survive with our guests, [...] we don't have a hotel without guests." (Izabel)

Along these lines, Ho and Gupta (2012) found that cognitive empathy in the hospitality industry promotes employees' prosocial and helping behaviours towards guests, as employees gain a better understanding of guests' expectations, which in turn increases their awareness of what needs to be done to improve the guest experience.

Another crucial element of ethical behaviour is internal communication, more precisely, open communication and interdepartmental communication. In terms of open communication, Izabel mentions the importance of managers and leaders being responsive to the needs of employees:

“good communication channel with everyone and to [be able to] rely [on others] [...] if [we] have any [...] doubts we know where to find the answers, or we know that we can go to this person. [...] This is, I believe, [...] important that people are free to go to talk with people. So, we are not like a closed [...] office, [...] my door of the office is always open even though I know this is disturbing 'cause they're coming because of this and that [...] all the time. But they know they can come here, and they [...] can talk [to] me also with the [general manager] or hotel manager the same and the operation manager. So, they know they can reach us, we are not distant, [...] and this is very good. So [...] to have [...] good communication skills [...] they feel good to come to talk with us. We are not just you know, [...] the bosses upstairs.”
(Izabel)

This finding echoes the notion of open communication as a central element of ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005), which renders leaders approachable, resulting in employees feeling comfortable to communicate problems to their superordinate (Treviño, Hartman and Brown, 2000). In addition to open communication, Izabel also emphasises the need for interdepartmental communication, which has a dual purpose: to ensure that everyone is on the same page (avoiding miscommunication) and to work collectively towards achieving the organisation's goal (avoid interdepartmental competition):

“For me is the communication [...] between [...] departments because, uh, sometimes [...] we missed the communication. So, if we [...] communicate every day, if everyone knows a little about what happened on the previous day, what, what we are going to expect. For example, we have a big event for next week and we need to be ready. But it's not only [...] front office [that] must be ready for [...] this event, we [also] need to communicate with the kitchen team, with housekeeping, with everything. So, sometimes, uhm, I believe, people think the others know [...] about the things, but they don't know. And that's why sometimes [...] there's a problem or [...] sometimes [...] things [...] didn't [go] very well because of this, because it's a lack of communications. [...]. So, there's ... we need to talk with each other. Even if we [...] think they know already. [...] Because it's good for [...] everyone [to be on] the same page, and everyone knows about it.” (Izabel)

Interdepartmental communication serves to mitigate the risk of miscommunication and false assumptions that can otherwise lead to frustration and the inability to achieve the organisation's goals. Izabel gives the example of organising an event involving all departments. From this perspective, interdepartmental communication also plays a key role in achieving the organisation's goals. Furthermore, a lack of interdepartmental communication can lead to internal or departmental competition, which Izabel believes is detrimental to achieving the goals of the organisation as a whole:

"If something happened not very good in F&B, we need to [...] try to figure out, [because] this is not F&B problem, this is hotel problem, [...] and we need to manage everything, not only [each] department by itself. [If the] kitchen didn't perform well, [...] we didn't perform well. [...] In the end we need to think of [Case Study Hotel] as itself and try to solve the problems [...] and try to do better for next time [...] It doesn't matter if it was F&B, front office, or kitchen, or housekeeping. What it means is, [...] we need to [...] satisfy [...] the guests [so] that they are happy to return and come whenever they want." (Izabel)

"I believe [in] every workplace, there's always this competition, [...] and it's good because that means that they are proud, and then they [...] want to be better than the others. [...] But we need to think about what is best; to have a good bar and a bad reception, or [...] maybe not excellent, but good [...] front office and [...] F&B. So, this [...] for me is more important. [Because if] we have a[n] excellent bar, but [at] the reception they are very bad, so people are complaining... No, I want [Case Study] Hotel [...] to be known as excellent hotel. It doesn't matter if it's in the bar, or the rooms, the cleaning of the rooms, [...] the reception attendance. We need to be good in every field." (Izabel)

In sum, Izabel describes ethical behaviour as common sense and respectful behaviour towards team co-workers and guests. She also stresses the importance of open and interdepartmental communication in order to work collaboratively towards the fulfilment of the organisation's goal (see [Table 15. Izabel BNM3 - Meanings & impacts of ethical behaviour](#)).

Table 15. Izabel BNM3 - Meanings & impacts of ethical behaviour

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR				
	COMMON SENSE	RESPECT	COMMUNICATION	
Meanings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wearing the right uniform - Being punctual - Being nice to guests - Being patient with guests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being respectful towards guests - Respecting differences amongst co-workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Open communication with managers and leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interdepartmental communication - Interdepartmental teamwork
Impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances employee morale - Enhances guest satisfaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitates healthy environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Makes leaders approachable - Encourages employees to share issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mitigates risk of miscommunication - Enhances collaborative work towards organisation's goal achievement

4.8.2 The role of EI

The respondent identifies several approaches to EI. Explicit EI encompasses the organisation's handbook or house of rules, the training programmes (for new employees and for trainees), and the induction programme. Implicit EI includes the social purpose of the organisation, the values and culture of the organisation, the leadership, and the reward system.

Explicit institutionalisation of ethics provides stakeholders with clear guidance on what constitutes ethical behaviour within the organisation. As mentioned previously, she considers ethical behaviour to be common sense. However, she also acknowledges that her common sense is not the same for everyone. Izabel points out that cultural differences are the cause of different ethical standards and working practices amongst employees. Therefore, it is important to institutionalise ethics explicitly so that the ethical standards and expectations of the organisation are clear to everyone; employees know what the organisation expects from them, and they know what they can expect from the organisation. Explicit EI, thus, reduces ambiguity and ensures that everyone is on the same page. Moreover, explicit EI is not only about setting clear guidelines and expectations, but it is also about explaining the motives underlying these standards so that employees understand the organisation's approach to running the business. In this way, employees are more likely to understand and conform to the organisation's ethical standards. Explicit EI not only ensures internal alignment, but also that everyone is treated equally, as the organisation's rules and expectations apply to everyone equally. In addition, the participant states that new employees are familiarised with the social purpose of the organisation during induction and training programmes (for new employees and trainees).

For Izabel, implicit EI is primarily a source of job satisfaction and motivation. The respondent mentions the social purpose of the organisation as an implicit approach to EI:

"I'm proud to be working in [Case Study] Hotel because this is not like a normal hotel. [...] So, this is very important indeed for me. I like this very much, this concept. [...] So, it's something that inspire us, inspire me, and [...] I feel good about this and uh, to be part of this family and to be part of this what we are doing."
(Izabel)

Supporting local communities and charity are aspects that give meaning to her professional activities. The respondent assimilates the organisational culture and values with the social purpose of the organisation.

"We are different from Crowne Plaza. [...] And we need to be proud of this. [...] I like to be here, because, uh, it's it's two ways. [...] I can do my work and I can help people as well. So, I can do something good for the community, [...] and [...] I feel good by this, yeah. And that we need to let our employees, our team to know this as well. Sometimes we are always doing the work and whatever we need to do, and we don't think about why we are doing this. We need to share this, these thoughts, and we need to share the values and and talk about this. It's very important. [...] We need to know how lucky we are to do this." (Izabel)

Though the social purpose gives the respondent a sense of purpose and pride, she points out that she and others sometimes need to be reminded of it to prevent their work from becoming routine, as otherwise one team member's lack of motivation will affect the rest of the team. It is explicit EI that enables employees to understand the values and purpose of the organisation:

"If there's uh, for example, lack of motivation, if we [...] come to work just to work, because we need to receive the salary in the end of the month, only that. It reflects in the team, reflects in our colleagues, in the managers. That's why we need to do something, [...] when [...] we see that we are doing this by routine, just doing the things by doing. That means that we need to do some changes. We need to motivate the people. We need to do, I don't know, a training or talking to people. We need to act the other way and try to reverse this thing and uh keep people motivated. [...] We need to be motivated, and [...] happiness comes

from here, because, yeah, we need to get this good [...] working environment.” (Izabel)

Apart from the purpose of the organisation, the respondent mentions the founder as a source of inspiration. His sense of passion for supporting communities inspires passion in the respondent:

“This is my first job in hospitality, but I never knew someone like [the founder] and [...], it's not just hotel, [...] we are not selling rooms only. [The founder] wants to be a different hotel. So, and this is what he explain us. So, when he talk with us, [he] has so much passion about this, so much, [...] and I believe we need to also have this passion, because we are [...] not selling rooms, we are more than this. [...] We can sell rooms, we can have profit, and also, we can help others, and this is this is [why] it's [an] amazing job.” (Izabel)

This finding echoes the findings Thorgren and Omorede (2015) who found that a leader's passion is a key element in follower engagement in a social enterprise, Cardon (2008) adds that an entrepreneur's passion can lead to employee passion.

Another aspect of leadership that the respondent addresses is the leadership style of superordinates. As explained in the previous section, leaders need to encourage open communication with their subordinates. This type of communication is a key element of ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005). In addition, the respondent points to another element of ethical leadership, namely leading by example:

“The top management [...] we have to lead by example. So, for me, it's very bad when [a] manager told the employees: OK, you have to do this, this, and this. And the [...] same manager is not doing this or is not doing the [...] example. And [...] for example, about [...] lateness in the work. If someone is [...] is always complaining, oh, you are always late and [...] this manager always comes late as well, and people watch it. So, how can he [say] [...] this to me if he's doing worse? Oh, because he's a manager he can do it? No, [...] we cannot. So, this must come from the top. If [...] our manager [is] doing the right thing, people can see: OK [...] we can follow. [...] [It] is easier to accept [...] orders [...] from someone who respects you [...] and also do the same thing, so it's easier. (Izabel)

This finding is consistent with other studies showing that leaders who lead by example become role models for their followers (Bandura, 1986), with leaders fostering a climate of trust in which followers are likely to adopt similar behaviours to their role models (Neubert *et al.*, 2009) and commit to the leader and the organisation (Hansen *et al.*, 2013). The role of leadership is thus twofold. Firstly, the interviewee mentions the founder as a leader and refers to him as a source of inspiration that gives meaning to her work. Secondly, she discusses two key aspects of ethical leadership, namely open communication and leading by example.

A final aspect of implicit EI that the respondent addresses relates to the reward system, which she considers superfluous as she sees ethical behaviour an integral part of her work:

“I believe for me, if I'm doing the right job [job right], if I'm doing what I should do, [...] I should be rewarded, because [...] I'm doing what [...] they asked me to do. My reward? It's the salary.” (Izabel)

Though she believes that ethical behaviour should be an integral part of the work, she, nonetheless, appreciates the recognition of ethical behaviour and considers it useful to reward ethical behaviour to set an example for others:

“Of course, that we have this rewards [system] if [...] someone is always having great reviews, and if [...] someone is doing more than it should, [...] of course, we need to talk with the person and say, OK, well done, you did an excellent job, [...] this is a very [...] good example for your colleagues. So, you should do like your colleague and do better. [...] But [...] I think we need to do what we [are] expected to be done. [...] I'm not doing my job because I'm expecting the rewards. [...] Of course, it's good to [get] the attention and to have someone [...] let us know that you are good, or you did well. Recognition, yeah. This is very important. The recognition is very important, but I'm not expecting to have more money [...] in the end of the month because [...] I did my job.” (Izabel)

Overall, the institutionalisation of ethics serves to develop an understanding of the social purpose of the organisation and to develop shared values. More specifically, explicit EI serves to clarify the social purpose and provide clear guidance on what constitutes ethical behaviour and what is expected from internal stakeholders, whilst

implicit EI serves to develop a sense of purpose for work (see [Table 16. Izabel \(BNM3\) – Meaning, role, and impact of EI](#)).

Table 16. Izabel (BNM3) – Meaning, role, and impact of EI

ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION				
	EXPLICIT EI	IMPLICIT EI		
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Handbook, house of rules - Training programmes (employees, trainees) - Induction programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social purpose - Leader (founder) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reward system
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify guidelines and expectations - Clarify social purpose - Ensure equal treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Remind of organisation's values and purpose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage open communication - Lead by example 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledge ethical behaviour
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhances job satisfaction - Fosters healthy work environment - Develops shared values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives meaning to work - Enhances motivation and passion - Develops shared values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fosters healthy work environment - Develops shared values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develops sense of pride - Develops shared values

4.9 FMM2 - Luca

4.9.1 The role of prosocial behaviour, and emotional and cultural intelligence

When asked to provide examples of ethical behaviour that are crucial in the hospitality industry, the respondent replies:

“A nice smile, a good welcome, be able to meet people from different backgrounds, to have an open mind, to be multitasking, to be calm, to know how to resolve problems for the guests, and be able to communicate with the guest but not actually taking part. For example, never talk about politics, when having a conversation try not to take part in saying: ‘this is right, this is wrong’, to be able just to have a general conversation. To have good customer service skills, good listening, be flexible to help the guests, and working as a team to help your colleagues and your managers.” (Luca)

The examples of unethical behaviour refer to:

“The constant being late, and not supporting the team, and letting down the company or the guests, as well.” (Luca)

Luca discusses ethical behaviour at three interrelated levels: at the team level, in guest-employee interactions, and in the general context of the hospitality industry. At the team level, the respondent mentions aspects such as punctuality and teamwork.

In guest–employee interactions, the respondent refers to customer service skills, smiling, friendliness, communication remaining neutral. More general aspects of ethical behaviour include open-mindedness, multi-tasking and problem-solving capabilities. The aforementioned aspects have similarities with Kang and colleagues' (2020, p. 2) concept of prosocial behaviour, which they define as *"customer contact employees' helping behaviour directed at either coworkers or consumers"*. In this vein, Bettencourt and Brown (1997, pp. 41–42) distinguish three dimensions of prosocial behaviour: role-prescribed customer service, extra-role customer service, and cooperation. Role-prescribed customer service includes expected behaviours derived from workplace norms and job descriptions, such as exhibiting courtesy or demonstrating accurate product knowledge. Extra-role customer service, in contrast, concerns discretionary employee behaviours that transcend formal role requirements, such as 'going the extra mile'. Lastly, cooperation refers to employees' helpful behaviour towards their coworkers, which Zeithaml and colleagues (1988) have identified a crucial element in service quality delivery.

When it comes to ethical behaviour specifically in the hospitality industry, the respondent also mentions the ability to remain calm and communicate without taking part. These notions pertain to emotional intelligence (hereafter EQ) and more precisely to the 'self-regulation' (Rahim *et al.*, 2002, p. 305) or 'self-management' (Scott-Halsell, Blum and Huffman, 2008, pp. 138–139) dimension of EQ, which relates to the ability to contain one's emotions and remain calm regardless of one's emotions. Another form of intelligence to which the respondent alludes is cultural intelligence (hereafter CQ), defined as *"an individual's capability to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse setting"* (Ang *et al.*, 2007, p. 336):

"the way we perceive people, that they are coming from different backgrounds, from different countries."
(Luca)

"be able to meet people from different backgrounds".
(Luca)

Cultural diversity, both amongst workforce and customers, is firmly entrenched in the hospitality industry. Interaction with individuals of different ethnicities carries the risk of misunderstanding due to misperception, misinterpretation, and misevaluation (Adler, 2008, p. 72). It is, therefore, understandable that Luca mentions the importance of CQ.

In sum, ethical behaviour, for Luca, involves prosocial behaviour towards coworkers and guests—namely role-prescribed customer service, extra-role customer service, and cooperation—, as well as emotional and cultural intelligence (see [Table 17. Luca \(FMM2\) - Meanings of ethical behaviour](#))

Table 17. Luca (FMM2) - Meanings of ethical behaviour

	ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR			
	PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR	JOB RELATED SKILLS	EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE
Meanings	Towards coworkers: - Punctuality - Supporting team members - Supporting management	Towards guests: - Smile - Customer service skills - "Not letting guests down"	- Multi-tasking - Problem-solving	- Remaining calm - Remaining neutral - "Ability to meet people from different backgrounds"

4.9.2 EI

Luca identifies departmental and interdepartmental meetings and organisational values as explicit approaches to EI and the reward system and leadership as implicit EI. In terms of explicit EI, Luca mentions that the organisation communicates the importance of ethical behaviour at departmental and interdepartmental meetings, held monthly and quarterly. At these meetings, department-specific matters around ethics are shared and discussed. Another explicit approach to EI is the organisation's values, which form the basis of the reward system (discussed below):

"We have the [Case Study Hotel] Values. There are seven values [...]. Every month, we choose one value and ask the team to send us the examples that demonstrate the values." (Luca)

According to the respondent, explicit institutionalisation of ethics provides clarity on what ethical behaviour means for the organisation, as clear guidelines reduce ambiguity and serve as a guide for the behaviour of internal stakeholders:

"I think for me it's good for the company to, kind of, inform of the ethical standards. It creates a picture of the way they want the business to be run. Therefore, for the employees, they will know exactly what is expected from them. And then it will be the individual person to feel: 'this is what I really would like to work or looking for something else'. I think it's good and makes things clearer." (Luca)

"I think it is guide and information for the staff, so they will have an understanding of the company ethics, but

then this depends on the individual how they interpret the message.” (Luca)

However, Luca points out that ethical standards can only be effective if they are aligned with those of individuals:

“I think the employee will feel part of this ethic belief, they will feel part of this group. I believe they will feel motivated. They will also have to believe in the same ethical standards so that they can work toward the same goal.” (Luca)

This statement suggests that internal stakeholders must already value ethical behaviour and that the organisation’s ethical standards serve to indicate what the organisation considers ethical behaviour. As such, individuals who see ethical behaviour as a personal value may develop a sense of belonging to an organisation that institutionalises ethics:

“I think staff will feel being part of the process. Rather than just going to work and then forget everything once you finish work, it is more like a lifestyle, it becomes part of the lifestyle. Also, it gives them clear guidelines which to follow.” (Luca)

Nevertheless, Luca also points to certain negative impacts of ethical standards. Namely, ethical standards can restrict the freedom of the individual:

“[T]here will be also disadvantages as well. Perhaps, because of some standards, the individual is not allowed to be more personal, for example. So, maybe a company says you are not allowed to talk to the guest because you are just a receptionist. So, the person to speak to the guest [is] only the manager. That could be one of the disadvantages. Yes, maybe it gives some limitations. It limits their freedom.” (Luca)

Moreover, Luca notes that ethical standards aimed at improving the environmental footprint of the organisation make decisionmaking more complex:

“[B]ut that’s what the company believes. For example, at [Case Study] Hotel, we say we don’t want plastic. Everything that we order, must have no plastic. It makes things difficult for us to find the right supplier and the right product, but, I think, it is worth, because we want to be represented in the world. Although it is difficult, it is the belief of the company. We want to be a green company, we have to work with our local community because we want to recycle more, but the

facilities were not ready for us to actually start recycling, so we have to shop around different private companies so they can provide us with the management of the waste in different bins; to have one bin for the paper, one bin for the plastic, one just for the recycles, for the batteries for example.” (Luca)

Furthermore, institutionalising ethics can be a time-consuming and risky endeavour for hospitality organisations:

“[I]t is very difficult. Sometimes you need to consider the staff turnover as well. You train your staff, and then after one month or two they leave you to go to another company and then you need to restart again.” (Luca)

With regard to implicit EI, the participant mentions the reward system, which is based on the organisation’s values and serves to acknowledge ethical behaviour:

“It would be good to reward ethical behaviour. One thing that we do at [Case Study] Hotel, on monthly basis, when we run the value of the month, we will ask everybody to provide us with examples. Amongst all the examples, we always find the best one and we give a little present, a little reward. Sometimes we do an email we send to the entire company to say this person did this and this and this, we put little pictures and we give a little price as well. This is what we do internally; we give rewards for people showing ethical behaviour.” (Luca)

The reward system is also used to monitor and address unethical behaviour:

“We will have to do that, unfortunately, as well. We address each case individually; we try to find out what happened, why we have to talk about this and find out a little bit more. It is kind of an investigation at first. After the investigation, we usually find solutions. If not, there will be further meetings. Sometimes we give one month for the employee to show improvement. Sometimes we need to do a personal development plan. If we identify something not working, we just write down the plan and what the expectations are, and we ask the employee to step up and focus for the next month.” (Luca)

Luca recognises the benefits of explicit EI as it provides clear guidelines for ethical behaviour so that internal stakeholders know what to expect from the organisation and

what the organisation expects from them. Nevertheless, the respondent favours implicit EI:

“I think implicit is better, so someone will be there as a leader, and I feel the leader will make the things alive. Because at the beginning, the ethos, the programme, the training, the message, it’s all on paper. But you need to have someone who actually then makes this idea alive and pass it on to the staff and everyone.” (Luca)

Such viewpoint may be related to the respondent’s awareness of greenwashing practices:

“Every company nowadays, especially big companies already famous, if you notice, they all now doing some charitable work. [...] They are multi-million companies and now they always, they all do a little bit of charity work on the side, just to say: we are a green company”. (Luca)

Windowdressing practices discredit the legitimacy of explicit ethical standards and reinforce the need for implicit EI so that workplace practices reflect the organisation’s ethical standards (explicit EI). In this vein, Luca states that a leader who reflects the organisation’s ethical values becomes a role model for subordinates:

“I think it will be better if there is someone on the top to show leadership style and work together with the team. If one of the managers is a role model and displays ethical behaviour, it would be even better. I would feel the staff would be more inclined to work harder.” (Luca)

This finding is consistent with that of Schwepker and Dimitriou (2021, p. 8), who found that hospitality employees tend to trust and emulate ethical leaders and, as a result, are committed to providing a quality guest experience.

The interviewee acknowledges the difficulties of EI. Particularly in the hospitality, prone to high employee turnover rate, institutionalising ethics can be a time-consuming and risky endeavour, as it requires training employees who may shortly after leave the organisation. In addition, enforcing ethical standards can limit employees’ leeway in daily operations. Though Luca finds the organisation’s purpose worthwhile, he points out that it makes decisionmaking more complex. Nevertheless, Luca appreciates the value of EI because explicit EI provides clear guidelines for

ethical behaviour so that internal stakeholders know what to expect from the organisation and what the organisation expects from them. However, Luca favours implicit EI because leaders become role models and materialise (“bring to life”) the organisation’s ethical standards, which can increase employee engagement (see *Table 18. Luca (FMM2) - Meaning, role, and impact of EI*).

Table 18. Luca (FMM2) - Meaning, role, and impact of EI

	ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION			
	EXPLICIT ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION		IMPLICIT ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION	
Meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Departmental meetings- Interdepartmental meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Organisational values	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reward system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Leadership
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Communicate the importance of ethical behaviour- Clarify guidelines and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Form the basis of the reward system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Acknowledge ethical behaviour- Monitor and address unethical behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Leaders become role models
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Reduces ambiguity- Increases understanding of company ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Guides internal stakeholders' behaviour- Develops a sense of belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Subordinates mimic leader's behaviour- Implicit EI 'brings to life' ethical standards- Increases employee motivation and engagement	
Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- "Understanding of the company ethics [...] depends on [how] the individual [...] interpret[s] the message"- Employees "will also have to believe in the same ethical standards so that they can work toward the same goal"- Limits individuals' freedom- Adds complexity to decisionmaking			

4.10 Intrapersonal analysis conclusion

As explained in the methodology chapter (see *3.8 Data analysis: reflexive thematic analysis*), embedded case studies attempt to depict a comprehensive picture of a phenomenon by gathering data from embedded subunits that are part of a larger unit (de Vaus, 2001, p. 220). This chapter focused on the individual (intrapersonal) subunit, to which Denzin (1978, p. 296) refers as the aggregate analysis and which represents the first step of Zartler's (2010, p. 178) multiple perspectives research. The objective of this chapter was to develop topic summaries to capture the range of meanings that respondents attribute to ethical behaviour and EI. Topic summaries—used to present the different interpretations of a concept or phenomenon—are not considered themes in reflexive thematic analysis, because topic summaries do not provide a shared meaning of the concept or phenomenon in question (Braun and Clarke, 2022, pp. 77, 230). Nevertheless, topic summaries are adequate for this chapter as they form the basis for the following analyses and not the final outcome.

4.10.1 Meanings of ethical behaviour

The results of the intrapersonal or aggregate analysis presented in this chapter show a variety of meanings attributed to ethical behaviour. The main findings showcase that ethical behaviour encompasses forms of prosocial behaviour, cognitive and affective empathy, emotional and cultural intelligence, teamwork, communication, and job-related skills. The results also indicate differences in behaviour depending on who ethical behaviour is exhibited towards (i.e., superordinates, subordinates, coworkers, guests, employer/organisation). A distinction is made between ethical behaviour in oneself, in others, and in general. Ethical behaviour in the workplace is considered important as it improves morale, job satisfaction, and employee engagement, which, in turn, positively affects guest satisfaction (see [Table 19. Conclusion - ethical behaviour](#)).

Table 19. Conclusion - ethical behaviour

ETHICAL BEHAVIOUR		
Expected in/from	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oneself • Others - Organisation 	[BNM1, FNM2, BNM3, BMM1, FMM2, FMM4] [BEM1, FEM2] [FEM2] [BNM1, BMM1, FMM4, FEM2]
Towards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coworkers - Superordinates - Subordinates - Guests - Employer/organisation - Society 	[BNM1, FNM2, BNM3, FMM2, FMM4] [BMM1, FMM2, FEM2] [BNM1, BNM3, FMM4, FEM2] [FNM2, FMM2, FEM2] [FNM2, BMM1, BEM1] [BMM1, BEM1]
Forms of ethical behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prosocial behaviour - Job-related skills - Cognitive and affective empathy - Emotional and cultural intelligence - Teamwork - Communication - Transparency 	[BNM3, BMM1, FMM2] [FNM2, FMM2] [BMM1, FEM2] [BNM3, FMM2] [BNM1, BNM3, BMM1] [FNM1, BNM3, BMM1] [FNM2]
Impacts of ethical behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boosts employee morale - Stimulates employee engagement - Enhances job satisfaction - Encourages ethical behaviour in others - Facilitates teamwork - Enhances guest satisfaction - Develops sense of purpose 	[BNM3] [BNM1, BNM3, BMM1, BEM1, FEM2] [BNM1] [BMM1] [BNM1] [BNM1, BNM3] [BNM3, BMM1, FMM4, BEM1, FEM2]

4.10.2 Meanings, roles, and impacts of EI

Following Brenner's (1992) distinction between explicit and implicit components of EI, the results are presented according to these two dimensions (see [Table 20. Conclusion – ethics institutionalisation](#)). The results show that both components of EI have an impact on respondents' perception of the role and importance of ethical behaviour. Although the organisation does not have explicit components dedicated solely to ethics—such as an ethics committee, code of ethics, ethics newsletter, or ethics training programme—ethical standards are discussed and integrated into daily operations. Such an approach may be explained by the organisation's social business model, which assumes that social value creation applies to both internal and external stakeholders. Explicit components of EI encompass the organisation's values and the employee code of conduct (i.e., house of rules, employee handbook). Other explicit approaches to EI include various meetings (i.e., 360 meetings, inter/departmental

meetings, team meetings) and training programmes (i.e., induction programmes, hospitality training programmes, onboarding sessions). Meetings and training programmes are utilised as a means to discuss ethical matters and articulate the organisation's values and social purpose. The key role of explicit EI is to clarify what ethical behaviour means for the organisation by setting clear guidelines and boundaries to control unethical behaviour, promote ethical behaviour, and align the values of the organisation and the individual. Reminding individuals of the organisation's social purpose at meetings and training programmes is also central to the organisation's ethics programme.

The most influential implicit EI components are the organisation's social purpose and ethical leadership. The institutionalisation of ethics is not limited to ethical behaviour in the workplace. Several participants mentioned the social business model as a form of implicit EI, as ethical behaviour is about contributing to the organisation's social purpose, which aims to support education, local communities and businesses. The articulation of the organisation's social purpose serves to align the organisational and individuals' values, and the majority of respondents also cited social purpose as the main source of job satisfaction, as the organisation's social purpose provides employees with a sense of meaning and purpose in their work. In terms of ethical behaviour in the workplace, the results show the importance of superordinates demonstrating ethical leadership behaviour. Several aspects of ethical leadership behaviour are discussed. Firstly, open and bilateral communication plays a crucial role in conveying the importance of ethical behaviour and reminding people of the organisation's purpose. Promoting open and bilateral communication renders leaders approachable and gives a voice to subordinates, which, in turn, promotes teamwork effectiveness. Secondly, leaders who are approachable and value open communication exemplify ethical behaviour. Leading by example is important in demonstrating what constitutes ethical behaviour, with managers and leaders acting as role models. Another implicit approach to EI relates to the reward system, which is mainly used to acknowledge and encourage ethical behaviour and to control unethical behaviour. Some respondents equate the reward system with a gamification method to encourage ethical behaviour. However, participants disagree on the legitimacy of rewarding of ethical behaviour. Whilst some participants take ethical behaviour as a given—that everyone is expected to exhibit such behaviour in the workplace—and,

therefore, deserves no rewarding, others consider the reward system useful in highlighting the importance of ethical behaviour and encouraging it.

The main difference between explicit and implicit EI is that explicit EI facilitates the development of knowledge in the area of ethical behaviour. This may be explained by the fact that explicit approaches to EI are embedded in the various training programmes. In contrast, implicit EI is seen as legitimising the explicit components of EI. For instance, leadership style, organisational culture, and daily operations reflect the explicit ethical standards in place in order to be perceived as authentic. Such a view may be reinforced by participants' scepticism and distrust as a result of windowdressing practices. Overall, both implicit and explicit EI have an impact on employees' job satisfaction, engagement, motivation, and morale. Institutionalising ethics helps to align individual and organisational values. Though they consider it worthwhile, two of the nine participants find that institutionalising ethics makes decisionmaking significantly more complex.

Table 20. Conclusion – ethics institutionalisation

ETHICS INSTITUTIONALISATION (EI)			
Components	EXPLICIT EI		IMPLICIT EI
Approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Onboarding sessions [FEM2] - Induction programmes [BNM3, BEM1] - Training programmes [BNM1, BNM3, BEM1] - Ethical standards [FNM2, BMM1, FMM4] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee handbook [BNM3, BEM1] • House of rules [BNM3] • Moral code [BMM3] - Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter/departmental meetings [FMM2] • Team meetings [BMM3] • 360 meetings [BNM1] - Organisational values [FMM2, BMM3, BEM1] - Marketing strategies (company slogan) [BEM1] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reward system [BNM1, FNM2, BNM3, BMM3, FMM2, FEM2] - Organisational culture [FNM2] - Social purpose [BNM3, BMM1, FMM4, BEM1] - Open communication [BNM1, FNM2, BMM1, FEM2] - Fair HR practices [FMM4] - Founder as role model [BNM3, FMM2, BEM1] - Ethical leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral communication [BNM1, BNM3] • Approachability [BNM1, FEM2] • Equal treatment [BNM1, BNM3] • Leading by example [BMM1, FMM2, BMM3, FMM4] • Give employee voice [FEM2]
Roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarify guidelines & boundaries [FNM2, BNM3, FMM2, BMM3, FMM4] - Convey social purpose [BNM3, BMM3, BEM1] - Control unethical behaviour [FMM4] - Align organisational & individual values [FMM4] - Ensure equal treatment [BNM3] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Acknowledge ethical behaviour [BNM3, FMM2] - Address unethical behaviour [FMM2] - Clarify organisational expectations [BNM1] - Align values [BNM1] - Ensure equal treatment [BNM1] - Convey social purpose [BNM3]
Impacts of explicit OR implicit EI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives sense of meaning, purpose, pride [FMM2, BEM1] - Develops sense of belonging [FMM2] - Enhances organisation's image [BEM1] - Facilitates knowledge development [BNM1] 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives sense of meaning, purpose, pride [BNM3] - Boosts motivation, passion, engagement [BEM1] - Legitimises explicit EI [BNM1, FMM2]
Impacts of explicit AND implicit EI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gives sense of meaning, purpose, pride [FMM4, BEM1] - Boosts motivation, passion, engagement [BNM3, FMM2] - Enhances satisfaction & morale [BNM1, BMM3, BEM1] - Develops shared values [BNM3] - Encourages ethical behaviour [FMM2] - Facilitates teamwork effectiveness [BMM3] - Enhances organisation's image [BMM3] - Fosters healthy work environment [BNM3] - Adds complexity to decisionmaking [FMM2, BEM1] 		

5

REFLEXIVE THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Similar to the findings section, this section takes an integrated approach by combining the findings and the discussion. In this level of analysis (meso level), to which Denzin (1978, p. 296) refers as interactive analysis—an analytic approach is taken to discuss interrelationships between stakeholders and develop themes that reflect shared meanings and understandings of what constitutes ethical behaviour. Based on Braun and Clarke's (2022, p. 10) variants of reflexive thematic analysis, the orientation to the data, in this chapter, is primarily inductive, in that the analysis and theme development are driven by the content of the data rather than existing theories. In contrast to the intrapersonal analysis, this analysis has shifted from an experiential qualitative framework towards a more critical stance, as the focus is no longer on capturing the diversity of meanings, but rather on interrogating the shared meanings or understandings of ethical behaviour. The themes related to the meanings of ethical behaviour are depicted in the thematic map below (see [Figure 6. Thematic map](#)).

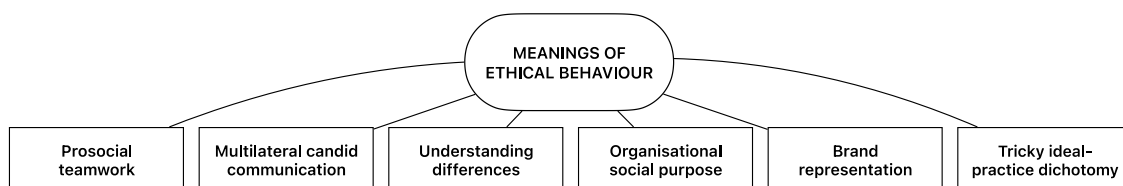


Figure 5. Thematic map

5.1 Prosocial teamwork

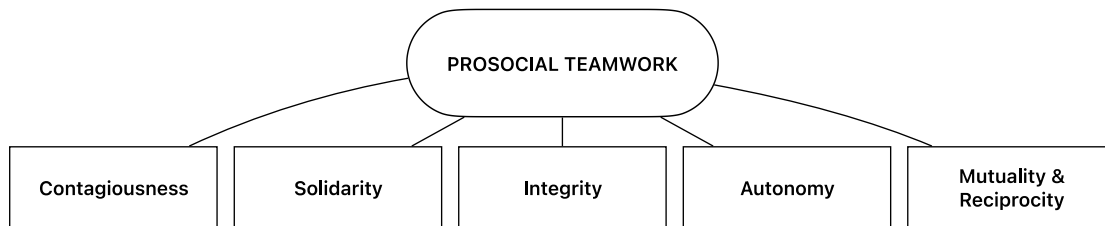


Figure 6. Theme & subthemes - Prosocial teamwork

A recurrent theme across participants' narratives relates to the notion of teamwork as an example of ethical behaviour. Rousseau, Aubé, and Savoie (2006) have developed a comprehensive framework that captures different behaviours in teamwork, which the authors divided into two main functions; team performance and team maintenance. Behaviours associated with team performance include the preparation of accomplishment, task-related collaborative behaviours, and team adjustment behaviours. Behaviours associated with preparation of work accomplishment involve setting individual goals that are connected to the purpose of the team and the organisation (ibid. 2006, p. 549). These behaviours have similarities with the findings of this study, discussed in the section on *mutuality* (see [5.1.6 Mutuality and reciprocity](#)). Task-related collaborative behaviours include coordination and cooperation (ibid. 2006, p. 551), which have similar aspects to *reciprocity* (see [5.1.6 Mutuality and reciprocity](#)). Team adjustment behaviours comprise collaborative problem solving (ibid. 2006, p. 555), which overlap with aspects of *solidarity* (see [5.1.3 Solidarity](#)). Behaviours related to team maintenance include 1) psychological support, described as “*voluntary assistance that team members provide to reinforce the sense of well-being of their teammates*” (ibid. 2006, p. 557), which is closely related to *prosocial behaviour* (see [5.1.1 Definitions prosocial behaviour](#)); and 2) integrative conflict management. These behaviours overlap with *solidarity* and *cognitive empathy* (see [5.1.3 Solidarity](#) and [5.3.1 Cognitive empathy](#)).

5.1.1 Definitions prosocial behaviour

The phenomenon of prosocial behaviour has received increasing research attention over the past two decades (a search in the Web of Science for articles on prosocial behaviour [keywords used: “prosocial behav*”] yielded 1,310 results in 2022

against 83 in 2000). In the growing body of research on this topic, there is currently no clear consensus on a definition of prosocial behaviour. However, the common denominator of most definitions is that prosocial behaviour is a positive act intended to benefit someone else (Pfattheicher, Nielsen and Thielmann, 2022, p. 124). Definitions differ in terms of intention and consequence. Whilst some emphasise the intentional nature of prosocial behaviour (e.g., Bar-Tal, 1976; Eisenberg and Miller, 1987; Batson and Powell, 2003; Zaki and Mitchel, 2013), others emphasise the consequentialist aspect of prosocial behaviour, in that the behaviour, whether intentional or not, benefits others (e.g., Staub, 1978; Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; Schroeder and Graziano, 2014). In terms of beneficiaries, Bierhoff (2002) argues that only human beings can be recipients of prosocial behaviour and not organisations, whilst Brief and Motowidlo (1986) and Bettencourt and Brown (1997) defend that such behaviour can also be directed at organisations. In organisational settings, definitions differ in terms of motivation. Some assert that prosocial behaviour refers to behaviours related to employees' duties or roles (e.g., Brief and Motowidlo, 1986; Bettencourt and Brown, 1997), whilst others argue that such behaviour is not motivated by professional obligations (Bierhoff, 2008) but transcends the formal job description (Gill and Mathur, 2007).

For the purpose of this study, which is set in an organisational context, the broad definition of Brief and Motowidlo (1986, p. 711) is adopted: *“prosocial behavior is behavior which is (a) performed by a member of an organization, (b) directed toward an individual, group, or organization with whom he or she interacts while carrying out his or her organizational role, and (c) performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the individual, group, organization toward which it is directed.”* This definition is more appropriate for this study, as the element of intention to promote the welfare of others falls within the realm of ethics, as it resembles Adam Smith's (1759) positive virtue of benevolence, which promotes the good for the other.

5.1.2 Contagiousness

Participants emphasise the importance of teamwork and being a team player. One of the recurring subthemes in teamwork pertains to contagiousness; the attitude and behaviour of one team member can affect that of others. In this respect, several studies have demonstrated the importance of teamwork and its impact on employee

morale (e.g., Cox, 2001; Johnsrud and Rosser, 2002; Gallie *et al.*, 2012; El-Said, 2014; Kandavel and Sakthivel, 2018).

Izabel, for instance, states:

"[E]verything is connected. So, whatever we do, [...] it reflects in the team, reflects in our colleagues, in the managers." (Izabel)

This view is also held by Joana who, in addition, identifies the concept of inseparability of individuals within a team:

"The team is nothing more than all the individuals. So, if there is something wrong with one individual, then that is directly impacting the team. This individual is part of the team, so I don't think we can think of the team without considering every single person that makes part of it." (Joana)

More particularly, Adriana and Joana report that unethical behaviour by team members will have a ripple effect on the rest of the team and customers:

"If you are not ethical, if you are not kind, you start breaking down on every level, you know, with the staff, with the clients. It's a chain." (Adriana)

"if you are in a team and you have someone constantly being unethical [...], that will contaminate the peers." (Joana)

When asked to provide examples of ethical behaviour that she considers crucial in the hospitality industry, Adriana discusses the notion of energy and how it affects her:

"I think this is absolutely essential, you know, the way you are treating people. This is the energy, the way you are treating people, the energy you are giving to them, [...] I think that's bringing up the best results." (Adriana)

She then gives an example from a previous employment:

"I was working with a great manager. [...] He was the best, he was absolutely amazing when it comes to food, he was very passionate about this. But the best thing was he was great human being. We created amazing things together. [...] He is a great human being. It is as simple as that. And when he left the company, [...] everything went down." (Adriana)

These results show that prosocial behaviour towards team members has a direct impact on individual job satisfaction and team morale. In line with the present findings, El-Said (2014) has found a strong association between employees' perception of teamwork and their morale in the hospitality industry. In contrast, this result contrasts with Erdoğan and Çelik's (2016) study conducted in the health sector, which found no statistical significance between teamwork and employee morale. This inconsistency may be attributed to the intrinsic idiosyncrasies of the hospitality industry.

In sum, the attitude and behaviour of one team member has a direct impact on the attitude and behaviour, morale, job satisfaction, and performance of the rest of the team. Contagiousness and inseparability in teamwork, thus, require team members to behave in a way that does not harm the morale and performance of the team, which, in turn, can affect the guest experience. The following sections discuss the dimensions of teamwork that participants identified as ethical behaviour in a team setting: solidarity, integrity, autonomy, mutuality, and reciprocity.

5.1.3 Solidarity

A subtheme derived from the majority of the participants' narratives (eight out of nine), associated with ethical behaviour in teamwork, is that of solidarity. The key elements, upon which this subtheme is based, include *supporting one another* and *living in a community*. The following responses illustrate the meanings participants attribute to ethical behaviour in the hospitality industry:

"looking after your teammates, working in a team"
(Amelia)

"Work[ing] as a team to help your colleagues and your managers" (Luca)

"making sure that you're taking care of the people that work for you. [...] So, in the business, it's making sure that [...] we support each other, we are here for each other". (Joana)

"understanding and try[ing] to help [others] in any way." (Elena)

In the above excerpts, phrases such as *"looking after your teammates"*, *"help your colleagues and your managers"*, *"taking care of the people"*, *"support each other"*, *"we are here for each other"*, indicate that ethical behaviour in a team involves supporting

team members in their work. Participants further discuss behaviours that facilitate supporting team members:

“when anything, you know, is going wrong, or if you got a problem, you know, instead of taking it upon yourself it’s [about] communicating with your team around you and see if you can work things out.” (Amelia)

“Awareness what of the surroundings, or anything. It could be anything what your guests may want, basically. Awareness of one’s own personal needs and staff as well. Just in general, you know, awareness.” (Ike)

In order to help others or get help from others, Amelia mentions the importance of communicating with the rest of the team when an issue arises. In parallel, Ike mentions the role of self-awareness and awareness of the needs of other needs. These findings resonate with the help-seeking behaviour described by Jones and George’s (1998), which refers to team members actively seeking help. Anderson and Williams (1996) found that this increases team members’ awareness of opportunities for cooperative behaviours. Another aspect of solidarity in teamwork relates to living in a community. The following responses illustrate the relation between ethical behaviour and the development of a sense of community within the team:

“ethics [...] I think it's just like basically living in a community. [...] for me, it is just like making sure that whatever you do, is not impacting negatively at least your neighbour. The person next to you. [It] is making sure that you are living in community, that you are together.” (Joana)

“We feel like we are family, and as family goes to different stages, ethical [behaviour] is understanding and try to help them in any way.” (Elena)

“you spend majority of your time in here, your colleagues are your family, probably some of them become such good friends, they [become] even closer than your own family” (Elena)

“ethical behaviour relate[s] to being a part of a community [...] regardless of the cultural background.” (Karolina)

The participants' responses suggest that ethical behaviour, when working in a team, is related to supporting each other and developing a sense of community, which Elena extends to living as a family. Her statement makes sense, as she explains, because working in the hospitality industry often involves long working hours, which means that most of the day is spent at work. In this regard, Izabel points out that it takes the efforts of each team member to develop such a climate:

“if we don't have a good environment at work, we are not happy [...], because [...] we spend more time at work, so we need to have a healthy environment. [...] We cannot be friends with everyone of course, we are not the best friends for all the colleagues. OK, but we can live together and try to respect everyone. So, as long as everyone do[es] this, the environment will be good, and the team will be good. If [...] everyone is gossip[ing] around or [...] bullying [...] we are not happy, and we are frustrated, and we don't have motivation [...] to come the next day to work. So, it's very important that we keep all the team motivated [...] but it's not easy task, I know.” (Izabel)

In sum, several respondents refer to solidarity towards colleagues and managers in relation to ethical behaviour in a team, to which Sanders and Emmerik (2004) refer as horizontal and vertical solidarity, respectively. More particularly, participants mention aspects such as providing support, helping, taking care, and looking after team members. These findings closely resemble Sewell's (2005, p. 204) discussion of the ethics of teamwork, which states that teamwork is not only limited to the performance of work activities, but that teamwork is also about developing processes of social affiliation and cooperation through solidarity. Similarly, Mangaliso (2001, p. 25) has stated that the solidarity spirit of Ubuntu encourages team members to work together and give their best for the betterment of the team. Participants identified communication, self-awareness, and awareness of the needs of others as key elements in mitigating negative contagiousness in teamwork and developing teamwork that promotes supportive (problem-solving) behaviour. These findings are consistent with the existing literature on teamwork behaviours that improve team performance and effectiveness (see [Table 21. Teamwork behaviours](#)). However, as Izabel points out, maintaining team solidarity is not an easy task, which is consistent with Molose, Thomas, and Goldman's (2019, p. 7) findings that *“maintaining unity and social relationships is a process that is complex”*.

Table 21. Teamwork behaviours

Authors	Teamwork behaviours
(Blickensderfer, Cannon-Bowers and Salas, 1998)	Awareness (implicit coordination)
(Bowers <i>et al.</i> , 1993)	Communication, situational awareness
(Campion, Medsker and Higgs, 1993)	Communication, social support
(Cannon-Bowers <i>et al.</i> , 1995)	Communication, shared situational awareness
(De Dreu and Van Vianen, 2001)	Helping behaviour
(Dominick, Reilly and McGourty, 1997)	Communication, collaboration
(Gladstein, 1984)	Open communication, supportiveness
(Hoegl and Gemuenden, 2001)	Communication, mutual support
(Janz, Colquitt and Noe, 1997)	Communication, helping behaviour
(Mathieu <i>et al.</i> , 2000)	Communication
(Prince and Salas, 1993)	Communication, situational awareness
(Stevens and Campion, 1994)	Communication, collaborative problem-solving

In addition to fostering a supportive team climate, participants also identified developing a sense of community within the team as an example of ethical behaviour. Some even extend living in community to living in a family. Such an analogy is explained by the long working hours typical of the hospitality industry. The development of a sense of community reflects the philosophy of Ubuntu, as Poovan, du Toit, and Engelbrecht (2006, p. 18) have noted; solidarity develops through the joint efforts of community members in the service of their community. Similarly, in an organisational context, Lutz (2009, p. 318) confirms that, based on Ubuntu principles, a firm is considered a community. In the hospitality industry, Pizam and Shani (2009, p. 146) found that hospitality work involves a high degree of collaboration and teamwork, and therefore, requires a strong team solidarity. Solidarity plays a critical role in various aspects of an organisation, as it can reduce absenteeism (Sanders, 2004) and employee resistance to organisational change (Torenvlied and Velner, 1988). Studies have also shown that solidarity is positively related to job satisfaction (Hodson, 1997; MacDonald, Kelly and Christen, 2019; Matsumoto and Gopal, 2019).

5.1.4 Integrity

The meaning of integrity is the subject of extensive philosophical debate, which has led to various approaches to understanding and defining integrity (Dare, 2010;

Frankfurt, 1971; Williams, 1973 McFall, 1987; Calhoun, 1995). Some view integrity as a capacity for deliberation and reflection (Edgar and Pattison, 2011), others as a consistent attitude (Rosmi and Syamsir, 2020), or a virtue (Calhoun, 1995). Dare (2010, p. 101) proposes that integrity is a concept that encompasses elements of autonomy, identity, and integration. It is the process of sincere and thorough reflection upon these elements that underpins integrity. This process bears resemblance to existentialism, which places great importance on the exploration of conscious and reflective choice (Greene, 1952, p. 266) (see [2.1.3 Existentialism](#)). For Williams (1985), integrity refers to adherence to one's identity as a moral agent. In an organisational setting, Baxter, Dempsey, Megone, and Lee (2012) identified several components of integrity: wholeness of character, ethical values, identity, and standing for something. Barnard, Schurink, and De Beer (2008, p. 46) found that a person with integrity is one who has a core set of moral principles and lives by them. Within a social constructionist paradigm, personal values, beliefs, and worldviews are formed through socialisation based on relations with others, historical and cultural backgrounds (Berger and Luckmann, 1991; Burr, 2003b). It could, therefore, be argued that everyone has different norms and values, leading to different attitudes towards the meaning of integrity. However, the relevance of these rules and values depends on the context and the stakeholders with whom one interacts (Lasthuizen, 2008, p. 12). Despite this diversity of interpretations of integrity, the common thread lies in a deliberate reflection on one's identity or core moral values and consistently adhering to these. As such, integrity, in an organisational context, is not limited to personal values; it also includes consideration of collective values (Rosmi and Syamsir, 2020).

Participants mentioned several aspects related to integrity that they consider crucial for teamwork. The following responses illustrate their understandings of ethical behaviour in teamwork:

“to be honest, trustworthy, punctual, [...] that's the most important part of it or you gonna be behind, you know, if you're not punctual on time [...], and just being honest with everything you know, and we just make a good team. All the time.” (Amelia)

“ethical would be, being kind of transparent, trustworthy, and honest probably, and being respectful” (Karolina)

“Most important is people do business with people who they trust. For me, building relationships and partnerships with different clients means being transparent and trustworthy. [...] I think these are the main kind of ethical behaviour.” (Karolina)

“we talk about respect, integrity, trustworthiness. We are very clear on teamwork and fairness. These are our values that we try to embed in our everyday work and trying for new team members to understand and for the team members who have been with us for a long time, being mindful” (Karolina)

“honesty, and transparency, and respect. Respect to, not only, guests and clients, but to the team members, as the hospitality is a teamwork.” (Karolina)

“honesty, transparency. [...] If you're honest with your guests and employers, suppliers, all of that, I think it is the way forward.” (Joana)

“Openness, honesty. I think it's super important. [...] Admitting a mistake, it just takes you a long way and it's OK to say that: ‘Look, heads up, I made a mistake.’ It's fine, it's absolutely fine. Then we help you [...] overcom[e it] and resolve it together. But trying to lie I think it is not good. Lies, it just complicates things sooner or later. Always, just be honest, be open. I think this is the most important thing, just because we are building relationship and again it doesn't matter whatever it's gonna be staff, customers—it's all about relationship, and relationship can be built only on trust and honesty.” (Elena)

“being approachable, [...] flexible [...], and enthusiasm, as well” (Ike)

“be respectful with your colleagues. [...] So, the first for me, is respect. [...] If you don't respect your colleague every day [...] this is unethical [...] it's not good if you are disrespectful with your colleagues.” (Izabel)

“to be mindful and kind to all around us.” (Adriana)

“to act with integrity, and I need to encourage others to do the same inside the organisation. So, I don't really have any problem to address directly if I can see that something is not right, or someone is kind of not acting with company values.” (Karolina)

“ethical behaviour [...] is doing what you say you do, uhm so being accountable to what you promise, and what you've been preaching. But also, is making sure that you are [...] not lying.” (Joana)

Izabel emphasises that respect should also come from managers as they should lead by example:

We have to lead by example. So, for me, it's very bad when [a] manager told the employees: ‘OK, you have to do this’, [...] and the same manager is not doing this. [...] If our manager do[es] the right thing, [it] is easier to accept [...] orders [...] from someone who respects you and also do[es] the same thing.” (Izabel)

Punctuality is another recurring example of ethical behaviour in the context of teamwork that several participants raise. This observation echoes that of Shaw (1998, p. 80), who considers punctuality as “part of everyday ethics [and] a matter of manners and courtesy”.

“punctual[ity]. Yeah, that's a big part [...] because, you know, that's the most important part of it, or you gonna be behind, you know, if you're not punctual on time” (Amelia)

“when someone is supposed to start work at 8 o'clock but continuously comes, like, at 9 o'clock. Continuously comes late. So, that could be unethical behaviour. The constant being late, and not supporting the team, and letting down the company or the guests, as well.” (Luca)

“be on time [...] if we are late, [...] it harms because [...] they are not here, [...] they are harming the colleagues because they have to stay longer, because the other colleague didn't came on time” (Izabel)

Table 22. Overview aspects of integrity

Aspects of integrity	Participants
Accountability	Joana
Approachability	Ike
Encouraging integrity in others	Karolina
Enthusiasm	Ike
Fairness	Karolina
Flexibility	Ike
Honesty	Amelia, Elena, Joana, Karolina
Mindfulness	Adriana, Karolina
Punctuality	Amelia, Izabel, Luca
Respect	Amelia, Izabel, Karolina
Transparency, openness	Elena, Joana, Karolina
Trustworthiness	Amelia, Elena, Karolina

Several participants identified **transparency** as an essential component in teamwork, as it is crucial for team members to be transparent when an issue arises, so that team members can support each other. Openness requires honesty about one's own mistakes and one's own abilities or limitations. This finding suggests that such transparency is necessary to be able to perform the job, which is consistent with previous studies that have found that employee integrity is a critical component of teamwork (Cameron, 2003) and is associated with better team performance (Cullen and Sackett, 2004). In contrast, team members with low integrity can be detrimental to organisational performance (Furnham and Taylor, 2004). Participants also mentioned that transparency is not limited to the team; employees should also be transparent with guests and business partners. This finding suggests that integrity is also important to the public, as it can lead to developing a trustworthy image and gaining the public's trust (Xie and Peng, 2009).

Several respondents mentioned the importance of **honesty**, **accountability**, **trustworthiness**, and **fairness**. These findings are closely aligned with those of Barnard, Schurink, and De Beer (2008), who have developed a framework for integrity based on a moral foundation and consider these elements to be core characteristics of integrity. Elena and Karolina specifically mention the importance of honesty and trustworthiness, as hospitality work is about teamwork and building relationships. This finding supports Osibanjo and colleagues' (2015) view that team members value

honest feedback from their colleagues and that integrity promotes the development of trusting relationships. In the field of leadership, Treviño and colleagues (2003) found that ethical leaders are thought to possess personal qualities and characteristics such as openness, integrity, honesty, and trustworthiness. Another element of integrity is **respect**, which El-Said (2014, pp. 213–214) defines as *“hotel employees’ perceptions of being accepted, appreciated, recognized, esteemed, considered, valued and treated with dignity from their managers, supervisors, co-workers, and other employees in the hotel regardless of their age, gender, religion, nationality, culture and degree of experience.”* Participants mentioned the importance of respect in teamwork, which corresponds to the findings of previous studies revealing that a team that fosters a climate conducive to integrity and mutual trust leads to more effective collaboration and teamwork (Matthews and McLees, 2015). Respect is particularly important in the hospitality industry, as Kusluvan and colleagues (2010, p. 198) argue that *“hospitality employees complain about being undervalued; unappreciated; and not recognized, respected, or rewarded on par with their efforts.”* Moreover, according to El-said (2014) perceived employee respect is associated with employee morale.

5.1.5 Autonomy and the role of ethical leadership and followership

Individual autonomy is an essential aspect of ethics. For instance, the exploration of conscious and reflective choice is one of the fundamental values of existentialism (Greene, 1952) (see [2.1.3 Existentialism](#)). Similarly, Kant (1898, p. 59) defined autonomy of the will as *“that property of it by which it is a law to itself (independently on any property of the objects of volition)”* and regarded autonomy as the supreme principle of morality. For Kant, it is reason that influences the will and determines its goodness. The will is, therefore, autonomous when our acts are dictated by reason. Hence the importance of building an ethical leader–follower relationship, where leaders empower their followers to take ownership and become autonomous in their decisionmaking. Participants—both leaders and followers—identified aspects they consider important in building ethical leader–follower relationships that can facilitate prosocial teamwork and promote autonomy. Characteristics of ethical leadership include empowering followers, aligning expectations, leading by example, and openness. Characteristics of ethical followership include initiative, self-development, ownership, and acceptance of responsibility.

5.1.5.1 Ethical leadership

It is essential that leaders support their employees in their work so that they become autonomous in their decisionmaking, as exemplified in the following accounts:

“helping people, see them grow, motivating them, that’s the most important. This is the most satisfaction. It’s just, literally seeing people coming happy to work and they’re doing well, and they just grow within their careers, or even discovering new paths.” (Elena)

“Empowering, this is exactly the word. This is very important, to be empowered, to empower people to make decisions and to guide them rather than tell them obvious.” (Elena)

“I think it’s super important for everyone’s development to have that freedom.” (Elena)

The above excerpts suggest that empowering followers enhances job satisfaction for both the leader and the followers. For Elena, it is satisfying to witness followers engage by producing their own ideas and participating in decisionmaking. This finding supports that of Huertas-Valdivia and colleagues (2019), who found in their study of Spanish hotel employees that leaders who empower their employees foster job engagement. Followers, according to Elena, take pride in their work and develop a sense of purpose. This, in turn, enhances followers’ motivation and job satisfaction. Elena points out the importance of giving employees some freedom to contribute their own ideas. This statement is closely related to Murphy’s (1993, p. 226) discussion on autonomy and self-realisation at work, claiming that autonomy requires a certain amount of discretion in the performance of a task. Elena also points out that she empowers followers by guiding, explaining, and giving examples, rather than telling. This indicates that she is aware of her position of power.

A striking finding is that only Elena, who is a senior manager, mentions the terms empowerment and ownership. None of the nonmanagerial employees or middle managers mentioned anything about empowerment or ownership. The expectations that followers have of their leaders are that they lead by example, ensure that expectations are aligned within the team, and that they are approachable. This finding may be explained by the educational side of the organisation and by the fact that two of the nonmanagerial participants are former members of the hospitality training programme delivered by the organisation.

The following feature of ethical leadership relates to aligning expectations, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

"I think that's a general manager's responsibility to [...] go around and [...] let, you know, every department [know] [...] that that's what we expect." (Amelia)

"I think it shows a good team leader because, we're all gonna be working [...] together, knowing that we've all got the same ethics. So, it's gonna make you happy to come into work, you know, 'cause everybody may be on the same level. [...] So, management's got a lot to do. [...] Everything should be fine with the crew, and the members of the team, you know, the team members." (Amelia)

Amelia's response shows that she expects leaders to ensure that all employees have the same understanding of what is expected of them so that everyone can perform their tasks. This resonates with her response to the question about which aspects of her job are the most satisfying:

"Just being in the kitchen. Doing what I do best. [...] When I'm there, it's just my passion. And I'm in my element. [...] I know how to get on with my job" (Amelia)

These results suggest that team members who are informed by their managers about what is expected of them are able to perform their tasks independently, which for Amelia increases job satisfaction.

Four participants saw leading by example as an essential component of ethical leadership, as illustrated in the following statements:

"We have to lead by example. So, for me, it's very bad when [a] manager told the employees: OK, you have to do this [...]. And the same manager is not doing this [...] So, how can he say this to me, if he's doing worse? Oh, because he's a manager he can do it? No, [...] [h]e cannot. So, this must come from the top. If our manager doing the right thing, people can see: OK [...] we can follow, [and it] is easier to accept [...] orders [...] from someone who respects you and also do[es] the same thing, so it's easier." (Izabel)

"I think it will be better if there is someone on the top to show leadership style and work together with the team. If one of the managers is a role model and displays ethical behaviour, it would be even better. I

would feel the staff would be more inclined to work harder.” (Luca)

“leading by example. So, it's how we act and how we respond to situations [...], it sets the tone to everyone else.” (Joana)

“as a top manager, I think it's really important for me to talk about it and literally act by example. It is really important. So, managers, all of them, they need [...] understanding [of] what ethics are, how it's done.” (Elena)

Leading by example is perceived as a sign of respect towards followers and legitimises the directive role of the leader, which in turn makes followers more inclined to accept orders and work harder. This finding closely resembles Nygaard and colleagues' (2017, p. 133) observation that *“managers who lead by example will boost team value and commitment.”* Luca's statement that managers who lead by example serve as role models is supported by the findings of Pircher Verdorfer and Peus' (2020) that managers who lead by example help their followers become more open to ethical influence.

Openness is also recognised as an essential characteristic of ethical leadership. Primary qualities of an ethical leader are being approachable, seeking to understand followers, and giving voice, as illustrated in the following quotes:

“The culture or the leadership, I think, people have to be really accessible”. (Elena)

This comment joins Ike's response to the meaning of ethical behaviour:

“being approachable and, you know, flexible”. (Ike)

“I will always find the time to have a tea or coffee with them, and I think that makes them valued and important and give them the chance to tell me from their perspective what's going on, and what is wrong. But, yeah, quite often people just judge without understanding. And that's how the ethics will be misjudged.” (Elena)

“Yes, we have to have a SOPs, or standard operational procedures, and all things, but I like people to be heard” (Elena)

Part of being an ethical leader is being approachable so that followers feel comfortable asking for help or raising an issue. This finding is supported by Treviño and colleagues (2000, p. 132) who also consider approachability as a pillar of ethical leadership. Openness also refers to leaders being open to other perspectives by seeking to understand and giving their followers a voice. Seeking to understand other perspectives relates to cognitive empathy and ethnocultural empathy (as discussed in [2.4.2 Cognitive empathy: understanding the perspective of the other](#)). Such empathy is a key principle for achieving mutual understanding (Simcic Brønn and Brønn, 2003). Encouraging employees to express their opinions is seen as a characteristic of ethical leadership. Such leaders encourage their employees to voice their opinions, and they listen to employees' concerns (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005). Extensive research in the hospitality industry has found that encouraging employee voice is associated with employee satisfaction and engagement (e.g., Raub and Robert, 2013; Kim, Knutson and Choi, 2016; Liang *et al.*, 2017; Jolly and Lee, 2021; Elbaz *et al.*, 2022). This finding can be partly explained by the fact that hospitality employees often feel undervalued and unappreciated (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010; Thangaraja, 2016). This threefold openness makes employees feel valued and can encourage them to participate in decisionmaking and become autonomous.

In sum, ethical leadership pertains to empowering followers, aligning expectations, leading by example, and being open. All four of these qualities can encourage followers become autonomous in their decisionmaking. Leaders who empower their followers, are those who encourage their followers to participate in decisionmaking and take ownership of their decisions, by giving them guidance rather than instructions and allowing for mistakes so that they can learn to make their own decisions. Empowerment is a source of job satisfaction for both the leader and the follower. It also gives employees a sense of pride and purpose. Aligning expectations means that all team members are informed about what is expected of them so that everyone can focus on completing their tasks autonomously, which increases job satisfaction. Managers who lead by example act as role models and promote ethical behaviour amongst employees. Leading by example also legitimises the leader's directive role and makes employees more inclined to accept orders and work harder. Open leaders are those who are approachable, receptive to different perspectives, and

willing to encourage employee voice. Such a stance makes followers feel heard and valued.

5.1.5.2 Ethical followership

The characteristic features of ethical followership that nurture prosocial teamwork and autonomy, relate to self-initiative, self-development, taking ownership, and assuming responsibility, as illustrated in the following statements:

Taking initiative by sharing ideas of improving service:

“sharing each other’s ideas, [...] putting in your own ideas: ‘Maybe we can do this better’, [...], You know, especially because, sometimes, whoever is in charge or your GM haven’t the best sort of idea, you’re just putting in your own ideas. [...] Whenever we have staff meetings, we can [...] say: ‘we could do this better or that’, or it could even be on daily basis, you know, for the littlest things [...] we can take this payment... this is the quick way to do this [...] or this is the best way to promote this [...] we can mention this. Just for the littlest things.” (Ike)

Taking ownership, taking initiative, engaging in self-development:

“I like people taking ownership, I think it is quite important. [...] yes sometimes they don’t make the right choice, and that’s OK because unless you make mistakes, you’ll never learn, right? [...] It’s part of the process” so I would encourage them to come up with ideas and different things. [...] I think when you involve and give ideas, and this idea becomes your project, and you develop, you start owning, and then proud of it”. (Elena)

Engaging in self-development:

“Everybody can bring something, and everybody has got a free way [will] and [is] free [...] to develop itself and progress, it’s as simple as that. [...] wherever it is, you know, you take it as you pleased to reach and develop yourself and move forward, you know.” (Adriana)

Taking responsibility:

“each person is responsible for its own actions” (Joana)

Similar to the discussion on *Ethical followership (4.3.2)*, teamwork does not depend on leadership alone. It also requires followers to make valuable contributions (Sronce and Arendt, 2009). Participants believe that ethical followership means taking initiative by contributing ideas that can improve the service, taking ownership, self-development, and accountability. These findings closely correspond to Kelley's (1992, p. 126) exemplary followers, who are said to *"take initiative, assume ownership, participate actively, [be] self-starters, support team and leader, [be] extremely competent, and go above and beyond the job"*. Taking the initiative and contributing one's own ideas is significant in the hospitality industry, because frontline employees are those who interact directly with guests and perform the tasks that managers expect them to deliver. Frontline employees have experience of such interactions and daily practical routines, which managers may not possess, as their tasks and duties lie elsewhere. In the hospitality industry, it is crucial that employees take initiative and ownership of their tasks so that they can independently respond to guest requests and quickly address guest complaints (Lin *et al.*, 2019).

In sum, building an ethical leader–follower relationship can foster a climate of prosocial teamwork and autonomy through the leader empowering followers by delegating decisionmaking power and followers taking ownership of their work. However, leaders need to recognise the risks of negative nudging (Vugts *et al.*, 2020) and abuse of power (Woods *et al.*, 2013), which can lead to the reduction of followers' decisionmaking autonomy and their responsibility to merely follow leaders' orders (Velasquez, 1982). In parallel, ethical followers are those who take charge of their tasks rather than passively abiding the rules. Ethical followers get involved and develop their own ideas to support coworkers and managers to improve service delivery. They see their mistakes as opportunities for self-development or the mistakes of others as opportunities to support them. The purpose of focusing on building an ethical follower–leader relationship is for team members to become autonomous in their decisionmaking, which, according to Gallie and colleagues (2012, p. 26), enhances employee wellbeing. Delegating decisionmaking authority to employees is particularly important in the hospitality industry, as frontline employees play an important role in delivering services that involve a high level of interaction between employees and guests (Terglav, Konečnik Ruzzier and Kaše, 2016), and employees need to be able

to make quick decisions to address guest needs (González-Porras, Ruiz-Alba and Morales-Mediano, 2021) or respond to guest complaints (Ogbeide *et al.*, 2017).

5.1.6 *Mutuality and reciprocity*

Prosocial teamwork requires an alignment of values and expectations of the individual and the organisation. The alignment of values serves to foster a mutual understanding of what constitutes ethical behaviour so that team members know how to behave in the team. Alignment of expectations aims to develop a mutual understanding of what is expected of team members and how they can contribute to the goals and purpose of the team and the organisation. Mutual understanding and reciprocal commitments are central to effective teamwork. In this sense, Lashley (2007, p. 4) defines hospitality as “[s]haring and exchanging the fruits of labour, together with mutuality and reciprocity [...]. [H]ospitality primarily involves mutuality and exchange, and thereby feelings of altruism and beneficence.” Mutuality refers to a shared understanding and agreement with the promises and commitments that each party has made and accepted. Reciprocity, on the other hand, refers to the agreement of the reciprocal exchange, in that the commitments or contributions made by one party obligate the other to make an appropriate return (Dabos and Rousseau, 2004, p. 53). Prosocial teamwork is, thus, not only about agreeing on ethical behaviour and work obligations, but also committing to reciprocate and contribute to the rest of the team and the organisation.

Participants agree that the team needs to align its values and expectations, as illustrated in the statements below:

“I think that shows a good team leader because, we’re all gonna be working [...] together knowing that we’ve all got the same ethics. So, it’s gonna make you happy to come into work, you know, ‘cause everybody may be on the same level” (Amelia)

“[E]veryone needs to understand what is our way and what is our values [...] what we expect, what we want. And this is very important for our owner for our CEO to tell them, so, and let them know what they is expecting from us.” (Izabel)

[The founder] serves as that reminder of why we’re here [...]. His presence is quite strong, so I think it does

remind people why we're here, what the point is that he's, like our kind of, our hero in lots of ways, [...] for me, every time he's around, [...] I remember why we're doing this. (Jane)

The founder seems to play a central role in conveying the purpose of the organisation. Participants expressed that they expect the values and purpose of the organisation to be communicated by the CEO. This may be related to the fact that the organisation is a social enterprise. As the founder of the organisation, he seems to be the most fitting person to convey such a message. In addition, employees attach great importance to the social purpose. Several participants mentioned that the organisation's social purpose is one of the main sources of job satisfaction and that it gives meaning to their work. Developing mutual understanding serves to clarify the organisation's purpose and expectations and to set clear guidelines so as to reduce ambiguity and potential frustration, as exemplified in the following accounts:

"if they know what to expect from us, what to expect from [Case Study Hotel], [...] it's easier to follow the rules and so, they know this since the beginning what they need to do. [...] [W]e need to connect and to communicate what we need from our team, what we need to achieve and always be in the same page everyone. Not someone doing this way and the other is doing the other way." (Izabel)

"I think it must be the same message, from the owners, the managers, the top-level management, escalated down. It should be the same message, the same values, and everybody believing in the same things." (Luca)

"highlighting to people, you know, about our ethical approach and what does it mean, you know, for us, working as a team and being able to deliver that, I think that's a big call". (Adriana)

"it is like knowing that ... the rules of the game. So, if you know the rules of the game, you know how to play the game, and you know how to succeed. If you don't have the ground rules set, then it's a bit everyone everywhere, and there are no clear goals, no clear expectations so that I think that generates a lot of frustration. So yeah, it's basically the guidelines, it's the rules of the game and once you have the rules you know what is your objective, or what is, like, your aim, what you have to do. So, I think that means really

minimise frustration and just issues within the team and everyone.” (Joana)

For Adriana to reciprocate, she expects standards to be in place and for team members to work in accordance with these. Her response below suggests that, similar to previous findings (e.g., Greenberg, 1980; DePaulo, Brittingham and Kaiser, 1983; Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), all parties need to contribute in order for her to be reciprocal and for there to be balance in the relationship. Adriana’s expectations may have been shaped by her disappointing experiences in previous employments. In this respect, it is likely that negative treatment is also reciprocated (Cropanzano *et al.*, 2017). Wayne, Shore, and Liden (1997), on the other hand, found that employees who reciprocate their commitments and obligations to one another are more likely to build a sustainable relationship and achieve their goals.

And now with [Elena], she is the same; kind and mindful and thinking person, because [...] I won't do it to myself to work with people who are unkind, unmindful, you know, I love what I'm doing, I'm passionate, and I've got experience. So, I know exactly how the things supposed to look like, and I'm always open for a constructive criticism, and I'm more than happy to do whatever needs to be done to bring the money and make the business rolling. But yeah, then there has to be some standards to it as well. (Adriana)

In reflecting on the role of organisational ethical standards, Luca comments:

“I think it is guide and information for the staff, so they will have an understanding of the company ethics, but then this depends on the individual how they interpret the message.” (Luca)

“ So, the behaviour has to be set. I mean, uhm, it's just like, each person behaves in a way, [...] I don't believe in putting people in boxes. So, we don't want everyone to have the same speech when dealing with guests. We don't want robots. We want people to act as themselves, but there are guidelines. There are limits and boundaries and that is the rules of the game. So, having it explicit and making sure that that is being followed is just making sure that they are also accountable for their own actions, and 'cause, it's easy if you don't say anything, if there are no rules to the game, that each person will play their own cards, and just guessing and expecting something.” (Joana)

As Joana and Luca mention, individuals' understanding and interpretation of the organisation's values and objectives may vary. Discrepant interpretations and understandings can lead to ambiguities that can hinder autonomous decisionmaking. This finding shows that mutuality is essential for employees to take ownership and make autonomous decisions. Autonomous decisionmaking authority is critical in the hospitality industry so that frontline employees can quickly respond to guests' needs or address complaints. A lack of mutuality can be the cause of internal competition, which can become a source of frustration for employees, as exemplified below:

"what is frustrating is the other [...] departments they think only on themselves, so F&B the department thinks of what is good for the F&B [...], the bar, what is the needs of the bar? But they don't think about the hotel itself. [...] [T]hey are always thinking about their own people [...] but not overall. You know what I mean? So, they are working by departments". (Izabel)

"if something happened not very good in F&B we need to try to figure out, and this is not F&B problem, this is hotel problem, [...] we need to manage everything, not only this departments by itself. [...] [T]his is what is frustrating to me. Some[times] [...] F&B is better than the front office, or kitchen didn't perform well. No, it was not kitchen or F&B or front office. We didn't perform well. It was Case Study Hotel. [...] We need to think of Case Study Hotel as itself [as a whole] and try to solve the problems, try to solve the challeng[es], and try to do better for next time, so the guest when he arrives next time will be [...] satisfy[ied]... we need to [make sure] the guests [...] are happy to return" (Izabel)

This finding suggests that prosocial teamwork involves perceiving the entire workforce as one team rather than separate departmental teams and working together towards a common goal, which can improve job satisfaction (Zaidi, Ghayas and Durrani, 2019). This is especially important in the hospitality industry, as guests may not differentiate between departments but perceive the organisation as a single entity, and, therefore, expect an employee to be informed about all departments. For instance, business guests attending a conference held in the establishment may also stay overnight in the hotel and consume a meal in the hotel restaurant. This requires interdepartmental collaboration so that employees can rapidly attend to guests' needs, as otherwise this may affect the guest experience and the perception of service quality. Mutuality and

reciprocity also require solidarity to avoid the risk of internal competition, which in turn can harm guest perception and experience. This echoes Tsui and colleagues' (1997, p. 1095) observation that mutuality of goals requires employees to attend not only to their immediate tasks but also to the wider needs of the organisation. Thus, developing a shared vision of what needs to be achieved and a commitment to reciprocate contributions towards the organisation's goals can develop a collective pride (Mangaliso, 2001) and improve morale (Day, Minichiello and Madison, 2007).

In sum, mutuality (shared understanding of expectations and values) and reciprocity (commitment to reciprocate contributions) are recognised as dimensions of ethical behaviour that help promote prosocial teamwork. The founder plays a central role in conveying the organisation's values and goals, which may be linked to the social dimension of the organisation. Indeed, social purpose is a central tenet of employee satisfaction and sense of purpose. Mutuality is crucial, as interpretations and understandings of what is expected of employees may vary. A lack of mutuality and reciprocity can lead to interdepartmental competition and employee frustration. It is, therefore, essential to view the entire workforce as one team, rather than separate departmental teams, in order to develop a shared vision that has been shown to lead to collective pride, job satisfaction, and morale. Mutuality and reciprocity are particularly important in the hospitality industry and especially in a team with apprentices. Emphasising the importance of mutuality and reciprocity can facilitate autonomous decisionmaking, crucial for frontline employees to quickly respond to guests' needs and address complaints.

5.1.7 Conclusion prosocial teamwork

The finding that teamwork is a prevalent theme is not surprising given the characteristics of the hospitality industry, where quality of service delivery is highly reliant on collaboration and cooperation (Pizam and Shani, 2009, p. 146). Prosocial teamwork aims to promote the welfare of team members, the team, and the organisation. The subthemes related to prosocial teamwork include contagiousness, solidarity, integrity, autonomy, and mutuality and reciprocity.

The findings on **contagiousness** showed that the attitudes and behaviours of one team member have a direct impact on the morale, satisfaction, and performance of the rest of the team. This introduced the notion of inseparability of individuals part

of a team. Furthermore, contagiousness transcends the boundaries of the team, as the employee behaviour can have a ripple effect on the rest of the team as well on guests.

Solidarity is necessary to ensure positive contagiousness in teamwork. Findings have shown that supporting teammates consists of looking after one another in the execution of work-related tasks and developing processes of social affiliation. Though the development of solidarity has been identified as a complex process, aspects such as communication, self-awareness of one's own capabilities and limitations, and awareness of the needs of others can foster a sense of solidarity in the workplace. Solidarity is associated with the development of a sense of community or family that comes from working long hours, typical in the hospitality industry.

The two dimensions of **integrity** consist of (1) the process of sincere and thorough reflection on one's values (Greene, 1952) and (2) living by one's values (Williams, 1985; Barnard, Schurink and De Beer, 2008). The core values of integrity include honesty, mindfulness, punctuality, respect, transparency, and trustworthiness. Punctuality is a key concern and is highly valued in the unpredictable and dynamic environment of the hospitality industry. Similarly, honesty, trustworthiness, and transparency are crucial when service delivery relies heavily on collaboration. Respect, too, is cited as a core value of integrity, which is not surprising as it has been reported that hospitality employees often feel undervalued and not respected (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010).

Autonomy involves building ethical follower–leader relationships. Ethical leaders have been shown to empower their followers by explaining rather than instructing them. Such an approach requires awareness of the leader's hierarchical position of power in order to mitigate the risk of negative nudging and abuse of power. Followers expect leaders to align the team to ensure followers have the same understanding of what is expected of them so that everyone can perform their tasks. Leading by example is a key component of ethical leadership that legitimises the leader's role and enhances employee motivation. A leader's openness plays an influential role in developing ethical follower–leader relations. Openness means being approachable so that followers feel comfortable raising an issue. Open leaders are assumed to make an effort to understand the other person and to be receptive to different points of view. In counterpart, ethical followers are those who take initiative by sharing ideas, taking ownership, engaging in self-development, and taking

responsibility for their own acts. Developing an ethical follower–leader relationship is paramount to promoting autonomy. Transferring decisionmaking power to frontline employees enables them to quickly attend to guest needs or address guest complaints and yield positive guest experiences and perceptions of service quality.

Mutuality and reciprocity refer to the development of a shared understanding of goals and values and a commitment to reciprocate contribution, respectively. Mutuality and reciprocity are viewed as dimensions of ethical behaviour that help promote prosocial teamwork. Both dimensions can mitigate the risks of interdepartmental competition, which is found to be a source of frustration. A mutual understanding and commitment to reciprocity contribute to the development of a shared vision and collective pride.

5.2 Multidirectional candid communication

Participants' understanding of ethical behaviour in relation to communication includes listening, and open, transparent, honest, multidirectional, interdepartmental, and organisational communication (see *Figure 7. Theme & subthemes - Multidirectional candid communication*).

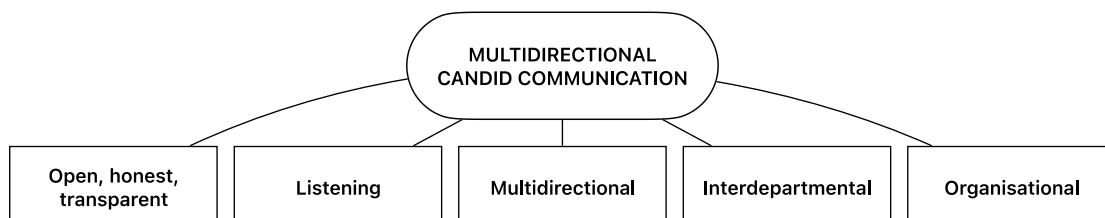


Figure 7. Theme & subthemes - Multidirectional candid communication

5.2.1 Features of candid communication

5.2.1.1 Honesty, transparency, openness

Findings show that communication, irrespective of the direction (further discussed in *5.2.2 Multidirectional communication*), needs to be open, honest, and transparent, as illustrated in the following accounts:

“Definitely effective communication, and honesty, and transparency: (Karolina)”

“I think a key driver of ethics is communication. I think communication and transparency are super important. So, I think, you know, for us all to feel like in the business we can speak openly and honestly about where we're at, you know, and have that communication channel be as open as it possibly can be.” (Jane)

Transparent and honest communication requires self-awareness of one's own capabilities and limitations:

“Not only saying what you [can] do but also saying what you can't do.” (Joana)

Self-awareness facilitates the development of empathy (Davis, 1980, p. 711), whereby self-awareness of one's own needs and abilities enables the individual to be open and offer or seek support. Such an attitude facilitates the development of solidarity within a team by enabling team members to support one another and develop social affiliation, as discussed in the section on prosocial teamwork (see [5.1.3 Solidarity](#) and [5.1.4 Integrity](#)):

“being open, being honest, being transparent. You know, sharing when we're feeling down, like sharing when we're struggling and trying to help each other.” (Jane)

Open communication helps individuals understand one another's perspectives (further discussed in [5.3.1 Cognitive empathy](#)) and reduces the risk of misunderstanding, frustration, and conflict:

“I think a[n] [...] open conversation it always going to take you big way, so if something frustrates me, I like to talk to them [...], because unless you stop it at the very beginning, it just [...] gets worse. I think it's also important [...] for everyone to understand why things are done, because if a person doesn't understand [...], there will be conflict, and that's something I don't like [...] I'm peaceful and happy person” (Elena)

“we need to understand what is going on and why it's going [...]. [S]o, in any decisionmaking I'd normally involve all of them and try to hear the sides.” (Elena)

“quite often, we'll do things without even realising, and that's what I always say to my team [...], I'm not perfect, [...] far from perfect, I do make mistakes, but unless you tell me if I don't know, there's nothing I can

do about it. So that's why I think open communication is super important.” (Elena)

Open communication makes it possible to understand one another's perspectives, as otherwise misunderstandings can lead to incorrect assumptions and become a source of frustration or conflict. Teams composed of trainees and more experienced members brings a diversity of work experience with the experienced employees needing to understand the needs of the less experienced, and the less experienced needing to understand how to perform their tasks. With this in mind, Joana and Izabel discuss the notion of common sense. Both participants are experienced team members; Izabel started working when the hotel opened, and Joana has worked in other properties of the same hotel group prior to joining Case Study Hotel (CSH). Whilst Joana explains that:

“Common sense doesn't exist. What is common for me is not common for another person. So, let's not assume anything. (Joana)

In contrast, Izabel argues that:

“sometimes what is lacking is like common sense. [...] So, for me, what is common sense? [...] to be nice to the guest, to always be patient and hear the guest [...], be on time, be respectful with your colleagues” (Izabel)

It is, therefore, critical for experienced workers to recognise the risk of taking their knowledge for granted and assuming that all team members have the same knowledge. Furthermore, hospitality work is highly dependent on interdepartmental cooperation (Dann and Hornsey, 1986). However, not every department may be aware of what other departments' responsibilities and duties involve, which often leads to interdepartmental conflicts (Datta, 2020; Wu, Wang and Ling, 2021). Hence the importance of open communication to develop a shared understanding of one another's needs and promote prosocial teamwork towards the delivery of quality service.

Candid communication helps address perceived unethical behaviour that can sometimes occur in a diverse team:

“I'll have a casual coffee with them, and they'll come to me and say: ‘oh, this person is just horrible, [...] they need to go’. [...] [Y]ou see this is not ethical. This is

not good. [...] I always ask questions to understand why this person is behaving this way. [...] I always try to look at the bigger picture.” (Elena)

“there might be a situation where somebody just jokes, it is their way of joking but if the other person doesn't feel good about it. [...] you need to encourage people to be open to talk and get them to agree, really, understand that it's not OK. It might be joke for you, but the other person is not feeling good so that needs to stop.” (Elena)

Hospitality workforce is notorious for its cultural diversity (Baum *et al.*, 2007). Though humour can improve emotional wellbeing (Crawford and Caltabiano, 2011) and contribute to the development of a sense of conviviality (Wise and Velayutham, 2020), humour is a double-edged sword (Malone III, 1980). In a multicultural setting, jokes can be misinterpreted. As Elena notes, it is essential to be open about the negative impacts of humour. This finding resonates with prior research on humour in multicultural work environments, which suggests that humour can be perceived as offensive and derisive (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006) and can lead to the formation of ethnic subgroups within a team (Sanders, 2002), resulting in potential discrimination (Michalik and Sznicer, 2017). Findings demonstrate the importance of being open about conflicting perceptions of group behaviour in order to recognise that behaviour can be perceived as unethical, in an effort to raise awareness of cultural differences (further discussed in [5.3.3 Ethnocultural empathy](#)).

Hence, participants mention honesty, transparency, and openness in communication as principles of ethical behaviour. The diversity in the team (work experience, cultural differences) requires members to be aware of their own needs and requirements and to be honest and transparent in their communication in order to raise awareness of differences (needs, expectations, cultural values), and thus promote prosocial teamwork. Building upon the communication of information, the following section discusses the role of listening.

5.2.1.2 Listening

Part of communication is the ability to listen. When reflecting on the meaning of ethical behaviour and sources of job satisfaction, participants emphasise the importance of the leader engaging with managers and employees in the workplace, as illustrated below. This confirms the findings of previous research that has shown the

importance of listening skills for hospitality managers (Brownell, 2004; Tesone and Ricci, 2005 in Suh et al., 201, p. 110). Suh and colleagues (2012, p. 110) even found that listening skills are more important for hospitality managers than other communication skills.

“our owner of the company [...] needs to understand and also hear the other persons. Maybe not only hear the general manager, of course, but also talk with another person. [...] [I]t's very important to listen. [...] [O]ur owner is from [abroad] but he comes frequently—not in this last year because of pandemic. But he was always coming here. But imagine [if] he never comes here, and only just like by email, or letter, [...] and only talk with general manager. I don't think this is a good thing. He needs to talk, and he needs to communicate with the general manager, of course. But I think he [...] needs to come here and check sometimes, just being [at] the bar and sitting there and watch and talk with the [...] the employees to know the vibes, to understand [if] they [are] happy [or] why they are always unhappy. [L]istening is very important.”
(Izabel)

“our founder [...] tries really hard to engage with the teams on a local level, as well. And you know, listens to the team, and speaks to the team and he's known, and he is that example and reminder to the team”
(Jane)

By listening, one not only develops tolerance for differences but also demonstrates the ability to display empathy (Davis, 1990) (further discussed in the following theme on [Understanding differences](#) (5.3). Respondents' observations that it is important for managers to engage with employees in the workplace are consistent with hospitality employees' feelings that they are underappreciated and need recognition (Choi, Fang and Khatler, 2022, p. 98).

5.2.1.3 Barriers to and lack of communication

There are numerous barriers to effective communication in the workplace, such as intergenerational differences (Madera, 2011), language barriers (Chen et al, 2011), cultural differences (Grobelsna, 2015), poor leadership (Khan, 2019). In the excerpt below, Izabel identifies staff shortages as a barrier to effective communication:

“staff is short. So, we don't have a lot of staff [...] and sometimes [...] we don't do the proper thing, so,

explaining everything. So, sometimes we are [...] in the rush and we need to take time and explain everything. So, for example, we have [...] four new starters and we need to [...] spend time with them [...] and even if it's not very good time because we are short in staff. [...] But we need to spend [...] [time] because they need to understand [...] our values.”
(Izabel)

Hospitality employees often need to make rapid decisions, be it frontline employees attending guests' needs, or backline kitchen staff completing dishes to a high standard within a specific timeframe. Working under time pressure can become a barrier to effective communication, especially when there is a shortage of staff, which can result in a lack communication. Participants identified lack of communication as a source of dissatisfaction and frustration, as exemplified in the following quote:

“not getting enough communication [...]. Not knowing when events is, especially on the days I'm off, and if I'm working the next day, I might not have a clue what has been going on, you know that's a lack of communication. That's what it is, and lack of updates, that's what annoys me.” (Ike)

Hospitality work is often an around-the-clock shift work (morning, afternoon, evening, night), which implies that workers starting their shift rely on intershift briefing from the previous shift to obtain the necessary information. Given the work and time pressures, it is crucial that such briefing takes place and is carried out accurately to ensure a smooth shift handover so that employees can resume work from the previous shift.

5.2.2 Multidirectional communication

As previously discussed, prosocial teamwork requires *inter alia* solidarity and a shared understanding (see [5.1.3 Solidarity](#) and [5.1.6 Mutuality and reciprocity](#)). To foster a sense of solidarity and mutuality, multidirectional communication plays a fundamental role (horizontal, upward, downward, outbound, interdepartmental).

Horizontal communication—information flowing between individuals in the same hierarchical level— involves peer support, as exemplified in the following quote:

“communicating with your team around you and see if you can work things out.” (Amelia)

Upward communication—information flowing from the lower to the upper hierarchical levels—requires that leaders be approachable, so that employees can seek help when issues arise. The accessibility of leaders plays a crucial role in enhancing job satisfaction, as illustrated in the following accounts:

“if you got a problem, [...] you speak to your line manager and I think they in turn will speak to the team member, [...] and if it's a case that we have to have a meeting to communicate and get it all over [communicated throughout the team]” (Amelia)

“most of us are trainees, [and] if you got a problem, we talk about it. [...] You can go to management, if you feel you can't talk to your line manager, the [general] manager, she always walks around, she tells you: 'you can always talk to me', you know, I love it. It's just good, it's a good feeling, the good vibes that they give that you're welcome to always have a talk if you've got a serious, you know, problem.” (Amelia)

“I believe it's very important to have a good communication channel with everyone and to [be able to] rely [on others] [...] if you have any [...] doubts we know where to find the answers. [...] I believe it's also important that people are free to go to talk with people. [...] [M]y office door [...] is always open even though I know this is disturbing, 'cause they're coming because of this and that [...] all the time, but they know they can come here, and they can talk [with] me also with the hotel manager the same and the operation manager. So, they know they can reach us, we are not distant, [...], and this is very good. [...] We are not just, you know, the bosses upstairs”. (Izabel)

This finding is supported by Lv and colleagues (2022, p. 9), who report that leaders who promote straightforward communication by reminding employees that they are receptive to employees' ideas and solutions, can foster a safe work environment. Such a leader communication style is a central tenet of ethical leadership (Brown, Treviño and Harrison, 2005).

Downward communication—information flowing from upper to lower hierarchical levels—serves to engage subordinates in activities that go beyond their daily tasks giving them a broader perspective of the organisation, as illustrated in the following account:

“My staff is aware of what we're doing, for what kind of clients we're cooking [...]. They are also aware of the provenance of the food, and of the suppliers and everything else. The suppliers are coming to us or I'm taking them to suppliers. They try the strangest stuff, tasting for the new menus. So, the whole picture is available for them, yeah.” (Adriana)

Downward communication typically serves to communicate work instructions, expectations, feedback, and motivational efforts (Mount & Back, 1999, p. 402). However, the effectiveness of downward communication depends on the relationship between manager and subordinates and the clarity and accuracy of the information (Anderson and Level, 1980, p. 52). In their study on internal communication in front-office departments of hotels, Fakhri and Marini (2019, p. 51) observed that employees need not only clear work instructions but also ideological aspects of the organisation (i.e., mission, vision, organisational culture) in order to gain an understanding of organisational goals. This is consistent with Adriana's approach of communicating *“the whole picture”*.

Outbound communication—information flowing from the organisation to external stakeholders—requires honesty and involves building relationships based on trust, as illustrated in the following quotes:

“we cannot, just for example, [...] sell something that we don't have, so [not] making promise[s] that we [...] we can't [keep].” (Izabel)

“building relationships and partnerships with different clients means being transparent and trustworthy.” (Karolina)

“the environment of people that is around your business. So, that is your guests, that is your team, that is your suppliers, your investors. So, it's just making sure that... you're just being clear and transparent with this communication, with your actions, and that you're not misleading anyone into anything.” (Joana).

“with our customers, you know, being open and honest with them as much as we possibly can about who we are and what we're trying to do. Communication would be key.” (Jane)

In sum, multidirectional internal communication allows team members to support one another, requires leaders to be approachable to assist subordinates with problems, and allows team members to gain a broader understanding of the organisation's goals. These findings are consistent with those of Glaser (1994, p. 294), who conducted a three-year case study on teamwork and communication and found that a communication-oriented team had an improved ability to address problems and manage conflict, as well as greater mutual support and cooperation. Josiam and colleagues (2009, p. 26) found that bilateral vertical communication (between employee and manager) promotes candid communication that makes employees feel safe and valued. Outbound communication needs to be transparent and honest in order to build trusting relationships with external stakeholders. In addition, employers in the hotel industry have identified the ability to organise and manage multilateral communication as a core competence for middle managers (Predvoditeleva, Reshetnikova and Slevitch, 2019, p. 252).

5.2.3 Interdepartmental communication

Interdepartmental communication promotes the sharing of guest feedback with backline team members, which enhances job satisfaction, as shown in the following responses:

"I don't see the guests. [...] But when [colleagues] do send feedback, it's good. You know, I can always, you know, really appreciate a lot." (Amelia)

"if you are working in the food area just ask how the food was, whether they liked it, you know, just passing on positive message towards your chef or your fellow colleagues or whoever is on duty that day. [...] From guest feedback as well, pass it on, especially name mentions. [...]. It's just passing on the message, you know." (Ike)

As exemplified below, interdepartmental communication serves to inform departments of what is expected of them, which connects to the discussion on mutuality and reciprocity (see [5.1.6 Mutuality and reciprocity](#))

"every department should be knowing that that's what we expect." (Amelia)

Interdepartmental communication can alleviate the risk of conflict due to misunderstanding:

*“it's also important for people, for everyone to understand why things are done, because if a person doesn't understand, let's say a basic example with housekeeping—if front office reception doesn't understand how housekeeping operates and what might go wrong, you know, there will be conflict”
(Elena)*

This finding is similar to that of Mullins (2001, p. 283), who found that the risk of conflict in hospitality teams is often underpinned by interdepartmental dependencies, where one department relies on another to complete a task. More specifically, differing goals between departments are one of the main causes of conflict in hotels (Dann and Hornsey, 1986, p. 25). Therefore, interdepartmental communication is important to promote a mutual understanding of goals. A lack of interdepartmental communication can lead to individuals making incorrect assumptions and hinder effective interdepartmental collaboration, as illustrated below:

“For me is the communication [...] between the department[s] [...] because, uh, sometimes we missed the communication. So, if we do communicate every day, if everyone knows a little about what [...] we are going to expect. For example, we have a big event for next week and we need to be ready. [...] it's not only front office [that] must be ready for this event. We need to communicate with the kitchen team, with housekeeping, with every [department]. So, sometimes, uhm, I believe people think the others know about the things, but they don't know. And that's why sometimes [...] there's a problem or sometimes [...] the things they didn't went very well because of this [...] lack of communication. And this, we need to improve about this as well. So, [...] we need to talk with each other. Even if we think they know already. [...] Because it's good for us [to be on] the same page. [...] So, I believe it's very important to have a good communication channel with everyone” (Izabel)

In sum, interdepartmental communication plays an important role in the hospitality industry as it promotes the sharing of guest feedback with backline employees, which can enhance job satisfaction and develop team affiliation. Findings also demonstrate that interdepartmental communication promotes the alignment of expectations within the team and can mitigate the risks of conflict and false

assumptions that can hinder effective interdepartmental relationships, which is essential in the hospitality industry given the high dependence of task performance.

5.2.4 Consistent organisational communication

Participants point to the role of consistent organisational communication in conveying its values and social purpose. Participants also argue that the organisation's values should be reflected in its daily operations, as consistent organisational communication serves to set the organisation's policies, expectations, and boundaries. In addition, the message conveyed should be consistent throughout the organisation so that expectations, values, and goals are clear and coherent. Lastly, organisational communication should convey the social purpose of the organisation.

The organisation's ethical values should be clearly communicated and implemented in the workplace, as illustrated below:

"You can have mottos, you can have a motto of the company, and ethical view of the companies or however you work. But [if] this is the [only] thing, and then in the end of the day, you gonna have an unethical person who wanna push you for the profit and stuff like that, that everything's gonna get bust. So, if there is no communication and there's no ethical and mindful doing of the business, it's not working. You can have written down everything you wish to. However, if you don't have someone who is ethically and kindly and mindfully executing this. It doesn't work." (Adriana)

This insight draws attention to the issue of windowdressing. Organisations that develop ethics initiatives such as mottos must also adhere to them and should be reflected in daily operations (Treviño, den Nieuwenboer and Kish-Gephart, 2014).

Similar to interdepartmental communication, participants express the need for organisational communication to be consistent and convey the same message throughout the organisation:

"the new trainees and the new employees have the same training about, for example, our culture. Because our culture is the same, uhm, so [for] every new starter, we need to explain why we are here, what we expect, why we are different, why we are [...] supporting [...] unemployed people, [...] or the

[charities]. Because [...] there's a reason for this and that's why they need to understand, uh, our culture. And then [...] the house rules are the same for trainees and employees, everything is the same" (Izabel)

"[E]veryone who comes [...] receive our Employee Handbook and House of Rules. So, they know from the start what we expect from them [...]. [I]f someone doesn't follow the rules, we need to speak with him and ask him why. Maybe he didn't understand, maybe in the previous job he did the things different[ly]. OK, and we need to adjust, we need to explain why we want them to follow th[ese] rules and then try to do the proper things. [...] [I]t is very important that everyone is in same page [...], all must be treated the same way. So, it doesn't matter if you are a kitchen porter or if you are a sales manager. The rules are [...] the same [for] everyone. Of course, they [...] have different jobs, [...] different hours, they have different things [responsibilities]. But, uh, the expectations are the same. [...] I cannot treat less a kitchen porter then our sales manager. I cannot just talk with the kitchen porter in one way different from the other person. So, we need to be respectful for ... with everyone. So, and treat everyone in the same." (Izabel)

"[T]he code, our guidelines. [...] Even though I think that the guidelines are the similar for all [...] hotel[s]. [...] it's important [...] [for them to] know from the start what [...] [to] expect from [Case Study Hotel] [...]. And then we need to train and then explain our values [...]. So, when they know our values, is easier [...] [for them] to do what we are expecting them to do. [A]lso [...] the values are the same for everyone. [...] it's easier for them to work with us and to be part of the team." (Izabel)

"it must be the same message, from the owners, the managers, the top-level management, escalated down. It should be the same message, the same values, and everybody believing in the same things." (Luca)

The need for consistent information across the organisation is consistent with the construct of mutuality, particularly the individual and organisational alignment of needs, values, and goals. Communication should not only be consistent, but also unambiguous by setting clear goals, as otherwise it may cause frustration amongst employees:

“we don't have clear... clear goals, clear communication, just clear everything on to who to speak to, [...] and what's happening next, why that is happening. I think this is, yeah, for sure, the most frustrating.” (Joana)

Consistent and clear communication facilitates the setting of expectations and boundaries:

“I think there's a boundary set, and these limits, and what is expected from you [...]. Otherwise, you put your team in a very delicate situation that is not good for your business or for the team itself. You want these people to work well together and not be, like, showing accusations at each other.” (Joana)

“If you don't have the ground rules set, then it's a bit everyone everywhere, and there are no clear goals, no clear expectations so that I think that generates a lot of frustration. [...] [O]nce you have the rules you know what is your objective, or what is, like, your aim, what you have to do. So, I think that really [...] minimise frustration and just issues within the team”. (Joana)

However, participants mention a lack of communication of the organisation's social purpose, as illustrated in the following accounts:

“I'm selling you this, but sometimes [...] we don't transmit this to our colleagues, [...] because we were closed this long time, we need to, again, to build our team. So, we need [...] sell [promote] our [...] values [so] they understand [...] why we are doing this, why we are different from Crowne Plaza. And we need to be proud of this. And this, sometimes, is lacking. [...] I like to be here, because [...], I can do my work and I can help people as well. So, I can do something good for the community, [...] and [...] I feel good by this. And that we need to let [...] our team to know this as well. Sometimes we are always doing the work and whatever we need to do, and we don't think about why we are doing this. We need to share this, [...] the values. [...] It's very important.” (Izabel)

“If I'm being totally honest, I think we could do more [...], it is something that needs to be reinforced because, you know, sometimes it's hard to always have your mind on, you know, ‘I'm giving back’ when you're, like scrubbing toilets or [...] dealing with that nightmare customer for the tenth time, like, I think we

could do more to remind people because [...] I think, you get complacent, you start to think that this is fine, this is normal and, it's like, this is really not normal, like, our organisation is really quite exceptional and, you know, just to remind people of how far we've come. I think we could do more in that space" (Jane)

"we have our values and behaviours [...], [but] it's very easy to forget all of that, so us as managers [...], how do we get people to understand the behaviours and why do we need to have behaviours". (Elena)

"we don't have an HR manager in place, uh, so I think that it doesn't really happen very well. [...] I think it really lacks [...] once you're here, you [...] [are] part of the change. Want to or not, you are part of the change. So, I don't think this is spread, which is a pity in my opinion." (Joana)

Informants emphasise that the organisation's purpose needs to be further promoted internally. This result is unsurprising because the social aspect of the organisation is an important source of job satisfaction because it makes the work meaningful (further discussed in the theme [5.4 The organisation's social purpose](#)). This finding resonates with the ambiguity of social enterprises, which have two conflicting goals: social purpose and economic performance, which can challenge employees' sense of belonging (Smith, Gonin and Besharov, 2013, p. 412) (further discussed in [5.6.4 Social–business dilemma](#)).

5.2.5 Conclusion multidirectional candid communication

A common theme amongst participants pertains to multidirectional candid communication, both interdepartmental and organisational. Characteristics of candid communication encompass openness, transparency, and honesty. Candid communication requires being aware of one's own requirements and abilities so that one can seek or offer support. Such behaviour can promote solidarity. Candid communication facilitates the understanding of different perspectives, which is crucial for the team's alignment when it is a diverse team (work experience, culture). Team alignment can develop a mutual understanding, reducing the risk of frustration and conflict. Candid communication also includes listening skills, which can help develop tolerance for differences and foster empathy. Participants appreciate leaders who listen and engage with their employees, as it makes them feel valued and heard. The

main obstacle to candid communication is the lack of staff and time pressure. Working in the hospitality industry requires quick decisionmaking, and with the lack of staff it is not always possible to take the time to clearly communicate needs and requirements. Participants also expressed a lack of communication, more specifically a lack of clear intershift briefing, which leads to unclear goals and subsequently leading to job frustration.

Respondents emphasised the importance of multidirectional communication, with horizontal communication enabling team members to support and collaborate with one another. Upward communication requires managers to be approachable so that subordinates can raise issues or ask questions. Such a relationship—consistent with the ethical follower–leader relations discussed in the section on *Prosocial teamwork*—facilitates the development of a climate of safety, which is important in a team composed of trainees.

Considering that service delivery depends on interdepartmental collaboration, participants emphasise the central role of interdepartmental communication in contributing to mutuality and reciprocity. Effective interdepartmental can enhance interdepartmental collaboration and mitigate the risk of conflicts underpinning interdepartmental dependency. Interdepartmental communication is also a medium to share guest feedback with backline employees and promote team affiliation.

Participants mention that organisational communication needs to be well established to convey the importance of ethical behaviour. For the message to be communicated effectively, organisational communication needs to be clear and consistent throughout the organisation. The values and expectations regarding ethical behaviour must be the same for everyone and reflected in daily operations, as otherwise employees may perceive the organisational values as windowdressing practices. However, participants expressed a desire for the purpose of the organisation to be communicated more frequently. Participants note that employees can easily forget or become complacent about the social purpose of the organisation. Employees, therefore, need to be reminded more often of the importance and value of their contribution to the organisation's purpose.

5.3 Understanding differences

A recurring theme in the context of ethical behaviour is the importance of *understanding differences*. Respondents' interpretation of ethical behaviour relates to the understanding of character- and work-related differences between employees. Respondents discuss three forms of understanding (further discussed in [2.4 Three facets of 'understanding' as ethical behaviour](#)), which relate to 1) affective empathy, the ability to recognise the another's feelings (Ickes, 1993, p. 588); 2) cognitive empathy, mental perspective taking (Smith, 2006, p. 3), and 3) ethnocultural empathy, empathy towards individuals from ethnic cultural groups that are different from their own (Wang *et al.*, 2003, p. 221).

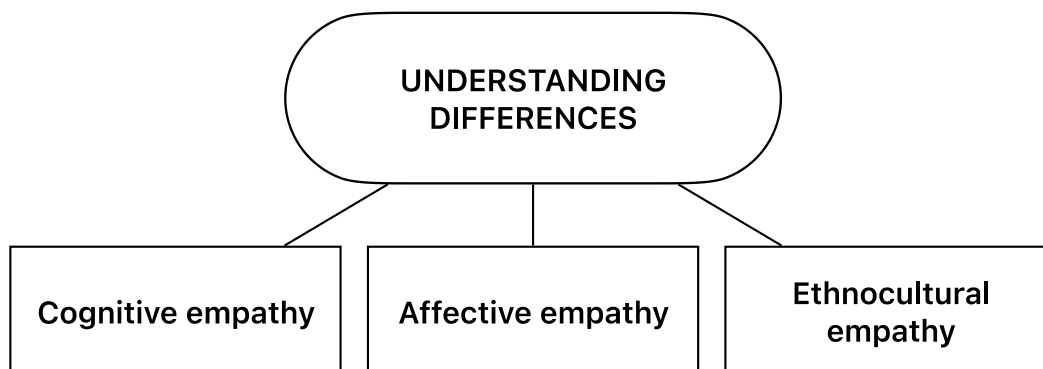


Figure 8. Theme & subthemes - Understanding differences

The following responses illustrate the character- and work-related differences, summarised in [Table 23. Character- & work-related differences](#)

“there's always different characters and you always have the odd one out, [...] it's super important to have different personalities, different people, different skill sets. [Y]ou need to balance this out, [...] there is a good in every different skill set, different personality, different interests.” (Elena)

“I wish everyone is passionate as I am.[...] But not every[one is]... for some people is just a job and, [...] they got different priorities. Some people just come earn some money they don't want to grow, they're happy and that's OK. [...] And if they're happy then I will be happy for them as well. [...] [I]f you try to engage [them] too much, [...] they will feel like, [with]

all these slogans [we]’re just brainwashing [them]. So, there needs to be a little bit of space. [...] [J]ust understand them and accept that you’re happy where they are and that’s OK.” (Elena)

“different views, opinions, cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs” (Karolina)

“this ethics topics is a very sensitive one, [...] in that people can feel very offended. [...] I think it’s so personal, that it can change from person to person and especially in such a diverse, uh, group as we are, with different culture, cultural upbringing, and nationality [...]. [W]hat makes me happy, and what I consider good value and ethical, maybe it’s not that important for someone else.” (Joana)

“I can just tell you what it means to me, as we said, it can mean to different to other people and everyone can have a different point of view on it.” (Karolina)

Table 23. Character- & work-related differences

Types of differences	
Character-related	Character, personality Personal interests Personal priorities Viewpoint Culture, traditions Values Religious beliefs English fluency
Work-related	Skills sets Engagement level Growth ambition Work behaviour

5.3.1 Cognitive empathy

Participants indicate that ethical behaviour means seeking to understand and respecting differences by adopting a nonjudgmental attitude, as illustrated in the following accounts:

“respect all the team [...] members, even if someone is more weak, or [...] they don’t work the same way as we do, but we need to understand each other and respect. Everyone is different. And we need to respect the differences.” (Izabel)

“I think ethical behaviour, it, it’s a lot of common sense, but common sense doesn’t really exist. One thing I’ve

learned working in hospitality is that there isn't such a thing as common sense, but there are some basics" (Joana)

"I think it's also important for people [...] why things are done, [...] if front office reception doesn't understand how housekeeping operates [...], there will be conflict". (Elena)

"judging people without understanding what behind is, this is not ethical in my opinion." (Elena)

"quite often, people judge with understanding, and that's the ethics will be misjudged" (Elena)

In an effort to promote prosocial behaviour in a diverse team (individual, cultural, professional), it is crucial to understand, respect, and not judge one another's differences so as to facilitate solidarity and develop a mutual understanding, as discussed in the theme on *Prosocial teamwork* (5.1). This finding is supported by Ho and Gupta (2012), who observed that team members who demonstrate cognitive empathy can foster positive social and supportive relationships and interactions within a team. The diversity of the team seems to be at the root of Joana's observation that there is no common sense in hospitality. This points to the need to achieve shared understanding through cognitive empathy.

5.3.2 Affective empathy

Building upon the concept of prosocial teamwork, which refers to supporting team members with the intention of promoting the wellbeing of other team members (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986, p. 711; Bolino and Grant, 2016), respondents identify affective empathy as a critical component of ethical behaviour, as exemplified in the following excerpts. Working in a heterogeneous team can be a source of frustration related to the different mindsets others may not expect or understand.

"it's difficult to work with people who doesn't have the same mindset, or being whinging, or being negative all the time, because it's painful to see person who doesn't like what he's doing and doing it still." (Adriana)

"When you do work with people, sometimes you can be frustrated by behaviour, by other people. For anything related to that kind of team spirit or team

issues or a different behaviour that you would do something different, or you wouldn't expect the team to behave a certain way or the way the service goes. Probably this might be frustrations.” (Karolina)

When seeking to understand issues or behaviours of others, affective empathy, as Elena comments, involves believing in others' honesty and goodness. However, the participant also recognises that others may take advantage of those who display such trust:

“you need to believe [...] in the good, that they are actually honest, and you need to understand their point of view, you have to put yourself in their shoes. So, this is a good ethical thing” (Elena)

“I might look a bit naive and too nice, but I believe in good, and I believe that [...] some people might take a bit of advantage of being nice and understanding.” (Elena)

In this vein, Izabel stresses the importance of understanding the motivations underlying a behaviour in order to understand another person's emotions:

“But first we need to understand why [...], because maybe he has some problem at home [...] that is troubling the person. So, maybe we need to be careful, and we try to understand the reasons why first. Not just judging” (Izabel)

When reflecting on the meaning of ethical behaviour, Adriana and Elena mention aspects that closely correspond to integrity in prosocial teamwork (see [5.1.4 Integrity](#)):

“it's mindful behaviour, you know, mindful and kind behaviour, [...] considering people[s] personal circumstances like, [...] family, children, health issues, [...] abilities” (Adriana)

“consider others. [...] [W]e are in hospitality. Hospitality is a business for people [...]. So, if we're not kind to each other, how can we be kind for our guests?” (Elena)

“ethical be like being considerate, and not prejudging.” (Elena)

Displaying affective empathy, according to Elena, also serves to make employees feel valued:

“I had this manager and it felt like we were in army [...], everyone stand still as if the queen was coming. I was just like, this is absurd. And the person would just look at you and just do the little nod. This is so wrong, and then I said to myself, like, if I ever become a manager, you know, I will never do that. I will always find the time to have a tea or coffee with them and I think that makes them valued and important and give them the chance to tell me from their perspective what’s going on and what is wrong.” (Elena)

In sum, affective empathy—the concern about the feelings of others—is important given the contagious aspect of teamwork (further discussed in [5.1.2 Contagiousness](#)), as the attitude of one team member can affect the morale of the whole team. In addition, the hospitality industry is renowned for being an emotionally demanding industry (Baum, 2008), which accentuates the need for team members to provide emotional support to one another. Such support can foster a sense of solidarity to develop a shared understanding, as discussed in the subtheme [Mutuality and reciprocity \(5.1.6\)](#), based on a mindful, trusting, considerate, and nonjudgmental attitude. This finding is supported by Bolino and Grant (2016) who observed that affective concern for others’ feelings can promote prosocial teamwork by supporting other team members in their tasks, which can improve social relationships in the workplace.

5.3.3 Ethnocultural empathy

Working in a culturally diverse team can be both challenging and enriching:

“there’s so many cultures here, so many different people, and this it’s challenging and it’s good.” (Izabel)

Cultural differences can be a source of frustration, as each develops their values and beliefs based on their cultural backgrounds, which can lead to feeling disconnected from one another:

“it is very difficult to connect yourself with something that you don’t know [...], it is very difficult to understand that. [T]here is this, like, cultural gap.” (Joana)

For instance, Karolina reflects on how the understandings of ethical behaviour can differ and should be respected, as exemplified in the following quotes:

“I think respect plays a very important part as you dealing with many people from different backgrounds, different cultures, different parts of the world. So, respect different views, opinions, cultures, traditions, and religious beliefs is important.” (Karolina)

“ethical [behaviour] can be view[ed] from the moral perspective and the value. They are probably common ethical behaviour related to being a part of a community or [...] of the cultural background. But also, this ethical behaviour can be related to the individual morals. It can be dictated by their religious beliefs or the kind of family environment. [...] [H]owever, what I think, if you do work in for example in UK, and you work with multicultural environment, people from all parts of the world, you are part of a community and you mention a standard behaviour are expected from you, based on the community you are in.” (Karolina)

Ethical behaviour in a multicultural team involves having an open mind for differences:

“able to meet people from different backgrounds, to have an open mind” (Luca)

Cultural team diversity also requires being aware of risks of misinterpretations, whereby the use of humour can have an adverse effect related to differences in values and levels of English proficiency, as discussed in the subtheme *Features of candid communication (5.2.1.1 Honesty, transparency, openness)*

“joking, especially in an international setting, can go wrong in many ways [...], the team is very diverse, like, we're from all over the world. English quite often is not the first language, so it all could really get messed up in interpretation and translation, very easily.” (Elena)

Participants stress the importance of empathising with team members' different meanings and perceptions of ethical behaviour due to cultural (cultural relativism) or individual (individual relativism) differences. However, participants also point out that it is the organisation's ethical values that individuals must follow, as they are part of the organisation's community.

“once you have the ground rules and so the rule of the game it's just more of how we act towards that” (Joana)

“if you do work in [a] multicultural environment, [...] you are part of a community, [...] the standard

behaviour [...] expected from you [is] based on the community you are in.” (Karolina)

This result suggests that the three forms of empathy (see [Table 24. Three types of empathy](#)) facilitate a mutual understanding of team members personal concerns, behaviours, and feelings. Nevertheless, it is the organisation’s understanding of ethical behaviour that takes precedence and must be followed.

In sum, ethnocultural empathy is an essential element of working in the hospitality industry, as this industry is notorious for its cultural diversity, both within the workforce and amongst guests. Cultural differences imply different perceptions of what constitutes ethical behaviour, which resonates with the ethical theory of cultural relativism. Though ethical relativism has been criticised for its inability to judge the rightness or wrongness of an act (McDonald, 2010, p. 454), it, nonetheless, helps understand individual and cultural differences.

5.3.4 Conclusion understanding differences

Table 24. Three types of empathy

Type of empathy	Personality traits, attitudes associated with empathy	Informants
Cognitive	Respecting differences	Izabel, Karolina
	Putting oneself in others’ shoes	Elena, Izabel
	Giving space	Elena
	Being careful	Izabel
	Not judging	Elena
	Accepting differences	Elena
Affective	Believing in the good in others	Elena
	Believing others are honest	Elena
	Being mindful, considerate, kind	Adriana, Elena
	Not (pre)judging	Elena, Izabel
Ethnocultural	Being open-minded	Luca
	Respecting differences	Karolina

In an effort to promote prosocial teamwork and encourage candid multidirectional communication, participants identified *understanding differences* as an important aspect of ethical behaviour. Team diversity stems from character- and work-related differences and requires team members to exhibit three forms of empathy (cognitive, affective, ethnocultural) in order to understand behaviours, concerns, and feelings of others so as to facilitate positive social and supportive relationships and interactions within a team. This suggests a need to achieve shared understanding

through cognitive empathy. Affective empathy can mitigate negative emotional contagion in a diverse team, which is particularly important in an emotionally demanding industry such as hospitality. Similarly, ethnocultural empathy is an essential element of ethical behaviour in the hospitality industry, notorious for its cultural diversity, both within the workforce and amongst guests. As such, cognitive, affective, and ethnocultural empathy can contribute towards a mutual understanding of team members' personal concerns, behaviours, and feelings.

5.4 The organisation's social purpose

A recurrent theme across the respondents' interviews is the organisation's social purpose as an illustration of ethical organisational behaviour. Participants cite the social purpose as a source of job satisfaction. It gives meaning to their work and stimulates employee engagement (see *Figure 9. Theme & subthemes - Social purpose as organisational ethical behaviour*).

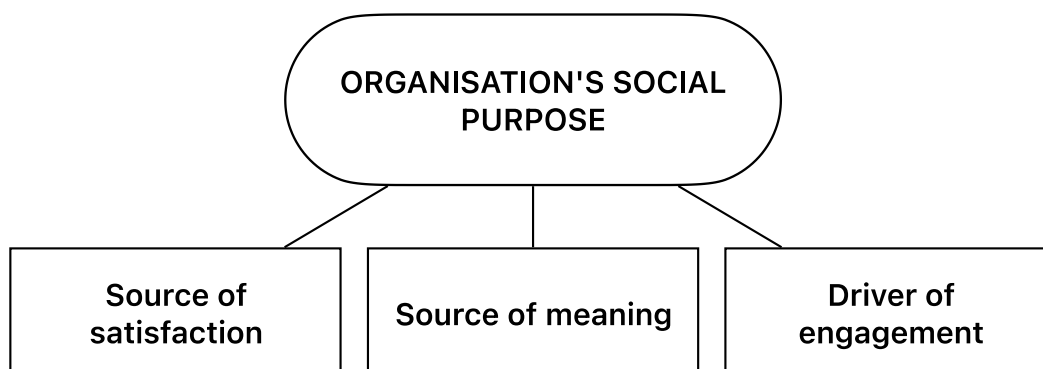


Figure 9. Theme & subthemes - Social purpose as organisational ethical behaviour

5.4.1 Social purpose as a source of job satisfaction

Six out of nine participants mentioned the organisation's social purpose as the main source of job satisfaction, that it is a privilege to work in an organisation whose purpose is to contribute to the greater good. Knowing that the organisation's purpose involves supporting education in less privileged regions enhances employees' job satisfaction. When asked to reflect on the most satisfying aspects about their jobs, six

of the nine respondents mentioned the initiatives related to the organisation's social purpose, as illustrated in the following excerpts:

"I'd love to start off with the training programme, [...] I've been unemployed for long time, you know, can't get into proper job. So, the training programme helps [...] get to the level that they really want [...]. [T]hey give me the opportunity to work 3–6 months and after that, you understand me, you get a chance [...] to get the job after[wards] [...]. It's up to you if you wanna stay there or you want to move on to a different level, so that's a good satisfaction" (Amelia)

"I'm proud to be working in [Case Study] Hotel because this is not like a normal hotel, [...] we are more than this. [...] [A]lso we can help others, and this is this is what it is, it's amazing job. [...] with [selling] this room [we] are helping some schools, we are helping [...] education, we are helping [...] unemployed people from [Local Borough], and we are helping the community, we are trying to have uh local suppliers as well, we are trying to do good". (Izabel)

"the most satisfying aspect is the fact that we are a social business, we've got local community at heart, and we help children [...], all the profits are going to [...] support education for unprivileged little souls, so that's the most beautiful part of this business really." (Adriana)

"I think, improves job satisfaction, [...] in my case, we are working in a social business, so it is not just a normal hotel, so we are working towards a goal to achieve, to help the children [...] to go to school and give education." (Luca)

[The most satisfying aspect about my work is] "that [it] is a social business. I had the opportunity to meet the kids [...], be there and see, just see the change. [...] I chose this [...] company because of its business model". (Joana)

"To me that is a great satisfaction of being a part of an organisation that is truly trying to do things differently. I think there's something exciting and fulfilling, feeling like you are a part of a trailblazer, you know, that we're kind of breaking with the status quo and trying to do things in a different way. I think that is really exciting for me, you know, personally, professionally, and socially." (Jane)

This finding confirms the influential role of organisational social initiatives on employee job satisfaction, commitment, and morale in the hotel sector (Appiah, 2019, pp. 140–141). More specifically, Pelozo and Shang (2011) reported that organisations with a mission to support communities enhance employees' job satisfaction. However, Kunda, Ataman, and Behram's (2019) study on the relationship between organisational social initiatives and employee job satisfaction in Turkish hospitality and tourism firms, found only a positive relationship between social initiatives that benefit employee wellbeing and employee satisfaction. Social initiatives related to the community and the environment had no influence on employee job satisfaction. A possible explanation for this contradictory result is that the sample consisted mostly of large firms with over 500 employees, so employees might feel less connected to the organisation's social initiatives compared to employees of social enterprises. In this context, Thorgren and Omorede (2015) found that the passion of social enterprise leaders for the organisation's purpose is an essential element for gaining employees' trust and inspires employees to display a similar passion, as illustrated in the statements below:

“when he [the founder] talk with us, [he] has so much passion [...], and I believe we need to also have this passion” (Izabel)

“He [the founder] influenced me in a big way [...], and [...] a lot of other team members feel the same way that that is inspiring, and helps remind us what we're doing, and why we're here, and what's the point of it all, you know, even on those darker days. [...] His presence is quite strong, so I think it does remind people why we're here, what the point is that he's, like our kind of, our hero in lots of ways” (Jane)

Another possible explanation relates to scepticism about CSR initiatives as a result of windowdressing practices (Connors, Anderson-MacDonald and Thomson, 2017), as exemplified in the quotes below. Whereas social value creation is a fundamental condition of social entrepreneurship (Chell *et al.*, 2016).

“I believe aaaall the companies, [...] they've got written statuses, [...] if you think about this... every single company they're like heaven made. [...] All the companies they've got amazing ethos. But down the line, everything is going to the profit.” (Adriana)

“Every company nowadays, especially big companies already famous, if you notice, they all now doing some

charitable work. [...] They are multi-million companies [...], they all do a little bit of charity work on the side, just to say: 'we are a green company'." (Luca)

5.4.2 Social purpose as a source of meaning

Participants identified the organisation's social purpose as a source of meaning. Knowing that the organisation supports local communities by providing educational and career opportunities to local community members and building partnerships with local businesses makes their work more meaningful, as evidenced in the following narratives:

"I think the employee will feel part of this ethic belief, they will feel part of this group. I believe they will feel motivated. [...] I think staff will feel being part of the process. Rather than just going to work and then forget everything once you finish work, it is more like a lifestyle, it becomes part of the lifestyle." (Luca)

"if I'm stressing if I have [...] tight deadlines and very boring things that I don't enjoy doing, there is a meaning behind it. [...] [U]nderstanding that there is a reason behind it, and that the end goal is really nice, it changes a bit. It doesn't change how stressed you will get probably, but it does put some meaning to your stress." (Joana)

"I used to work for a big business and I kind of broke with that three years ago, where I said I'm only ever going to work on ethical projects from here on in. And I don't work with the project, I don't work with the client unless I believe that they are trying to do something good in the world. [...] I need to feel like, what I'm doing, even if it is, you know, a mindless spreadsheet or, you know, a piece of research, or if it's, you know, having some boring meetings with like 25 different people. If I know that the end goal is something positive and ethical, then I feel good." (Jane)

"I'm proud to be working in [Case Study] Hotel, because this is not like a normal hotel, [...] we are more than this." (Izabel)

"you come to work today, and you put all your hard effort, we know that 500 children will be able to go to school next week. So, you're doing something really good, and I think this is really important". (Elena)

Participants explain that the organisation's purpose of supporting (local) communities and vulnerable stakeholders makes their jobs meaningful, even if the tasks are mundane and unchallenging. This finding confirms the challenges for employers to develop meaning in the workplace, especially for mundane activities (Bauman and Skitka, 2012, p. 77) that are not conducive to employee job satisfaction (Elster, 1986, p. 113). In contrast, Grant (2007, p. 406) found that impactful activities (activities that make a difference by improving the welfare of others), such as contributing to an organisation's social purpose, enable employees to find their work meaningful, which plays a crucial role in employee happiness and wellbeing (Murphy, 1993, p. 228) and workplace spirituality (Haldorai *et al.*, 2020, p. 8). Aristotle considered ethics as the pursuit of excellence and self-realisation (*eudæmonia*) through the appropriate use of intellectual and moral virtues (Bragues, 2006, p. 343; Aristotle, 2009 [c. 350 BC]) (further discussed in the literature review, see [2.1.1 Teleology](#)). In a work context, the pursuit of self-realisation refers to the achievement of meaningful work that promotes employee satisfaction and wellbeing (Murphy, 1993, p. 225).

5.4.3 Social purpose as a driver of engagement

Informants mentioned that the organisation's purpose drives them to engage and encourage others to contribute to the organisation's purpose by initiating waste management projects and exploring new meanings of social business models, as shown in the following quotes:

"I'm gonna do my best to help others. [...] I'm actually quite shocked to see how much effort they put in it, and then understanding the story, [...] they want to be part of it. I think it's a human, a natural thing; you want to do something good; you want to be part of good things." (Elena)

"as a project, I want to find a better way of minimising the food waste to a bare bare minimum. That's the bigger goal; it is kind of the bigger bigger project to not only the waste management but generally you know like reusing, recycling, getting involved with different charities." (Adriana)

"My staff is aware of what we're doing, for what kind of clients we're cooking, what's the client is dealing as well. They are also aware of the provenance of the food, and of the suppliers and everything else. The

suppliers are coming to us or I'm taking them to suppliers. They try the strangest stuff, tasting for the new menus. So, the whole picture is available for them, yeah.” (Adriana)

“exploring what it means to be a social business and what that looks like. You know, in terms of how do we try and renegotiate our conversation with profit and the role of the shareholders and the role of investors” (Jane)

The organisation's purpose is a key driver of employee engagement, not only in contributing to the organisation's purpose by initiating waste management projects or exploring new meanings of social business models, but also in encouraging others to engage in daily activities such as promoting prosocial teamwork (i.e., open communication) and ethical behaviour (i.e., integrity) in others. For instance, Adriana's commitment reflects in 1) involving team members in activities that go beyond their daily tasks, 2) initiating waste management projects, and 3) developing partnerships with organisations that share similar goals. As such, her solidarity-based behaviour also extends beyond the boundaries of the team and the organisation. Levy and Park (2011) note that hotel organisations are showing a growing interest in environmental initiatives (i.e., recycling, waste management), due to the growing awareness of global warming and the environmental damage caused by business operations. Adriana's commitment to addressing environmental issues closely align with the findings of Turker (2009) who confirms that corporate environmental initiatives have a positive impact on employee engagement. In the hospitality industry, prior studies have also demonstrated the influential role of social initiatives for communities and the environment on employee engagement (Gürlek and Tuna, 2019; Kim and Kim, 2021), with hospitality employees who feel closely connected to the organisation are more likely to support the organisation's interests (Lv *et al.*, 2022, p. 8).

5.4.4 Conclusion on the organisation's social purpose

In conclusion, an organisation's social purpose is perceived as an expression of the organisation's ethical behaviour, which is a source of employee job satisfaction, gives meaning to employees' work, and is a key driver to employee engagement. An organisation's social initiatives (towards communities and the natural environment) enhance employee job satisfaction as they contribute to the organisation's goal.

Employees of social businesses, especially when led by a leader who is committed to the social purpose, feel a strong connection to the purpose of the organisation as it gives meaning to their daily work. In addition, the social purpose of the organisation is an important in employee engagement.

5.5 Brand representation

Another aspect of ethical behaviour discussed by respondents relates to *brand representation*. Respondents consider it ethical behaviour to appropriately represent the organisation's brand towards coworkers, guests, business partners, and charity (see [Figure 10. Theme & subthemes - Brand representation](#)).

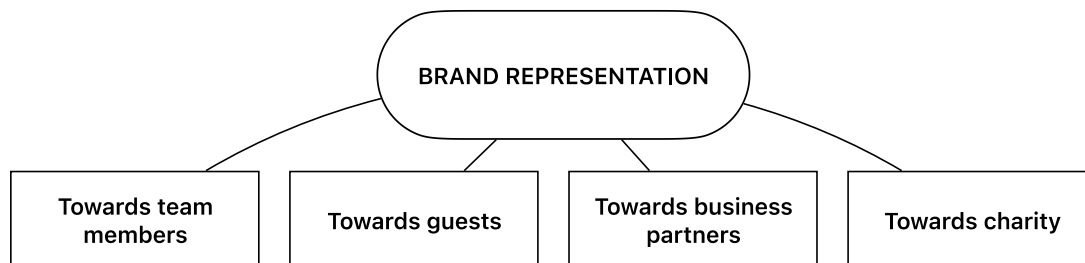


Figure 10. Theme & subthemes - Brand representation

5.5.1 Towards team members

With regard to coworkers, ethical behaviour relates to **hospitableness towards coworkers**, see also discussion on the importance of prosocial teamwork.

“I have to [...] present myself as the good team member, [...] so coming across in a good manner that [...] it will be more welcoming for the people to remain”. (Amelia)

5.5.2 Towards guests

Ethical behaviour towards guests, as Ike explains below, is related to reflecting the organisation's sociable community culture.

“it’s kind of how you [...] carry yourself, you know, as a person and how you represent, you know, the business, [...] the brand you’re working for, [...] [i]t’s

how you represent the hospitality business [...], because we are quite different to [...] other hotels [...], our hotel brand, [...] [is] a more [...] sociable [...] business [...], that's why, you know, there's no TVs in the room, it is more like a community sort of environment, you know. And how we approach to our guests, [...] interact with them.” (Ike)

This finding suggests that the alignment of organisational and individual values and expectations is important not only for the development of prosocial teamwork, as discussed in the discussion on the role of *Mutuality and reciprocity* (5.1.6), but also for the representation of the brand towards guests. This draws attention to the role of consistent organisational communication, where the same message is communicated throughout the organisation to develop a shared understanding of the organisation's goals (mutuality), so that employees also represent the brand consistently towards guests to promote positive guest perceptions of the organisation. These findings lend support to prior studies on the instrumental role of brand-oriented behaviours of hospitality employees in guests' perceptions of a brand (King, So and Grace, 2013, p. 172). Brand-oriented behaviours are those that create, develop, and protect brand identity during employee–guest interactions (Urde, 1999, p. 117). Given the intangible feature of the service, brand-oriented behaviours of employees are particularly important in the hospitality industry, as it is the employees who bring the organisation's brand to life through their actions and interactions with guests. The following excerpts provide examples of how the brand can be represented to make guests feel welcome and identify the brand with artefacts (i.e., employee uniform):

“to come to work with the [...] right uniform and to be nice to the guest, to always be patient and hear the guest.” (Izabel)

“we need to have [...] a good relationship with ever [guest]. So, [...] it's not only be[ing] nice, [...] we need to go further. We need to welcome well [...] so this is [about] how we treat the guests and how we [make them] feel [...] welcome to come.” (Izabel)

“In every bedroom, [...] we provide a little worry doll – they are handmade [...]. The story says that the person will actually say all the worry to this little doll and then they have to put this doll under the pillow and all the worry will go away and they can have a good night sleep. I think that is a nice gesture.” (Luca)

“The food, for example, in the kitchen, [...] expired food, we have to throw away. We cannot just sell the food that is already expired to the guests [...]. [T]he rooms as well, we need to [...] properly clean the rooms, [...] we have [...] sanitise everything and properly and this is from the rooms, to everywhere, to kitchen, to our ... the bar, everything.” (Izabel)

Ike's response below suggests that *going the extra mile* by offering further information about facilities or promoting items available in other departments is a form of ethical behaviour. *Going the extra mile* requires product and brand knowledge so that employees can represent the brand and interact competently with guests. These interactions are moments of truth, during which guests form their perceptions of the organisation (Hultman, 2005; Widjaja, 2005)

“showing [guests] [...], for instance, someone wants to [...] have a quick look at the [...] meeting rooms, you know, showing what they can be used for. [...] [T]rying to explain to the best of my ability that, you know, we can [provide] other [...] services, [...] I just don't make promises I can't [keep]” (Ike)

“promoting what's on our, like, menu. [...] promoting [...] chef specials, drinks [from] other [departments], in terms of special cocktails.” (Ike)

Karolina mentions that a brand can only be perceived as ethical if organisations do not (ask employees to) engage in questionable practices such as overbooking or unequal treatment based on who paid more for the same service:

“I think if someone has been promised something in particular and then suddenly, upon arrival, it's been given something else. I think this is really not ethical. I have also a kind of an issue, if the hotel is oversold and then the guest is arriving and finding out really last-minute that it doesn't have a room to sleep in for the night that was guaranteed upon confirmation and needs to go somewhere else. To me, this is unethical. From my experience in the hospitality, there are practices that whoever pays a lower price is going to get, let's say, the worst product. If there are two people and one is paying the higher price, from whichever channel and the other person, they are not going to be treated equally. Sometimes it happened. I'm finding it not ethical. I think people really shouldn't be treated this way.” (Karolina)

This finding offers support to prior studies on overbooking practices in the hotel industry, which have been widely researched, from the perspectives of organisations, guests, and employees (e.g., Toh, 1985; Wilson, Enghagen and Sharma, 1994; Fasone and Faldetta, 2013; Haynes and Egan, 2020). The purpose of overbooking practices is to minimise losses and maximise profits by forecasting potential reservation cancellations and no-shows (Douvrou, 2018). However, such practices can be perceived as unfair and deceptive (Wilson, Enghagen and Sharma, 1994). Despite service recovery strategies (e.g., walking guests, compensation) to attenuate the negative impact of overbooking, incorrect predictions may result in guests being denied service (Noone and Lee, 2010), leading to increased guest dissatisfaction and complaint and reduced guest loyalty (Hwang and Wen, 2009; Noone and Lee, 2010). In addition, dealing with overbooked guests puts front desk employees in a stressful situation, which can affect employee job satisfaction (Enghagen and Healy, 1996).

5.5.3 Towards business partners

Ethical behaviour in terms of brand representation also applies to business partners. Karolina's observations suggest that ethical behaviour involves appropriate brand representation when interacting with external stakeholders such as clients and business partners. This observation is closely related to outbound candid communication (see [5.2.2 Multidirectional communication](#)). The interviewee feels responsible for ensuring she and her coworkers represent the organisation with integrity, as otherwise it may deteriorate the brand's reputation:

“as I am a part of a team, I am kind of feeling responsible to be part of the organisation, not only inside, but because of my role, I am representing the company outside. So, I need to act with integrity, and I need to encourage others to do the same inside the organisation.” (Karolina)

Similar to brand representation towards guests, Karolina points out the importance of representing the organisation with integrity towards business partners. This finding confirms the role of service brand orientation of employees, who demonstrate their commitment to the success of the organisation by reflecting the brand and its values (Wallace and De Chernatony, 2009; King, Grace and Funk, 2012).

5.5.4 Towards charity

Joana argues that ethical behaviour is about ensuring that the revenue generated is actually invested in charitable causes. Therefore, it seems important to the participant to ensure that workplace practices reflect the organisation's social initiatives, as the following quote illustrates:

“if booking directly with the hotel, your five pounds of that night is being sent to the schools in [Central America], is making sure that each night that is booked, that five pounds, these five pounds are reaching the kids in the school. So, it's guaranteeing that that is happening.” (Joana)

This finding accords with the discussion of organisational social purpose as a source of meaning and driver of employee engagement (see [5.4.2 Social purpose as a source of meaning](#) and [5.4.3 Social purpose as a driver of engagement](#)). Joana's clear commitment to the organisation's purpose—as stated: *“I chose for this company because of its business model”*—confirms the influence of socially responsible initiatives on hospitality and tourism employee engagement and sense of pride in their work (Park, Lee and Kim, 2018, pp. 189–190). The respondent's position reflects changing societal demands for more ethical and responsible organisations (Marchoo, Butcher and Watkins, 2014; Crane and Matten, 2016; Kuokkanen and Catrett, 2022). As a result of the increasing awareness of social responsibility, hospitality employees also tend to seek employers that match their values (Wut, Xu and Wong, 2022, p. 257). Furthermore, Joana's statement demonstrates her dedication to the organisation's purpose and resonates with the negative impact of windowdressing practices, such as CSR washing, which *“refers to cases where organizations claim to be more socially responsible than they really are”* (Coombs and Holladay, 2012, p. 30), with conflicting goals and practices invalidating the organisation's social vision, as they are perceived as a manifestation of windowdressing rather than a genuine organisational purpose.

5.5.5 Conclusion brand representation

In conclusion, a common theme amongst participants included brand representation as an understanding of ethical behaviour. Participants emphasised the importance of representing the organisation's brand to team members, guests, business partners, and charity. Brand representation to coworkers is interpreted as an

expression of prosocial behaviour to make team members feel welcome. Towards guests, employees play a vital role in representing the organisational culture and values. Given the intangible nature of a service, employees become the identity of the brand, and guests form their perceptions of the brand based on their interactions with employees. Ethical brand representation to guests also includes not engaging in deceptive and fraudulent practices (i.e., overbooking, preferential treatment), as this can lead to dissatisfaction amongst both guests and employees and, consequently, damage the reputation of the organisation's brand. Similarly, ethical brand representation to business partners is a commitment to contribute to the organisation's success by reflecting organisation's values with integrity. Lastly, brand representation to charities is recognised as an important aspect of ethical behaviour, arising from the intersection of changing societal demands for more responsible organisations and the increasing scepticism underpinned by windowdressing practices.

5.6 Tricky ideal–practice dilemma

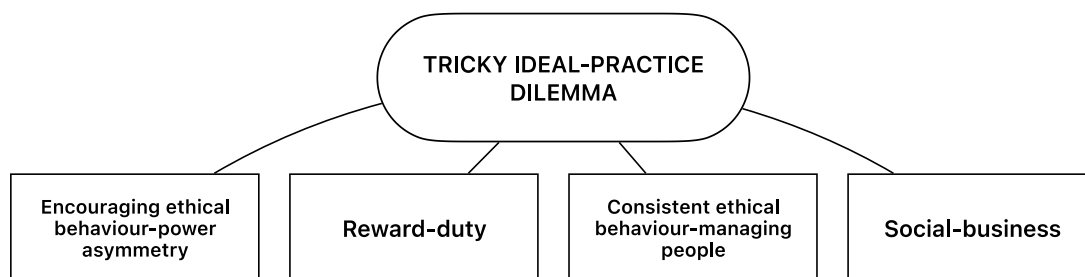


Figure 11. Theme & subthemes - Tricky ideal-practice dilemma

This theme does not seek to discuss what constitutes ethical behaviour, but rather to capture the intricacies underlying ethical decisionmaking in the workplace, by shedding light on the dichotomies, trade-offs, and dilemmas related to the *ideal* ethical behaviour and its implementation in *practice* in the workplace (see [Figure 11. Theme & subthemes - Tricky ideal-practice dilemma](#)). The emotionally and physically demanding nature of hospitality work, time pressures, high turnover rates, and diversity (cultural, English proficiency, work experience, and individual attitudes and values) all represent idiosyncrasies that affect employees' (ethical) behaviours and decisionmaking processes. Although respondents attach considerable importance to

ethical behaviour and recognise its role in the workplace (prosocial teamwork, candid multidirectional communication, understanding differences, social purpose, brand representation), they also admit that it is difficult to consistently enforce or encourage ethical behaviour and decisionmaking. Occasionally, one person's behaviour, even if unintentional and unforeseen (further discussed in section [2.1.1 Teleology](#)), may be perceived as unethical by another person. In a multicultural team, for instance, the use of humour can have adverse effects (as discussed in [5.2.1.1 Honesty, transparency, openness](#)). Ethical misconduct can also be a consequence of ethical blindness, when the decisionmaker is temporarily unable to see the ethical element of a decision (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012, p. 324) due to the many external constraints that are common in the hospitality industry, as exemplified in the following quote:

“you come first to make sure you’re doing the ethical behaviour [...] but it has to be within your team. [...] making sure you’re doing the right thing. [...] Because it’s just very easy to be sucked into to be doing this the wrong way. Because otherwise it will just look bad for [the company].” (Ike)

The subthemes, in relation to *ideal–practice dilemma*, are dichotomies of 1) ethical behaviour and power; 2) rewarding ethical behaviour and ethical behaviour as a duty; 3) ethical behaviour and managing people; 4) business purpose and social purpose.

5.6.1 The encouraging ethical behaviour–power asymmetry dilemma

The dilemma of ethical behaviour and power relations lies in encouraging ethical behaviour in individuals perceived as being in a power position. Joana has used the adjective *tricky* to describe the difficulty of encouraging ethical behaviour in others, as illustrated in the following accounts:

Do you feel responsible to encourage ethical behaviour amongst guests?

“Yeah, I think so, uhm. I think guests is the trickiest one. Uhm, because it is like in the end, yes, they are paying and yes, they are what keeps the business running. So, it’s very hard to find this line”. (Joana)

Do you feel responsible to encourage ethical behaviour amongst superordinates?

“Yes, it is tricky [...], even though I am in a [...] managerial position, I do have managers above me, right? It is very tricky, and I think it all depends on the

relationship we have, [...] how open they are to critics, and just to listen your point of view. [...] it is 100% much more complicated, uh, to deal with this type of situation if it's with someone [...] on a higher rank. [...] and I think also that this ethics topics is a very sensitive one. It's like just very delicate in that people can feel very offended, [...] I think [...] it is a critique [...], it's just very strong. People can take it very strong 'cause it is something very personal. Ethics is definitely not an easy topic for people to answer.”
(Joana)

This observation points to an asymmetry of power between guests and employees. It can be argued that employees have power over guests because they possess knowledge, information, and resources with which to exert power and influence guests' decisionmaking or behaviour (Golubovskaya, Robinson and Solnet, 2017, p. 1286). However, this result suggests otherwise. Guests are in a position of power *vis-à-vis* employees because guests are the paying party—upon whom businesses rely—and employees are expected to meet guests' expectations (Poulston, 2008a, p. 234; Lugosi, 2019, p. 89). Such a power position can be derived from the well-known phrase “the guest is always right”, as Izabel mentions, for instance, when discussing the role of ethical behaviour:

“guests are always right, so we need to [...] have [...] a good relationship with everyone. [...] [W]e only survive with our guests [...] we don't have a hotel without guests,” (Izabel)

With such an asymmetry of power, it can place employees in a dilemma to encourage ethical behaviour or to point out unethical behaviour to paying guests. Especially since the organisation relies on guests to generate revenue.

Internal power relationships occur between superordinates and subordinates. In this context, Astley and Sachdeva (1984, p. 105) state that “[s]ubordinates obey superiors not so much because they are dependent on the latter, but because they believe that the latter have a right to exercise power by virtue of their position.” Such a perception of power position makes it difficult for subordinates to address ethical behaviours they observe in their superiors. As Joana notes, ethical values are highly personal, which makes it a sensitive topic to discuss with superiors. This finding is in line with previous studies on internal whistleblowing, such as reporting perceived unethical work practices to internal authorities (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran,

2005, p. 277), which found that employees, out of fear of retaliation (Kish-Gephart *et al.*, 2009, p. 184) and a belief that speaking out is futile, employees are often reluctant to engage in internal whistleblowing (Morrison and Milliken, 2000, p. 716). As Joana notes, promoting ethical behaviour among supervisors depends on the leader's attitude and relationship with them, confirming that the leader's attitude towards their followers and the way the leader uses their power to build positive relationships play an important role (Avenant and April, 2016, p. 218).

5.6.2 The reward–duty dilemma

When asked to discuss their views on rewarding ethical behaviour, participants found it tricky and hard to provide a clear-cut answer, as illustrated in the following accounts:

“this is a trick[y] question. [...] if I'm doing the right job [job right], if I'm doing what I should do, [...] I should be rewarded because [...] I'm doing what [...] they asked me to do. My reward? It's the salary. [...] So, everyone, for me, needs to do the[ir] job. Of course, that we have this rewards, we have to, if [...] someone is always having great reviews, and if [...] someone is doing more than it should [...], of course, we need to talk with the person and say, OK, well done, you did an excellent job [...] this is a very good example [...] for your colleagues.” (Izabel)

“That is very tricky. [...] [M]y first answer would be, um, we shouldn't. Because this is just what [...] we have to do. [...] We shouldn't praise, I mean, I think it's good praising, yeah, [...] I, I think my answer is, I don't have a fixed answer. [...] [A]t the same time is good for examples. Making [...] this person [...] connected and seen, and that it is really appreciated and that being good pays off. So, I, yeah, I'm in between the two. [E]ach case is a different case, and the situation is different. So yeah, I'm afraid I don't really have a clear answer for this one.” (Joana)

“It's hard, isn't it? Because it comes back to [...] the idea that there's no such thing as a truly selfless act. [...] [W]hen someone is acting ethically [...] there's always a trade-off. So, even if it's just that feel-good feeling that you get [...] a pat on the back [...]. I think [...] there's no such thing as a purely good act. That's the ideal, right? [...] I don't think we should over

reward people for being good, I think that should just be the norm, and it shouldn't be about their reward [...], but actually just realising that the reward is so much bigger than that, if [...] we're focused on [...] being more ethical, the whole world would be a better planet [...]. I think you should just want to do it because it's the right thing.” (Jane)

Participants seem to be in a dilemma when discussing the reward system. On the one hand, the participants reject the idea of rewarding ethical behaviour, as they consider ethical behaviour as a norm, as their duty, and as part of their job. As such, ethical behaviour should be an end in itself. When ethical behaviour is rewarded, the reward becomes a means to an end and the behaviour is no longer considered a truly selfless act. This reasoning is consistent with deontological theories, such as Kant's (1926, p. 22) view that *“an action done from duty must wholly exclude the influence of inclination, and with it every object of the will, so that nothing remains which can determine the will except objectively the law, and subjectively pure respect for this practical law”*. On the other hand, participants are in favour of rewarding ethical behaviour, on the grounds that it can make one feel appreciated. Rewarding ethical behaviour recognises what constitutes ethical behaviour and serves as an example and incentive to encourage ethical behaviour in others. This finding supports previous studies on the role of reward systems in the hospitality industry, which confirm that hospitality employees are motivated by reward systems to behave ethically (Chung-Herrera, Enz and Lankau, 2003, p. 19) because they appreciate being recognised for their exemplary behaviour (Stevens, 1999, p. 18). Reward systems not only serve to recognise ethical behaviour (Dwyer, Teal and Kemp, 1998, p. 34), these also enable employees to make sense of what constitutes ethical behaviour (Treviño, Butterfield and McCabe, 1998, p. 453) and set an example for others (Yeşiltaş and Tuna, 2018, p. 8), making rewarded employees become role models of ethical behaviour (Weaver, Treviño and Agle, 2005, p. 314). In addition, reward systems are used by leaders to hold employees accountable for behaviour in line with the organisation's ethical standards (Treviño, Brown and Hartman, 2003, p. 18).

A striking finding in this study is that the participants who have a conflicting view about the reward system are senior employees (seniority in employment tenure or hierarchical level). They also mentioned that the organisation's social purpose is a main source of satisfaction and gives meaning to their work. These findings seem to

underpin their commitment to the organisation's purpose and their view of the reward system, suggesting that ethical behaviour is a given and needs no rewarding. However, given the team diversity, it is likely that motivation and engagement will vary. As the organisation provides hospitality training to long-term unemployed community members, the provision of clear ethical standards, together with a reward system, can serve to promote and communicate the importance of ethical behaviour and to monitor unethical behaviour.

5.6.3 The consistent ethical behaviour–managing people dilemma

Managing people in the hospitality industry is a complex task. As demonstrated in the discussion on understanding differences (see [5.3 Understanding differences](#)), character- and work-related differences between team members requires multiple forms of understanding (i.e., affective, cognitive, and ethnocultural empathy). When discussing sources of job frustration and examples of unethical behaviour, Karolina and Adriana mention ambivalence in managing people, as illustrated below:

When asked to reflect on the most satisfying aspects of her work, Karolina responds:

“Being in the hospitality, [...] being among people, serving people, building relationship, and meeting people. I think that's the most important for me. I wouldn't be able to be an accountant and work isolated or on my own [...], the team plays a big part”.
(Karolina)

When asked about her main sources of frustrations, Karolina answers:

“When you do work with people, sometimes you can be frustrated by behaviour, by other people. [A]nything related to [...] team issues or a different behaviour [...]. Probably this might be frustrations. [...] [E]specially [...] from the point of being senior management and managing people.” (Karolina)

Adriana was asked to discuss examples of unethical behaviour, and found that:

“the difficult part of my job is managing people [...]. So, it's great to be kind, it's great to be understanding and considerate [...] [about] the person's personal, you know, circumstances. However, um, in the end of the day, we've got business to run, as well, so you know, being considerate, being kind, yeah, it's a big juggle” (Adriana)

“the training programme, it's an amazing thing, but you know, that takes a lot of time and resource for the team. [...] [I]t's hard when you are, like, trying so hard to deliver these ethical programmes” (Jane)

Karolina's answer may seem paradoxical at first glance; her greatest satisfaction at work is working within a team, whilst at the same time, the main source of frustration is the differences in behaviour between team members. As discussed in the previous topics, teamwork and communication are crucial and were mentioned by the majority of participants as aspects of ethical behaviour. This confirms that communication is associated with effective teamwork in the hospitality industry (Ingram and Desombre, 1999) whilst lack of (interdepartmental) communication hampers the effectiveness of teamwork as it is highly dependent on (interdepartmental) cooperation, which can lead to frustration and conflict (Burgess, 2013), which in turn affects the morale and motivation of managers and subordinates (Conway and Monks, 2011).

Similarly, Adriana has difficulty managing a team and a kitchen at the same time whilst maintaining ethical behaviour as a central tenet. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of previous research that work overload is associated with unethical behaviour in the hospitality industry (Poulston, 2009; Belhassen, 2012; Gürlek, 2020). Backline kitchen staff are under intense time pressure to coordinate and deliver food in a timely manner, leaving little time to patiently explain cooking techniques or attend to personal matters, which can become a source of frustration as this can otherwise lead to poor or failed delivery of products. Moreover, as Jane notes, the hotel's training programme puts additional pressure on team members. Thus, *ideal* ethical behaviour can sometimes be obscured by situational pressures, and may in *practice* translate into different, perhaps undesirable, behaviour (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012, p. 324). Many studies confirm high levels of stress amongst kitchen professionals caused by excessive workload (Tongchaiprasit and Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016; Cerasa *et al.*, 2020; Lin, Mao and Hong, 2021), excessive working hours, health and safety issues (Zopiatis, Kyprianou and Pavlou, 2011), communication issues (Murray-Gibbons and Gibbons, 2007), shortage of trained personnel (Chuang and Lei, 2011; Birdir and Canakci, 2014), leading to occupational, psychological and physical stress. This phenomenon is exacerbated by the labour shortage in kitchens in the UK, where nearly two-thirds of businesses reported unfilled vacancies in May 2021 as a result of Brexit and closures due to coronavirus pandemic (UKHospitality, 2021).

5.6.4 Social–business dilemma

The dual aspect of social enterprise, which Jane discusses below, has been widely researched to shed light on the complexities of harmonising competing missions; profit versus non-profit, with the former pursuing profit maximisation strategies, whilst the latter seeking social value creation (e.g., Pache and Santos, 2013; Aileen Boluk and Mottiar, 2014; Kannothra, Manning and Haigh, 2018; Nicolás Martínez, Rubio Bañ n and Fernández Laviada, 2019; Žur, 2021).

“Benefits, I think that the strongest benefit, I think, is brand loyalty. I think people tend to stay with [Case Study Hotel] for a long time, because of that sense of passion, you know, purpose, because of that sense of mission, and I think that's probably the strongest thing, in terms of a business benefit that we, kind of, keep and retain talent overtime because we're invested personally.” (Jane)

“sometimes that can be hard because, [...] this dual aspect of trying to create as much profit as we possibly can to give back. That balancing act of investing in our charitable endeavours and investing in the company is sometimes [...] hard to navigate. So, our staff probably could be paid a lot more, in all fairness, but it's that constant trade-off of, like, the decisions that we make and trying to justify it, [...] it's hard when your key ethical output is keeping your costs down so you can give back more. So, it's a war with each other. [...] It's difficult to balance that and to do it right when you are so focused on ethics. If you are just bothered about profit and loss, it would be very easy, but when you're also trying to apply that lens of ethics, [...] When that comes into your business conversation, you know, it makes it infinitely more complex. [...] It makes decisionmaking harder.” (Jane)

As Jane explains, social purpose increases brand loyalty by giving employees a sense of passion and purpose. Conversely, social purpose makes decisionmaking more complex. In an effort to balance the expectations of multiple stakeholders (Costanzo *et al.*, 2014, p. 655), trade-offs must be made between investments in the social mission and in the business. This finding is consistent with that of Wilson and Post (2013, p. 727), who found that social enterprises face constant tensions and conscious trade-offs at the operational level. This requires attracting and retaining employees with the skills to manage this complexity and a passion similar to that of the

founder (Kodzi Jr., 2015, p. 292), who often has a strong emotional attachment to the organisation and its cause (Siebold, Günzel-Jensen and Müller, 2019, p. 10).

5.6.5 Conclusion tricky ideal–practice dilemma

This theme sought to shed light on the complexities of navigating consistent ethical decisionmaking in challenging contexts. Ethical decisionmaking is the result of the interaction between the personal characteristics of the decisionmaker and the context within which the decision is made (Treviño, 1986). The inherent characteristics of the hospitality industry make it a context prone to ethical blindness, defined as “*the decision maker’s temporary inability to see the ethical dimension at stake*” (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012, p. 324) (further discussed in [2.2.4 Hospitality ethics](#)). The dilemmas discussed are instances of dichotomous contexts for ethical decisionmaking.

Encouraging ethical behaviour in others amidst asymmetrical power relations places the decisionmaker in a dilemma. The perception of being in an inferior position of power can make one reluctant to speak up out of fear of retribution (Kish-Gephart *et al.*, 2009). The impact of power dynamics is a function of the quality of the relationship. Negative power relationships can be mitigated by leaders using their power to foster positive relationships and work environments (Avenant and April, 2016).

The dilemma between rewarding ethical behaviour and engaging in ethical behaviour as a duty has raised concerns. Ethical behaviour can be seen as a duty and part of one’s work. This relates to Kant’s (1926) view that an act done out of duty cannot be influenced by inclination. Ethical behaviour as such requires no reward. However, in organisations, particularly those working with trainees, rewarding ethical behaviour and addressing ethical misconduct can raise awareness of what constitutes ethical behaviour (Treviño, Butterfield and McCabe, 1998) and serve as an example to others (Yeşiltaş and Tuna, 2018), with rewarded employees becoming role models of ethical behaviour (Weaver, Treviño and Agle, 2005). Furthermore, reward systems enable leaders to hold their employees accountable for behaving according to organisational standards (Treviño, Brown and Hartman, 2003).

Consistently engaging in ethical behaviour when managing people in a high-pressure environment can be hard to navigate. External situational pressures can

make it difficult for decisionmakers to recognise the ethical dimension of a decision and to make decisions that are consistent with their values and principles (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012). The physical and emotional demands and diversity of teams, common in the hospitality industry, can create an environment in which it is difficult to consistently act with integrity and engage in ethical decisionmaking.

A social purpose can increase brand loyalty and develop a sense of passion and purpose amongst employees. However, the dichotomous nature of social enterprises renders decisionmaking more complex. The dual mission of maximising profit and creating social value requires managing the expectations of multiple stakeholders (Costanzo *et al.*, 2014), leading to tensions and conscious trade-offs at the operational level (Wilson and Post, 2013). This requires organisations to attract and equip employees with the skills to manage the complexities of a dual mission.

5.7 Conclusion interpersonal analysis

As an embedded case study, this interpersonal analysis chapter embodies the group or relational subunit of analysis, to which Denzin (1978, p. 296) refers as interactive analysis and which represents the second step of Zartler's (2010, p. 178) multiple perspective research approach. This chapter is concerned with exploring interrelationships between participants by identifying patterns in participants' perceptions of ethical behaviour. In contrast to the intrapersonal analysis, where topic summaries were developed to depict the diversity of interpretations of ethical behaviour (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 77), this chapter seeks to capture common themes. Thus, this chapter reflects on the meanings and understandings of what constitutes ethical behaviour. In exploring participants' interpretations of ethical behaviour and its role in the workplace, findings reveal six predominant themes: 1) prosocial teamwork; 2) multidirectional candid communication; 3) understanding differences; 4) the social purpose as organisational ethical behaviour; 5) brand representation; 6) the ideal–practice dilemma (See *Figure 13. Thematic map with relationships*).

The reflexive analytical interpretation presented in this chapter emphasises that *prosocial teamwork* is a fundamental aspect of ethical behaviour in the workplace. The main reason that prosocial teamwork is strongly associated with ethical behaviour is

that the wellbeing of team members, the team, and the organisation is recognised as central to shaping team dynamics and fostering collaboration and cooperation, upon which the quality of the service delivery is highly dependent. The contagious feature in teamwork, where the attitudes and behaviours of one team member affect those of others, requires solidarity and integrity to ensure positive contagiousness and the development of a sense of community. Respondents view prosocial teamwork as an approach to promoting autonomous decisionmaking by building ethical follower–leader relationships, where leaders lead by example and empower followers, and followers engage in taking ownership and self-development. Delegating decisionmaking authority requires mutuality and reciprocity. Participants frequently mentioned the importance of developing a shared understanding of goals and values (mutuality) and committing to reciprocate team members' contributions (reciprocity) to foster a shared vision and collective pride.

A theme closely related to prosocial teamwork is *multidirectional candid communication*. Informants view multidirectional candid communication as crucial for fostering prosocial teamwork. Candid communication involves openness, transparency, and honesty. Candid communication requires an awareness of one's own needs and capabilities as well as those of others, which enables support to be sought and given. Respondents report that candid communication facilitates understanding of different perspectives, which is crucial in a diverse team to develop mutual understanding and reduce the risk of conflict. Considering that service delivery depends on (interdepartmental) collaboration, respondents stress the importance of multidirectional communication to enable mutual support and collaboration amongst team members. Organisational communication is viewed as a medium to convey the importance of ethical behaviour. For the message to be conveyed effectively, organisational communication must be clear and consistent throughout the organisation. The values and expectations regarding ethical behaviour must be the same for everyone and reflected in daily operations, as otherwise employees may perceive organisational values as windowdressing practices. Informants acknowledged that *understanding differences* is an important aspect of ethical behaviour that can promote prosocial teamwork and multidirectional candid communication. In an effort to develop supportive relationships and understand behaviours, concerns, and feelings in a diverse team, respondents emphasise the

importance of displaying three forms of empathy: cognitive, affective, and ethnocultural.

The *organisation's social purpose* is viewed as a demonstration of organisational ethical behaviour. The organisation's purpose to create social value is a major source of job satisfaction because employees contribute to this purpose, which makes their work meaningful, especially to participants who have become sceptical as a result of windowdressing practices. Thus, the social purpose renders their work meaningful and is an important factor in employee engagement. This leads to the following theme of *brand representation*. Given the meaningfulness of their jobs and their engagement in supporting the social purpose, participants identify brand representation as a form of ethical behaviour. It is considered ethical behaviour to represent the organisation's brand towards team members, guests, business partners, and charity. The intangible feature of a service makes that employees become the brand's identity, as guests, business partners, and charities form their perceptions of the brand based on their interactions with employees.

The final theme draws attention to the complexities of navigating consistent ethical decisionmaking in dichotomous contexts. Participants discuss 1) the difficulties of encouraging ethical behaviour amidst asymmetrical power relations; 2) the dilemma between rewarding ethical behaviour and committing to ethical behaviour as a duty; 3) the difficulties of demonstrating consistent ethical behaviour and managing people; and 4) the social–business dilemma. Notorious for its physical and emotional demands, the hospitality industry is an environment prone to situational pressures that can prevent employees from consistently acting with integrity and engaging in ethical behaviour.

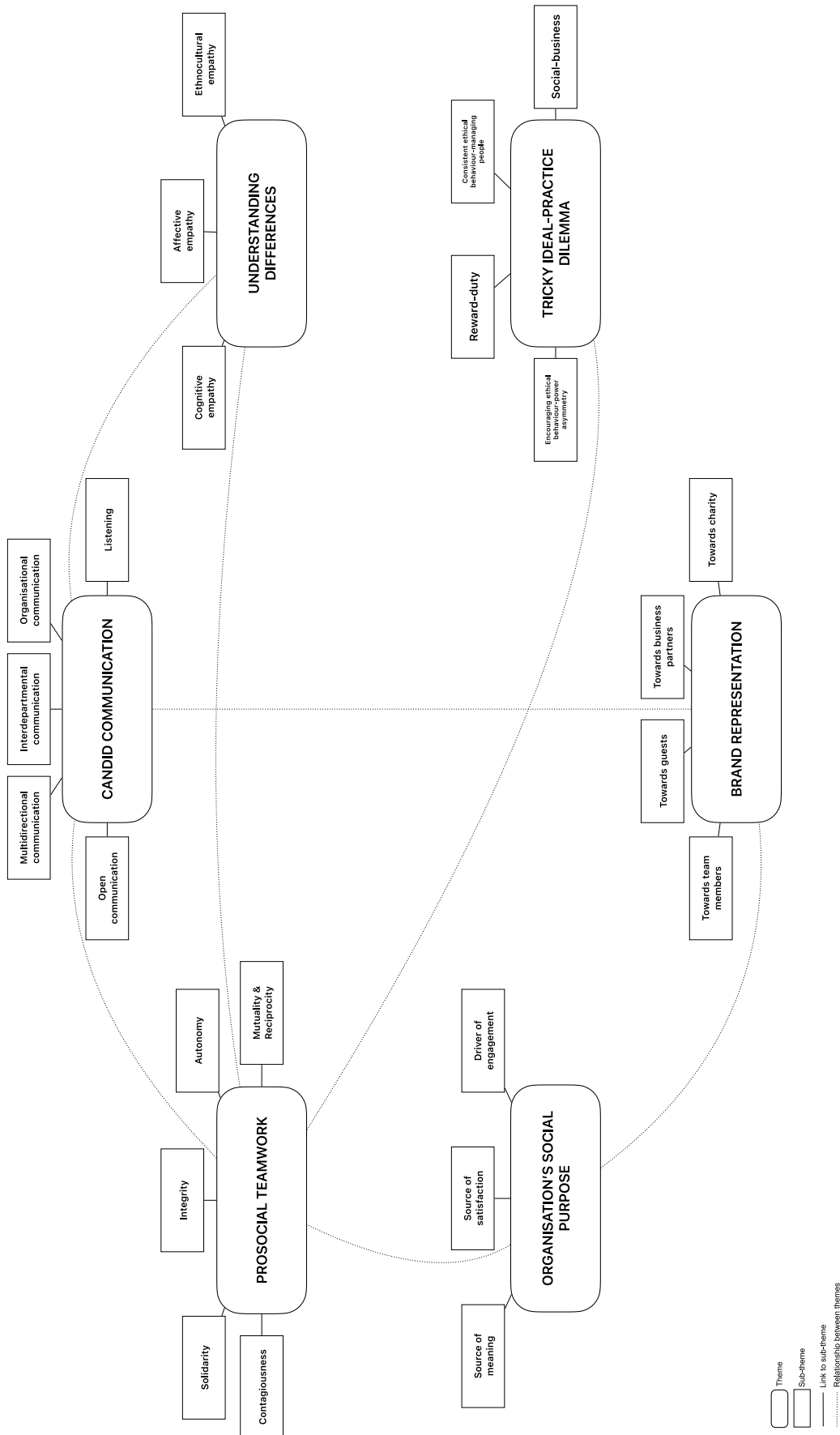


Figure 12. Thematic map with relationships

6

ORGANISATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the meanings ascribed to ethical behaviour and to investigate organisational implications for institutionalising ethics. Thus far, the analyses sought, first, within a social constructionist paradigm, to showcase the diversity of meanings and understandings of ethical behaviour by developing topic summaries (see *Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.*); and second, to capture the prevailing shared meanings and understandings of ethical behaviour (see *Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.*). Building upon the intrapersonal (micro level) and interpersonal (meso level) analyses, this phase—organisational implications, to which Denzin (1978, p. 296) refers as the collectivity—represents the third step of Zartler’s (2010, pp. 178–179) stepwise data analysis process in multiperspective research. At this level of analysis, the subunit of analysis is no longer the individual nor the group, but the organisation. The purpose of this analysis is to crystallise the predominant meanings of ethical behaviour in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of ethical behaviour and propose organisational implications for the institutionalisation of ethics. In the interpersonal analysis, six recurring themes were constructed, shedding light on the prevalent meanings of ethical behaviour. Findings reveal that *prosocial teamwork*, *multidirectional candid communication*, and *understanding differences* are fundamental pillars of ethical behaviour. Findings also show that employee *brand representation* and an *organisation’s social purpose* are essential aspects of individual and organisational ethical behaviour. In contrast to the aforementioned themes, which relate to endogenous ethical behaviour aimed at enabling an ethical workplace, *brand representation* and the *organisation’s social purpose* pertain to exogenous ethical behaviour in an attempt to develop an ethical purpose that is supported by and reflected in the workplace. Lastly, the *tricky ideal-practice dilemma* theme provides

insight on the underlying tensions and complexities of consistent ethical behaviour and decisionmaking.

Drawing upon these findings, this chapter aims to propose organisational implications for developing strategies for institutionalising ethics that integrate approaches to promote endogenous (ethical workplace) and exogenous (ethical purpose) ethical behaviour in an effort to develop an ethical organisation (see [Figure 13. Ethical organisation](#)).



[Figure 13. Ethical organisation](#)

6.1 Towards an ethical workplace

Themes related to endogenous ethical behaviour include *prosocial teamwork*, *multidirectional candid communication*, and *understanding differences*. These themes are closely interrelated, particularly in the idiosyncratic context of a hospitality and learning-training organisation. Two main aspects of prosocial teamwork can be distinguished: informal and formal. Informal aspects of prosocial teamwork mostly relate to the *contagious* nature of teamwork and the need to act with *integrity* in an effort to develop a sense of *solidarity*. Formal aspects of prosocial teamwork include the promotion of *autonomy* and the promotion of *mutuality and reciprocity* (see [Figure 6. Theme & subthemes - Prosocial teamwork](#)). In order to develop both aspects of prosocial teamwork, the findings indicate a need for *multidirectional candid communication* and an ability to *understand differences*, especially given the contextual complexities of consistent ethical decisionmaking discussed in section [5.6 Tricky ideal–practice dilemma](#).

6.1.1 Informal aspects of prosocial teamwork: contagiousness, integrity, and solidarity

Prosocial behaviour within a team refers to a behaviour performed with the intention of promoting the wellbeing of the individual, the team, and the organisation (Brief and Motowidlo, 1986, p. 711). Findings suggest that such behaviour is fundamental given the contagious aspect of teamwork (see [5.1.2 Contagiousness](#)); the behaviour and morale of one team member is likely to affect those of others. More specifically, an important influencing factor on a team member's ethical behaviour is the ethical behaviour of other team members (Deshpande, Joseph and Prasad, 2006, p. 212; Dimitriou and Ducette, 2018, p. 72). Findings also suggest a need for team members to act with integrity and develop a sense of solidarity to mitigate negative contagion and develop a teamwork that promotes supportive behaviour (as discussed in [5.1.3 Solidarity](#) and [5.1.4 Integrity](#)). In addition, contextual factors and pressures can affect ethical behaviour (Kelley and Elm, 2003; Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012). Pressures such as emotional and physical demands, high employee turnover rates, seasonality, and staff shortage are endemic issues in the hospitality industry. Diversity, recognised as an inherent characteristic of the hospitality industry, can be identified at both the individual level (e.g., cultural and social backgrounds, attitudes, values, levels of work experience, levels of engagement and motivation) and the functional level (e.g., task requirements, expectations, and responsibilities). In addition to the industry-specific characteristics, the focal organisation is a hospitality training provider; the learning–training context may have an impact on team dynamics and, thus, on the ethical behaviour of team members.

In such an environment, team members need to support one another to facilitate working in a high-pressure environment, avoid risks of conflict, and promote the wellbeing of the team and the organisation. Results also suggest that empathy (cognitive, affective, and ethnocultural) is seen as a form of ethical behaviour (as discussed in [5.3 Understanding differences](#)). A possible explanation for this finding may be related to team diversity. A culturally diverse team requires ethnocultural empathy to understand and adapt to new cultural environments. In addition, team members in a learning organisation are likely to have different work experiences, which requires affective and cognitive empathy to respond to different needs. This also requires experienced team members to become trainers.

These results have several implications for organisations interested in institutionalising ethics and in particular in promoting prosocial teamwork in a diverse team. In view of informants, attitude is more important than technical skills. This may be explained by the *contagious* nature of teamwork, where the attitude of one team member affects that of others. Whilst technical skills are usually easier to transfer, attitudes, on the other hand, which are related to personality traits (Silva, 2006) and dispositions (Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010), are more difficult to train or change. Furthermore, similar to previous studies, the findings point to issues in managing diversity in the team (Baum *et al.*, 2007; Singal, 2014b; Grobelna, 2015; Malik, Madappa and Chitranshi, 2017). These findings point to the need for understanding and respecting cultural differences, which have implications for explicit approaches to ethics institutionalisation (EI), particularly in human resources recruitment strategies. To instil prosocial teamwork in a culturally diverse team, this study proposes that recruiters set attitudes such as prosocial orientation, integrity, and empathy (cognitive, affective, ethnocultural) as key recruitment criteria. Psychological assessment models, such as the Ethic of Care Interview (ECI) by Skoe (2010), the value-based decision framework by Mayr and Freund (2020), or the Tourism Social Entrepreneurial Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (TSE-EE) by Shrif-Tehrani, Seyfi, and Zaman (2022) may be used in the recruitment process. An alternative approach may be to encourage the recruitment of candidates with international work experience as evidence of ethnocultural empathy.

In addition to hiring applicants with a prosocial and ethnocultural orientation, promoting prosocial teamwork in the workplace also has organisational implications for implicit approaches to EI. This study recognises the need for employers and leaders to develop an organisational culture that nurtures teamwork through solidarity and integrity, similar to the Ubuntu principles (Gathogo, 2008; Molose, Thomas and Goldman, 2019; Nicolaides, 2020). Accentuated by the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic on employees' mental health and their sense of detachment from the organisation (Kaushik and Guleria, 2020; Al-Ghazali and Afsar, 2022; McAdams and Gallant, 2022; Rahimi, Akgunduz and Bilgihan, 2022; Zientara, Adamska-Mieruszezwska and Bąk, 2022; Mensah *et al.*, 2023), employers need to (re)connect with their internal stakeholders and develop social cohesion. In the hospitality industry, organisational culture plays a crucial role in shaping employee

behaviour (Kemp and Dwyer, 2001; Kusluvan *et al.*, 2010). Ceremonies or celebrations of organisational culture can reinforce cultural values (Brown, 1998, p. 21). In this regard, this study proposes that organisations expand reward systems that focus on employees' ethical behaviour towards guests by integrating rewards for ethical behaviour in the workplace (towards team members) that focuses on team support, communication, and attitude towards team members. An integrated approach to rewarding ethical behaviour has a dual purpose of monitoring ethical behaviour and nurturing social cohesion. This also has implications for leaders, who should act as role models for subordinates through open communication and support for team members in developing prosocial behaviour.

In sum, developing teamwork with a focus on prosocial behaviour, integrity, solidarity, and ethnocultural orientation has organisational implications for explicit and implicit EI (see [Table 25. Endogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI](#)). Explicit forms of EI include the implementation of recruitment strategies that set attitude as a key recruitment criterion by using psychological assessment models and attracting candidates with prior experience in international settings. Implicit forms of EI involve 1) developing an organisational culture that nurtures solidarity and support in teamwork; 2) expanding a reward system that focuses on ethical behaviour amongst team members; and 3) leaders in acting as role models.

6.1.2 Formal aspects of prosocial teamwork

6.1.2.1 Autonomy

As found in [5.1.5 Autonomy and the role of ethical leadership and followership](#), autonomous decisionmaking through the development of ethical leader-follower relationships is considered a characteristic of prosocial teamwork. Such a relationship is developed by leaders who exhibit an ethical leadership style, empower subordinates by delegating decisionmaking authority, lead by example, and are approachable through open communication. Such a leadership style makes subordinates feel empowered, heard, and valued. Ethical followership, conversely, asks subordinates to take initiative and assume ownership rather than passively abiding rules. Extant research has demonstrated that employee empowerment plays a critical role in reducing turnover intentions (Sparrowe, 1994), enhancing job satisfaction (Shehawy, 2022), promoting service performance (Hoang *et al.*, 2021), and enhancing employee

autonomy (Chiang and Chen, 2021). Autonomous decisionmaking authority is critical in the hospitality industry, as employees need to make rapid decisions to attend to guest needs.

These findings have implications for explicit EI, particularly for human resources strategists. Firstly, this study suggests that recruiters focus on behavioural and attitudinal aspects when setting selection criteria, such as confidence in empowering followers and giving them voice, receptiveness to open communication, and orientation to ethical standards and values. Similarly, recruiters should look for proactive attitudes when selecting subordinate candidates, such as willingness to take initiative and willingness to assume ownership and responsibility. Secondly, human resources strategies should include developing training programmes for leaders and followers. Training and development programmes on ethical leadership could be developed to 1) develop a leadership style that reflects the organisation's values; and 2) strengthen leaders' understanding of their role in ensuring ethical behaviour of team members. Training and development programmes could also be designed for all team members to enhance their development opportunities and align individual and organisational values and expectations. To further promote autonomy, this study suggests that organisations can benefit from maintaining updated and clear codes of ethics and conduct upon which team members can rely and upon which leaders can hold team members accountable for behaving in accordance with organisational standards. Such codes provide clarity about the role of employees and the expectations of the organisation.

To consolidate explicit EI and ensure the codes reflect workplace practices, cultivating ethical leader-follower relationships to develop autonomy has organisational implications for implicit EI, particularly in the area of leadership and organisational culture with an emphasis on ceremonies such as the reward system. This study, which recognises empowerment as a dimension of ethical leadership (Khuntia and Suar, 2004), suggests leaders influence the behaviour of subordinates through empowerment by relinquishing decisionmaking authority and giving subordinates the opportunity to participate in decisionmaking and problem-solving. Giving subordinates the opportunity to discuss day-to-day business problems that managers and leaders may not be aware of, gives subordinates a voice and may encourage employee engagement in improving practical aspects of service delivery. To encourage leaders

to empower their followers and followers to become autonomous, this study suggests adapting organisational reward systems by rewarding 1) subordinates who proactively engage in decisionmaking and propose solutions to improve service delivery performance, and 2) managers or leaders who maintain open communication, empower subordinates, and involve subordinates in decisionmaking. Such a reward system may help raise awareness of issues related to power asymmetries, as discussed in the literature review (see [2.3 Power relations in business management and the role of ethics](#)) and in [5.6.1 The encouraging ethical behaviour–power asymmetry dilemma](#). It is important to note that all approaches to institutionalising ethics must convey the same message (values, goals, expectations) in order to create role clarity and enable autonomous and rapid decisionmaking.

In sum, fostering ethical leader-follower relationships to develop team members autonomous decisionmaking has organisational implications for explicit and implicit EI (see [Table 25. Endogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI](#)). Explicit approaches to EI encompass developing recruitment strategies that focus on behavioural and attitudinal aspects of leaders and followers. Other human resource management strategies include the design of training and development programmes for leaders and followers. Further explicit approaches to EI include maintaining current and clear codes of ethics and conduct to ensure role clarity. Implicit forms of EI pertain to 1) leaders exhibiting ethical leadership style through empowerment, and 2) the implementation of a reward system that focuses on leaders' empowering leadership style and followers' proactive and autonomous decisionmaking.

6.1.2.2 Mutuality and reciprocity

Findings in the interpersonal analysis revealed that mutuality and reciprocity are seen as dimensions of ethical behaviour that help promote prosocial teamwork by developing a shared understanding of the organisation' goals and values and a commitment to reciprocity of contributions (see [5.1.6 Mutuality and reciprocity](#)). This outcome is to be expected as work in the hospitality sector is reliant on (interdepartmental) collaboration. Such interdependence requires cooperative teamwork and multidirectional candid communication to enable effective team performance in service delivery through the development of a shared vision and a collective pride. Within the stakeholder theory framework, stakeholder engagement is central to an organisation's strategy for it to be successful. As such, organisations need

to engage in and encourage respectful, honest, and multidirectional communication with their stakeholders (Noland and Phillips, 2010).

These findings have several important implications for the institutionalisation of ethics. Firstly, this study suggests that organisations could benefit from selecting candidates with strong communication skills and from providing communication training to promote employees' understanding of the role and importance of candid and multidirectional communication and listening. Secondly, organisations may benefit from introducing job rotation programmes, where employees are periodically transferred to different departments to develop an understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities. In this way, a mutual understanding of how each department contributes to the organisation's goals can be developed, and interdepartmental support and commitment to reciprocate contributions is facilitated (Salem and Abdien, 2017, p. 72). Job rotation can improve employee performance (Colquitt, LePine and Noe, 2000), employees resilience (Davis, Kher and Wagner, 2009), job satisfaction (Al-Romeedy, 2019), and promotion opportunities (Chen and Tseng, 2012). However, when implementing job rotation programmes, employers need to be aware that such programmes may not be suitable for all employees, as working in different departments, even temporarily, can be a source of anxiety and conflict (Tharmmaphornphilas and Norman, 2004). Therefore, prior to developing such programme, organisations should evaluate its suitability by assessing employees' readiness (willingness and ability) for job rotation and managers' readiness to support it. Organisations may maximise benefits by taking a systematic approach to the design of job rotation programmes, which requires the involvement and support of employees and managers to ensure that the programme is responsive to their needs and that the purpose is clear. This may be facilitated by developing a manual that provides 1) employees with clear guidelines for managing their expectations during job rotation, and 2) managers with clear guidelines for supporting rotated employees. Given the efforts required of managers and rotating employees, it may be useful for organisations to implement a reward system that recognises their achievements. When employees' contributions are recognised, they feel valued and can serve as an incentive for others.

Thirdly, developing a shared vision through mutuality and reciprocity and multidirectional candid communication has implications for leaders. They need to be aware of their role in being receptive to and engaging in consistent and transparent

communication within and between departments. Frequent (inter)departmental briefings involving representatives of all levels of hierarchy can increase awareness of one another's roles and responsibilities and promote autonomy amongst followers. Similarly, organisational communication should be transparent and consistent throughout the organisation to create a shared vision and reduce the risk of interdepartmental conflict and internal competition.

In sum, developing mutuality and reciprocity and promoting multidirectional candid communication has organisational implications in terms of explicit and implicit EI (see [*Table 25. Endogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI*](#)). Explicit approaches to EI include recruitment strategies that focus on communication skills. Other human resource management strategies encompass designing job rotation programmes that involve internal stakeholders to assess their readiness and address their needs. Job rotation may promote employees' understanding of other departments' roles and responsibilities, which in turn may contribute towards mutuality and reciprocity. Although job rotation can be a useful learning mechanism, leaders also need to be aware of potential counterproductive outcomes and adopt a systematic approach to gain stakeholder support. Consolidating the effectiveness of job rotation has implications for implicit EI. This study suggests that organisations could benefit from developing a reward system to recognise the contributions and achievements of stakeholders who become role models for others. Further implications for implicit EI arise in the area of leadership, where leaders become role models by being open to and committed to consistent and transparent communication within and across departments.

Table 25. Endogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI

Context	Context characteristics	Findings	Organisational implications for:	
			Explicit EI	Implicit EI
Hospitality industry	Pressures	Source of frustration - informal aspects of prosocial teamwork help cope with pressures and develop social cohesion	HR recruitment strategies	Organisational culture (rituals, ceremonies); (ethical) leadership
	Diversity	Source of frustration/conflict - importance of understanding differences (three forms of empathy)	HR recruitment strategies	Organisational culture ; leadership
	Reliance on (interdepartmental) collaboration for service delivery	Risk of internal competition, formation of subcultures - need for mutuality and reciprocity	Explicit standards for role clarity and interdepartmental understanding/alignment	Multidirectional candid communication ; consistent organisational communication of role, expectations, goals to ensure clarity and alignment
	Rapid decisionmaking (time delivery) to attend to guests' needs and address complaints	Need for autonomy	Explicit standards , SOPs for accessibility of information, knowledge	Ethical leader-follower relations (awareness power asymmetries; empowerment, transfer decisionmaking authority, accessibility, leading by example, employee ownership, engagement)
Learning/training organisation	Work experience diversity	Source of frustration - importance of cognitive empathy	HR recruitment strategies (experienced candidates)	Reward system – integrative approach to rewarding ethical behaviour (internal and external focus)
		Experienced team members act as trainers for members of training programme	HR training/mentoring strategies to develop training skills for experienced team members; explicit standards , SOPs (accessible and consistent information)	Leadership (ability to lead team with trainees and trainers)

6.2 Towards an ethical purpose

Ethical purpose is the result of an interplay between the organisation's values (purpose) and how internal stakeholders represent those values. In theory, scholars have questioned the ethical nature of social enterprises and whether social enterprises are inherently ethical businesses (Chell *et al.*, 2016; Dey and Steyaert, 2016; Haugh and Talwar, 2016). In practice, societal demands have shifted towards more ethical organisations (Crane and Matten, 2016; Kuokkanen and Catrett, 2022) and employers (Wut, Xu and Wong, 2022). Consumers and employees have become increasingly sceptical of windowdressing practices (Mazutis and Slazinski, 2014; Rahman, Park and Chi, 2015; Willness, 2019; Koleva and Meadows, 2021) and the failure of organisations to clearly communicate their social initiatives (Zhang and Hanks, 2017). These concerns urge social entrepreneurs to rethink their approaches to creating social value and engaging internal stakeholders to ensure that the workplace authentically reflects the organisation's brand and values.

As discussed in the theme *Brand representation* (5.5), participants reported that representing the organisation's brand is a form of ethical behaviour. Some participants also reported that they feel responsible for representing the brand with integrity.

Towards guests and clients, employees play a central role in reinforcing the organisation's values (Miles and Mangold, 2005). During guest-employee interactions, guests form their perceptions of the organisation (King, So and Grace, 2013). That is, employees become the identity of the brand and make the service experience tangible (Urde, 1999). It is, therefore, important to align organisational and individual values to ensure ethical brand representation. As highlighted in a corpus of literature, this finding confirms the importance of internal-external branding alignment (e.g., Aurand, Gorchels and Bishop, 2005; Wang, Yang and Yang, 2019; Garavan *et al.*, 2022; Gulati, Mathur and Upadhyay, 2023). To achieve such alignment, internal stakeholders must engage in brand-oriented behaviours to create, develop, and protect brand identity when interacting with external stakeholders (Urde, 1999; King, So and Grace, 2013). Similar to the implications highlighted in *Mutuality and reciprocity* (5.1.6), the introduction of ethical brand representation initiatives has significant implications for organisational communication with the goal of developing a shared vision so that the organisation's brand is supported and reflected in the workplace. This study recognises the importance of embedding the organisation's values in the workplace for these to authentically reflect in daily operations. In the context of social enterprises, it is not merely a matter of employees adhering to the organisation's purpose, but also about employees being committed to the organisation's purpose and caring about it (André and Pache, 2016). Genuine employee support is especially important for social enterprises because, as one informant expresses:

"when you're a social business, it's hard in a lot of ways and it's a lot harder; in terms of, you know, people will hold you to such a high standard and, kind of, expect you to be perfect, and that's not always easy." (Jane)

The high expectations of external stakeholder for social enterprises may be related to their scepticism associated of windowdressing practices. This necessitates that organisations initiate internal stakeholder engagement, which depends on effective organisational communication (Clampitt and Downs, 1993). To achieve value embedding, organisations must ensure clear, consistent, and frequent communication of the organisation's purpose (Leijerholt, Chapleo and O'Sullivan, 2019). Firstly, organisational communication about its vision and values must be clear to ensure role clarity and reduce the risks of uncertainty and ambiguity. Clear communication is

particularly important in a multicultural environment where English is not the first language for all internal stakeholders. In an organisation where training is provided, it is also likely that team members have different professional experiences. Therefore, communication must be unambiguous and understandable for all. Secondly, communication must be consistent throughout the organisation to encourage a cohesive commitment amongst employees to brand-oriented behaviour in an effort to create, develop, and protect brand identity (Urde, 1999). Therefore, the message communicated about the organisation's vision must be the same for everyone. Thirdly, organisational communication needs to be frequent. In this regard, several participants expressed that the purpose of the organisation gives meaning to their work but that the values and purpose of the organisation are insufficiently communicated. This echoes Elena's statement that people tend to forget quickly and need to be reminded of what the organisation stands for. Frequent organisational communication is also a way to engage with and involve employees, so they feel recognised and valued (Walden, Jung and Westerman, 2017).

Clear, consistent, and frequent communication of the organisation's vision may also help foster mutuality and reciprocity by mobilising individual and organisational alignment of values to develop a shared understanding of and commitment to authentic brand-oriented behaviour. This study suggests that it may be beneficial for organisations to engage internal stakeholders to gain their support for contributing to the organisation's social value creation (social purpose) by fostering a culture of collaboration and engagement and developing a shared vision. As stated in the theme *The organisation's social purpose (5.4)*, participants reported that the social purpose of the organisation is a source of job satisfaction and provides meaning to their work. Social purpose is also a key driver to employee engagement. However, in the theme *Social-business dilemma (5.6.4)*, it was also reported that the dichotomous nature of social enterprises makes decisionmaking more complex. Pursuing a dual mission of profit maximisation and social value creation creates tensions and trade-offs at operational level (Costanzo *et al.*, 2014). This finding has implications for human resources managers who need to attract and select candidates with the skills to manage the complexities of competing missions. Within the stakeholder theory framework, some scholars have argued that internal stakeholder engagement ought to be an integral part of an organisation's strategy to be successful (Noland and

Phillips, 2010, p. 40; Santoro *et al.*, 2020). Considering that social purpose is a source of job satisfaction and meaning, this study argues that organisations should explore internal stakeholder engagement approaches to create value not only for the organisation's social purpose but also for the internal stakeholders themselves.

One of the organisation's social value creation initiatives is to provide hospitality training to long-term unemployed local community members. The intrapersonal analysis (see [4.6.2 Meaning and impacts of EI](#)) findings have revealed that providing on-site training affects daily practice and requires experienced employees to act as mentors. Though only one of the nine informants articulated the impact of the training programme on the daily tasks of managers and employees, this finding is nonetheless a matter of importance because the training programme is a core component of the organisation's social purpose. In addition, numerous studies have demonstrated the manifold benefits of mentoring in the hospitality industry on organisational socialisation (Zhou *et al.*, 2022), organisational citizenship behaviour (Chang and Uen, 2022), mentee satisfaction (Qu *et al.*, 2021), employee retention (Yang *et al.*, 2019), mentee morale (Chandan and Singh, 2019), and mentee knowledge and confidence development (Scerri, Presbury and Goh, 2020). Studies have also reported that mentors can benefit from mentoring by improving their confidence and competence (Zagenczyk *et al.*, 2009), career development opportunities (Kram, 1988, p. 2), and leadership skills (Rekha and Ganesh, 2012). Benefits of mentoring programmes, however, depend on several factors. The mentor-mentee relationship plays an influential role in the outcome of mentoring (Goosen and Van Vuuren, 2005; Eby *et al.*, 2007). Other factors such as mentees' unwillingness to learn, mentors' lack of expertise (Eby *et al.*, 2010), or unclear roles and expectations (Allen, Eby and Lentz, 2006) can lead to conflict and poor mentoring experiences.

It is, therefore, essential to scrutinise the implications of mentoring programmes for employees, managers, and the organisation. As reported in [Meaning and impacts of EI \(4.6.2\)](#), findings suggest that the hospitality training programme is a risk-laden initiative as experienced employees become mentors to vulnerable protégés whilst simultaneously attending to their daily duties and the needs of guests. Considering that the hospitality training programme is a core component of the organisation's social purpose, making mentoring an integral part of the work of employees and managers, this research suggests organisations may benefit from developing a formal mentoring

programme by adopting a systematic approach, such as Scerri, Presbury, and Goh's (2020) four-stage mentoring programme framework. The four stages of this framework are: 1) participant matching, 2) participant preparation, 3) participant interaction, and 4) evaluation and outcomes. It is reasonable to assume that not everyone is ready to become a mentor. Therefore, this study suggests adding an initial stage to the four-stage framework, which has implications for human resources management. To attract and select candidates with the appropriate readiness (willingness and ability) level for mentoring, this study suggests that recruiters 1) develop job descriptions that highlight core activities and responsibilities, which include mentoring protégés when on-site training is provided, and 2) establish hospitality work and training/mentoring experience as fundamental selection criteria. Further implications for the development of a mentoring programme relate to the training of mentors and the development of explicit codes of ethics and handbooks to provide clear guidelines to mentors and protégés. Furthermore, the framework could include an additional stage that focuses on the reward system in which mentors and protégés are rewarded for their achievements. When participants are rewarded for their achievements, they feel valued and can serve as an example for other team members.

In sum, developing an ethical purpose involves an internal-external branding alignment to ensure that the social purpose of the organisation is supported by and reflected in the workplace. This has implications for implicit EI, which is to initiate internal stakeholder engagement to create both social value and stakeholder value (see *Table 26. Exogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI*). In addition, organisational communication of social purpose should be clear, consistent, and frequent. The dual mission of social business makes decisionmaking more complex because of the conflicting missions. This has implications for EI as it involves attracting and selecting candidates with the skills to manage such complexities. In addition, the hospitality training initiative has several implications for explicit and implicit EI. As experienced employees become mentors, recruiters should attract and select candidates with the appropriate readiness to mentor. This study suggests adopting a systematic approach to developing the mentoring programme, consolidating it with clear manuals to guide mentors and protégés, and a reward system to recognise contributions and achievements.

Table 26. *Exogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI*

Context	Context characteristics	Findings	Organisational implications for: Explicit EI	Implicit EI
Social enterprise	Mission duality	Complex decisionmaking	HR recruitment strategies	
	Social purpose	Source of satisfaction and meaning, driver of engagement		Internal stakeholder engagement to create social value and stakeholder value
	Societal demands, scepticism	Risk of perception of windowdressing – need for ethical brand representation		Clear, consistent, frequent communication of organisation's social purpose for internal-external branding alignment
Social initiative	Learning-training organisation	Experienced employees become mentors	HR recruitment strategies Systematic mentoring programme Clear codes of ethics and handbooks	Reward system to acknowledge contributions and achievements

6.3 Towards an ethical organisation

From this study, it has become apparent that ethical behaviour embodies endogenous and exogenous behaviours, with the former referring to ethical behaviour within the workplace and the latter referring to behaviour associated with the social purpose of the organisation and how internal stakeholders contribute to that purpose and represent the brand. Promoting endogenous ethical behaviour aims to develop an ethical workplace, whilst promoting exogenous ethical behaviour aims to develop an ethical purpose, and an ethical organisation is the confluence of ethical workplace and ethical purpose. As revealed in *6.1 Towards an ethical workplace* and in *6.2 Towards an ethical purpose*, the institutionalisation of ethics in pursuit of an ethical workplace and purpose has several implications (see *Table 27. Endogenous and exogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI*). This finding advances knowledge about whether social enterprises are inherently ethical. Social value creation is a prerequisite of social entrepreneurship (Chell *et al.*, 2016, p. 620). This study contends that, within the realm of stakeholder theory, the value creation sought should include both that for social purpose and that for internal stakeholders.

Table 27. Endogenous and exogenous ethical behaviour - implications for EI

Explicit EI	Human resources recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attitude (three forms of empathy, prosocial orientation, candid communication) - Mentoring experience - Ability to manage mentor-protégé team - Ability to manage dual mission
	Human resources training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic job rotation programme (mutuality/reciprocity) - Systematic mentoring programme (hospitality training programme)
	Explicit codes of ethics and handbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guidelines job rotation - Guidelines mentoring programme - Guidelines daily operations (autonomy)
Implicit EI	Organisational communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multidirectional candid communication (individual-organisational alignment) - Consistent, frequent, open communication (internal-external brand alignment)
	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ethical leadership style (leading by example, open communication, empowerment) - Support mentoring programme - Support dual mission
	Reward system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated approach: reward ethical behaviour towards guests and towards team members - Reward job rotation contributions and achievements - Reward mentoring contributions and achievements

Given the specificities and pressures of the hospitality industry and the complexities and pressures of social enterprises, starting and running a social enterprise in the hospitality industry is a complex undertaking. Entrepreneurs must pursue strategies to maximise profits in order to ensure the survival of the enterprise and create social value. In view of this, entrepreneurs should realise that such an endeavour cannot be achieved without the support of internal stakeholders. This study therefore suggests that companies engage internal stakeholders to facilitate individual and organisational alignment of values and expectations. This can enhance mutuality and reciprocity in making contributions to the team and the organisation's purpose. An internal stakeholder orientation can help entrepreneurs better understand stakeholder expectations and needs to support the team and the organisation. Furthermore, stakeholder engagement may facilitate value creation for the social purpose, the organisation, and internal stakeholders.

7 CONCLUSION

7.1 Overall aim, objectives, and research gap

The overall aim of this study was to comprehend the meanings of ethical behaviour and the implications for EI in a social enterprise hotel. Framed within a social constructionist epistemology and a normative stakeholder and ethical decisionmaking theories paradigm, this study adopted an embedded single-case study design and took an internal stakeholder approach. To achieve the overall aim, this study sought to 1) understand the meanings internal stakeholders ascribe to ethical behaviour; 2) understand internal stakeholders' perceptions of EI; and 3) explore the implications of these meanings and perceptions for organisations that seek to institutionalise ethics (practical and theoretical implications are discussed in more detail in the following section [7.2 Practical and theoretical implications](#)).

1) This study identified six recurring themes for ethical behaviour: *prosocial teamwork, multidirectional candid communications, understanding differences, the organisation's social purpose, brand representation, and the tricky ideal-practice dilemma*. Findings have shed light on dilemmas and dichotomous aspects of ethical behaviour. Taken together, these results have provided insights into the diversity of meanings of ethical behaviour and the complexity underlying consistent ethical behaviour. With respect to ethical behaviour, one of the key findings of this study is that ethical behaviour contributes to achieving an ethical workplace and an ethical purpose; and it is the achievement of both that constitutes an ethical organisation.

2) In contrast to previous research that indicated that only implicit EI is associated with job satisfaction, this study found that both implicit and explicit EI are sources of job satisfaction and motivation for ethical behaviour, provided that implicit and explicit EI are aligned. Implicit EI, such as organisational culture and leadership style, must reflect the organisation's explicit ethical standards. When aligned, both approaches to EI legitimise and reinforce each other.

3) In terms of organisational implications, this study found that the common denominators for EI are alignment and value creation. Firstly, institutionalising ethics with the purpose of promoting an ethical workplace, individual-organisational alignment is about harmonising heterogeneous values and goals rather than creating uniform values and goals. Consistent with stakeholder theory, employees are treated as individuals each in their own right. Secondly, institutionalising ethics with the purpose of promoting an ethical purpose, internal-external brand alignment aims to create brand homogeneity within and outside the workplace. Thirdly, implicit-explicit EI alignment aims to achieve consistency between explicit standards and implicit organisational culture to strengthen EI effectiveness and legitimacy. These three forms of alignment serve to create value for the organisation and its internal and external stakeholders.

This study has contributed towards narrowing the research gaps identified by Myung (2018), calling for further research on ethical behaviour and ethical decisionmaking in the hospitality industry context. This research has also contributed towards addressing the need for further stakeholder-related research in the fields of business ethics (Köseoglu *et al.*, 2016) and hospitality (Barakat and Wada, 2021).

7.2 Practical and theoretical implications

In addition to capturing the diversity of meanings attributed to ethical behaviour, the main findings of this inquiry have highlighted several interrelated dichotomies: 1) formal-informal dimensions of ethical behaviour; 2) endogenous-exogenous aspects of ethical behaviour; 3) complementarity of implicit-explicit EI; 4) social-business visions. In the context of this particular case, findings have pointed to the potential value of three types of alignment: 1) individual-organisational alignment of values, goals, needs, and expectations; 2) internal-external branding alignment; and 3) implicit-explicit EI alignment.

The findings suggest that, in this case study, ethical behaviour is associated with prosocial teamwork, multidirectional candid communication, and three forms of empathy (affective, cognitive, and ethnocultural). These attitudinal aspects appear related to soft skills that hospitality employers tend to prefer over technical skills (Sisson and Adams, 2013; Pranić, Pivčević and Praničević, 2021). As evidenced in the

literature review, the hospitality industry suffers from severe skills deficits, partly due to curricular gaps (English, Maton and Walker, 2007; Hearn, Devine and Baum, 2007; Lolli, 2013).

Practical implications: Firstly, as discussed in Chapter [6 Organisational implications](#), findings may offer insights for the organisation's human resources managers in deploying recruitment and training strategies by developing soft skills selection criteria and training programmes. Secondly, these findings may inform hospitality educational institutions on revising hospitality curricula to develop industry-relevant soft skills. Thirdly, these findings support the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 Target 4.4, which aims to ensure Relevant Skills for Decent Work (UNESCO, 2016).

Theoretical implications: Prior studies have highlighted the importance of soft skills in the hospitality industry, which, similar to the findings of this study, often relate to teamwork and communication skills (Hai-Yan and Baum, 2006; Sisson and Adams, 2013; Weber *et al.*, 2013). This study supports and expands the findings on the role of teamwork and communication by distinguishing five dimensions of prosocial teamwork (see [Figure 6. Theme & subthemes - Prosocial teamwork](#)) and five dimensions of multilateral candid communication (see [Figure 7. Theme & subthemes - Multidirectional candid communication](#)) that are associated with ethical behaviour. These findings have contributed to the understanding of the role of communication and teamwork in social enterprise hotels seeking to institutionalise ethics. Further findings from this study have expanded the literature on the role of soft skills in the social enterprise hotel sector by recognising how three forms of empathy (cognitive, affective, and ethnocultural) play a critical role in understanding differences related to cultural background, level of work experience, and work-related responsibilities.

Whilst the formal dimension of ethical behaviour is associated with the development of mutual understanding of the values, goals, and expectations of the organisation and internal stakeholders, the informal dimension relates to the development of social cohesion within a team. These findings have practical implications for social enterprise hotel leaders interested in formulating EI approaches that contribute to individual and organisational alignment by addressing formal and informal dimensions of ethical behaviour. In an effort to develop an ethical workplace, decisionmakers in social enterprise hotels are informed about the importance of both

formal and informal aspects of ethical behaviour in prosocial teamwork and can benefit from fostering a climate of social cohesion, mutuality, and reciprocity.

The distinction between endogenous and exogenous ethical behaviour, whilst related, allows for a more nuanced understanding of different types of ethical behaviour, potentially informing context-specific decisionmaking on institutionalising ethics. Promoting endogenous ethical behaviour is about promoting an ethical workplace, whilst exogenous ethical behaviour is related to the ethical representation of the brand towards external stakeholders in order to develop an ethical purpose. In both cases, the findings inform theory about the value of alignment, with endogenous ethical behaviour being promoted through individual and organisational alignment, and exogenous ethical behaviour being enhanced when organisations pursue internal and external brand alignment. It is important to note that the purpose of alignment is not to create homogeneous values or goals, but rather to harmonise heterogeneous values and goals. Therefore, three forms of empathy are important to understand different perspectives and to show consideration for different values and cultures. This finding expands knowledge on approaches to institutionalising ethics by shedding light on the role of integrating alignment initiatives.

The complementarity of implicit and explicit EI expands the literature on EI. Previous research has generally found that only implicit EI is associated with job satisfaction, quality of work life, employee engagement, and esprit de corps (Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010; Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2010; Marta *et al.*, 2013; D.-J. Lee *et al.*, 2018). However, in this study implicit and explicit approaches to EI were found to reinforce each other, on the premise that they are aligned. Whilst explicit EI serves to clarify what constitutes ethical behaviour, it is implicit EI that legitimises the explicit initiatives, as organisational culture and leaders must reflect the explicit policies. These contradicting findings may be explained by the differences in samples and contexts. Previous studies have typically involved human resources and marketing managers from a mix of industries, whereas this study was contextualised in a learning-training organisation and involved participants from three hierarchical levels in frontline and backline departments. Thus, this study has broadened the knowledge of approaches to and impacts of institutionalising ethics in terms of context and hierarchical levels.

Whilst previous research has tended to examine EI outcomes by assessing the effects of EI on quality of work life, esprit de corps, organisational commitment, or job satisfaction (Singhapakdi and Vitell, 2007; Vitell and Singhapakdi, 2008; Koonmee *et al.*, 2010; Singhapakdi *et al.*, 2010; Marta *et al.*, 2013; D.-J. Lee *et al.*, 2018), this study adopted an inductive approach by first assessing internal stakeholders' understanding of ethical behaviour as an input to the institutionalisation of ethics. Moreover, prior studies were predominantly quantitative and examined managers' perspectives. In contrast, this study adopted a qualitative embedded single-case study design that included respondents from three organisational hierarchical levels in backline and frontline departments. These findings have several methodological implications. Firstly, the inductive approach enriched the theory by developing understanding of the antecedents of EI rather than the outcomes. Secondly, the inclusion of perspectives from multiple hierarchical levels and departments has led to a more holistic understanding of ethical behaviour and how these perspectives may affect EI approaches. Thirdly, given the importance of context in the field of ethics and ethical decisionmaking (Palazzo, Krings and Hoffrage, 2012), a qualitative embedded case-study design allowed the study to remain in context to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of an organisation's context within which the phenomenon of EI is embedded.

This study combined ethical decisionmaking theory and normative stakeholder theory as a theoretical framework. Normative stakeholder theory aims to understand (Ferrell and Ferrell, 2008) and balance stakeholder interests (Reynolds, Schultz and Hekman, 2006) and build ethical relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders (Greenwood and Freeman, 2011). By institutionalising ethics and managing stakeholder interests, social enterprise hotel leaders become central figures in (ethical) decisionmaking. In view of this, ethical decisionmaking theory provided the framework for analysing the data, focusing on factors that affect ethical decisionmaking and how decisionmaking affects stakeholders. This approach has significant theoretical implications for the understanding of institutionalising ethics in social enterprises in the hotel sector. Combining ethical decisionmaking and stakeholder theories has expanded theory by providing an integrative framework for developing ethical decisionmaking processes for the purpose of building ethical relationships with stakeholders and creating value for the organisation as well as its stakeholders.

Building upon Simon's (1976, p. xlviii) assertion that organisations can be understood in terms of their decisionmaking processes, this study argues that ethical organisations can be understood in terms of their ethical decisionmaking processes and stakeholder value creation.

7.3 Contributions and originality

This research makes a fivefold contribution to the body of knowledge:

- 1) This study enhances understanding of EI by demonstrating the complementary roles of implicit and explicit EI, provided they are aligned. Findings reveal that, when aligned, implicit and explicit EI relate to beneficial outcomes like job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and prosocial teamwork. Whereas, when misaligned, explicit EI may be perceived as windowdressing. Overall, this research provides a more nuanced perspective on implicit and explicit EI as interconnected and on establishing alignment as crucial for EI to be legitimised.
- 2) This study makes several valuable contributions to the body of knowledge on multidirectional candid communication and its role in ethical behaviour. The identification of five distinct dimensions of multidirectional candid communication – Transparency, Listening, Multidirectional Communication, Interdepartmental Communication, Organisational Communication – provides greater conceptual clarity. The empirical findings demonstrating the interrelation between multidirectional candid communication and ethical behaviour also advance theoretical understanding of how listening, transparency, multidirectional, interdepartmental, and organisational communication can foster ethical behaviour in the workplace. Overall, this study provides evidence that multidirectional candid communication is a critical soft skill linked to ethical behaviour.
- 3) This research also makes substantive contributions to knowledge on prosocial teamwork and its connections to ethical behaviour. By identifying five dimensions of prosocial teamwork – Contagiousness, Solidarity, Integrity, Autonomy, Mutuality & Reciprocity – this study offers a detailed framework for understanding the concept of prosocial teamwork. By establishing teamwork as multidimensional and highlighting its prosocial qualities, this research provides evidence that prosocial forms of teamwork are key drivers of ethical behaviour.

- 4) This study expands theoretical knowledge by delineating three forms of empathy associated with ethical behaviour: affective, cognitive, and ethnocultural. The identification of distinct components of empathy provides greater specificity to the concept. The empirical findings linking all three forms of empathy to ethical behaviour also provide a fuller picture of how multifaceted empathy relate to ethical behaviour. Overall, this study deepens understanding of empathy and its links to ethics.
- 5) This study integrates normative stakeholder and ethical decisionmaking theories as a theoretical framework for developing ethical decisionmaking processes with the purpose of creating value for organisations and stakeholders. By interweaving ethical decisionmaking with stakeholder value creation, this research generates new insights into how to align ethical decisionmaking with stakeholder interests.

In sum, this research makes important contributions to knowledge across multiple domains, advancing theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence on ethics institutionalisation, communication, teamwork, empathy, and their relationships to ethical behaviour and stakeholder value creation. The originality of this study is twofold. Firstly, an inductive approach to the study of EI was adopted, which yielded new insights into the antecedents of EI. Secondly, informants were regarded as individual stakeholders each in their own right rather than grouped into generic hierarchical categories, which led to a more holistic understanding of ethical behaviour and EI.

7.4 Further research

Given the importance of (multi)stakeholderism (Gleckman, 2018; Dodds, 2019), further research could explore the phenomenon by including internal and external stakeholders, such as owners, shareholders, business partners, suppliers, and guests. Such an approach may provide new insights and yield a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of stakeholderism in the context of EI.

Building upon the findings of this embedded single-case study, which was a business unit part of a hotel group, further research is suggested by using a hospitality group as a case study that includes the headquarters and business units (individual hotels part of the group), where the subunits of analysis are the hospitality group, the

headquarters, and the business unit. Findings may shed new light on complexities underlying group-level alignment when it comes to institutionalise ethics.

To gain a more holistic understanding of EI at the industry level, further research could be conducted by undertaking comparative studies between private- or family-owned organisations, social enterprises, and multinational corporations. Such approach may expand knowledge on the different perceptions of and approaches to EI.

8

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

8.1 Sample composition

Participants are predominantly female respondents (seven out of nine respondents are female), whilst both genders are relatively evenly distributed in the organisation's workforce (55% male and 45% female), resulting in an underrepresentation of male respondents. The reason for this limitation is that the workforce was placed on furlough during the coronavirus pandemic and its associated closures, resulting in the researcher having to rely on the gatekeeper to contact and recruit participants. Nonetheless, the research findings provide valuable indications of the different perspectives.

8.2 Linguistic and cultural diversity

Seven of the nine respondents are non-native English speakers. Including the researcher, eight nationalities from three continents are represented. Interviewing participants whose native language is not English may become a barrier. Though the researcher is also a non-native English speaker, she is fluent in English, and her international work experience has exposed her to cultural diversity, which has allowed her to develop an intercultural sensitivity, mitigating the negative effect of the language barrier (see [Error! Reference source not found. Error! Reference source not found.](#)).

8.3 Stakeholders

In light of Jenkins' (2001) finding: *"The gap between business profit and societal ethical demands increases when the codes are limited to specific internal issues rather than based on [external] perspectives. That short-sightedness in managers provokes confusion among employees, limiting the efficiency of the codes themselves"* (in Robina-Ramírez, Isabel Sánchez-Hernández and Díaz-Caro, 2021, p. 633). Though

including perspectives from external stakeholders such as guests or business partners may have enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the meanings and impact of EI, it would have substantially increased the risk of compromising the focal firm's anonymity. As a result, the perspectives were limited to internal ones and excluded the use of data from external stakeholders.

8.4 Findings transferability

As qualitative research and ethical matters are deeply contextualised, the transferability of the research findings is limited to similar contexts, namely social enterprises in the hotel sector. A broader scope may have been depicted by expanding the research and conducting a case study of the hotel group (business group) rather than one of the group's hotels (business unit). However, including more business units would have increased the risk of anonymity breach. Moreover, rather than a broad contribution, the findings of this research offer an original contribution to knowledge on ethics institutionalisation by providing an in-depth and reflexive analysis.

8.5 Anonymity

A limitation stems from the organisation's decision to remain anonymous. Whilst anonymity allowed participants to feel safe to share their personal experiences, it also restricted the researcher from using a variety of secondary data sources at the risk of disclosing the identity of the organisation. This research endeavoured to ensure both internal and external anonymity. Although most participants gave their consent to be identified in the study and in the dissemination of research findings, it was considered that the identification of some participants could compromise the anonymity of the organisation and that of participants who did not give their consent. This study also attempted to anonymise locations (see Anonymisation), which could lead to decontextualisation and, thus, limit the scope for analysis (Nespor, 2000, p. 562; Saunders, Kitzinger and Kitzinger, 2015, p. 8).

9

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10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A. Articles yielded: keyword searches with(out) *“hospitality”*

Digital library	Keyword searches			
	Business ethics		Ethics institutionalisation	
	Without “hospitality”	With “hospitality”	Without “hospitality”	With “hospitality”
EBSCOhost COMPLETE		123	758	2
Emerald Insight	32 292	2 057	1 529	50
JSTOR	86 114	2 477	583	26
	524	661	583	78

(numbers in table represent the number of articles from academic and peer-reviewed journals, retrieved 4 December 2018)

10.2 Appendix B. Semistructured open-ended interview questions

Job satisfaction:

1. What aspects are most satisfying to you about your work?
2. What are your primary sources of frustrations or dissatisfaction?

Ethical behaviour:

3. What does ethical behaviour mean to you?
4. Broadly speaking, can you give some examples of ethical behaviour?
5. Broadly speaking, can you give some examples of unethical behaviour?
6. How does [Case Study Hotel] communicate the importance of ethical behaviour in the workplace?
7. What are your thoughts on rewarding ethical behaviour?
8. What are your thoughts on punishing unethical behaviour?
9. Whose responsibility do you think it is to encourage ethical behaviour at work?
10. How responsible do you feel about encouraging ethical behaviour amongst employees, managers, and guests?
11. What ethical qualities and behaviours do you feel are essential in this industry?

Ethics institutionalisation:

12. In which way(s) do you think explicit EI (i.e., formal ethical standards: ethics training programmes, ethics codes, ethics committee) impacts job satisfaction?
13. In which way(s) do you think implicit EI (i.e., reflected in organisational culture, leadership style) impacts job satisfaction?
14. In which way(s) do you think explicit EI (i.e., formal ethical standards: ethics training programmes, ethics codes, ethics committee) impacts ethical behaviour?
15. In which way(s) do you think implicit EI (i.e., reflected in organisational culture, leadership style) impacts ethical behaviour?

10.3 Appendix C. Participant information sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Research Integrity

The University adheres to its responsibility to promote and support the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research; observing the appropriate ethical, legal, and professional frameworks.

The University is committed to preserving your dignity, rights, safety, and wellbeing and as such it is a mandatory requirement of the University that formal ethical approval, from the appropriate Research Ethics Committee, is granted before research with human participants, human data, personal and/or sensitive data, or non-human animal commences.

The purpose of this Participant Information Sheet is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this research project.

Project title

“An Embedded Case Study on the Effects of Ethics Institutionalisation in the Hospitality Industry: A Multistakeholder Approach”.

Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

Name: Dr Raoul Bianchi

Contact address:

School of Business and Law
University of East London
Docklands Campus, University Way
London E16 2RD

UEL email address: r.bianchi@uel.ac.uk

Student researcher

Name: Ms Janice Lalu

Contact address:

School of Business and Law
University of East London
Docklands Campus, University Way
London E16 2RD

UEL email address: u1732185@uel.ac.uk



Project description

This research will take a multistakeholder approach to investigate the effects of ethics institutionalisation (EI) in organisations in the context of the hospitality industry. More particularly, the object of this study is to explore the optimal effects of EI on stakeholders, and on the organisation's performance. This study seeks your comments and perspectives on 1) the role of ethics in hospitality organisations and 2) the relation between ethical decisionmaking and business performance.

Risk

The project has no risk potential.

Confidentiality and anonymisation

- Confidentiality of all participants will be respected and maintained. Data will be anonymised during the transcription process (i.e., names of participants will be codified during the data collection). Transcripts will be securely and anonymously stored.
- Participants **will** be anonymised in publications that arise from the research.
- Participants **will not** have the option of being identified in the research project and dissemination of research findings and / or publication.
- Data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection and Data Management Policies'

Data security

- The data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy.
- The data **will** be stored safely on a password protected computer.
- The raw data **will not** be shared with individuals outside of the research team.
- Participants **will** be audio and/or video recorded.

Third-party permission

The project **does not include** the involvement of an external organisation or institution.

Disclaimer

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time during the research. Should you choose to withdraw from the research project you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. Please note, that your data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis, however after this point it may not be possible.



If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the research in which you are being asked to participate, please contact:

Catherine Hitchens, Research Integrity and Ethics Manager, Graduate School, EB 1.43

University of East London, Docklands Campus, London, E16 2RD

Telephone: 020 8223 6683. Email: researchethics@uel.ac.uk.

For general enquiries about the research project, please contact the Principal Investigator on the contact details at the top of this sheet.

10.4 Appendix D. Participant consent form



Consent to Participate in a Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants

Title of proposed research project: *“An Embedded Case Study on the Effects of Ethics Institutionalisation in the Hospitality Industry: A Multistakeholder Approach”*.

Principal Investigator/Director of Studies

Name: Dr Raoul Bianchi

Contact address:

School of Business and Law
University of East London
Docklands Campus, University Way
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UEL email address: r.bianchi@uel.ac.uk

Student researcher

Name: Ms Janice Lalu

Contact address:

School of Business and Law
University of East London
Docklands Campus, University Way
London E16 2RD

UEL email address: u1732185@uel.ac.uk

	YES	NO
I have read the Participant Information Sheet relating to the above research project in which I have been asked to participate and I have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research project have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.		
I consent to my participation being audio or video recorded.		
I understand that my involvement in this project, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential as far as possible. Only the researchers involved in the research project and will have access to the data.		
I understand that maintaining strict confidentiality is subject to limitations if the sample size is small or focus groups are used and that this may have implications for confidentiality/anonymity.		



Where possible, participants' confidentiality will be maintained unless a disclosure is made that indicates that the participant or someone else is at serious risk of harm. Such disclosures may be reported to the relevant authority.		
Participants will be anonymised in publications that arise from the research. I give my permission for anonymized quotes from my responses to be used in publications resulting from the project.		
The results will be disseminated. Dissertation / Thesis, Other (please specify) I give my permission to be identified in the study and dissemination of research findings and / or publications resulting from the project.		
I give my permission for the research team to use the data I have provided in future research.		
I give my permission to be contacted by the research team regarding participation in future research projects.		
It has been explained to me what will happen once the research project has been completed.		
I understand that my participation in this research project is entirely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw at any time during the research without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give a reason. I understand that my data can be withdrawn up to the point of data analysis and that after this point it may not be possible.		
I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the research project which has been fully explained to me and for the information obtained to be used in relevant research publications.		

Participant's Name

.....

Participant's Signature

.....

Principal Investigator's Name

Dr Raoul Bianchi

Principal Investigator's Signature

.....

Date:

.....

10.5 Appendix E. Ethical clearance



Dear Janice

Application ID: ETH1920-0146

Project title: Evaluating the effects of ethics institutionalisation in the hospitality industry: a multiperspective approach

Lead researcher: Ms Janice Lalu

Your application to University Research Ethics Sub-Committee was considered on the 8th of October 2020.

The decision is: **Approved**

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee (URES) has taken the decision that all postgraduate research student and staff research projects that include face-to-face participant interactions, should cease to use this method of data collection, for example, in person participant interviews or focus groups. Researchers must consider if they can adapt their research project to conduct participant interactions remotely. The University supports Microsoft Teams for remote work. New research projects and continuing research projects must not recruit participants using face-to-face interactions and all data collection should occur remotely. These regulations should be followed on your research until national restrictions regarding Covid-19 are lifted. For further information please visit the Public Health website page <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 2 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the secretary for the University Research Ethics Sub-Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research project you must complete [An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application](#).

The approval of the proposed research applies to the following research site.

Research site: online

Principal Investigator / Local Collaborator: Ms Janice Lalu

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice for Research and the Code of Practice for Research Ethics](#) is adhered to.

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research project should be reported using the University's form for [Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction](#).

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the research projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Research Ethics Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

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10.6 Appendix F. Ethical clearance – title change



Dear Janice,

Application ID: ETH2223-0073

Original application ID: ETH1920-0146

Project title: Making hospitality about hospitableness – an internal stakeholder approach to the evaluation of meanings of ethical behaviour and implications for ethics institutionalisation in the social enterprise hotel sector

Lead researcher: Ms Janice Lalu

Your application to Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee (EISC) was considered on the 21st December 2022.

The decision is: **Approved**

The Committee's response is based on the protocol described in the application form and supporting documentation.

Your project has received ethical approval for 4 years from the approval date.

If you have any questions regarding this application please contact your supervisor or the administrator for the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee.

Approval has been given for the submitted application only and the research must be conducted accordingly.

Should you wish to make any changes in connection with this research/consultancy project you must complete 'An application for approval of an amendment to an existing application'.

Approval is given on the understanding that the [UEL Code of Practice for Research](#) and the [Code of Practice for Research Ethics](#) is adhered to.

Any adverse events or reactions that occur in connection with this research/consultancy project should be reported using the University's form for [Reporting an Adverse/Serious Adverse Event/Reaction](#).

The University will periodically audit a random sample of approved applications for ethical approval, to ensure that the projects are conducted in compliance with the consent given by the Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee and to the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

Please note, it is your responsibility to retain this letter for your records.

With the Committee's best wishes for the success of the project.

Yours sincerely,

Fernanda Pereira Da Silva

Administrative Officer for Research Governance

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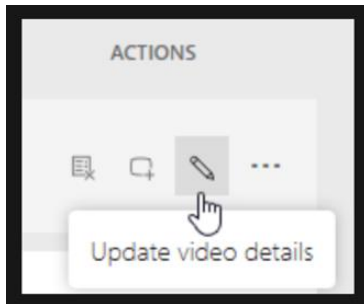
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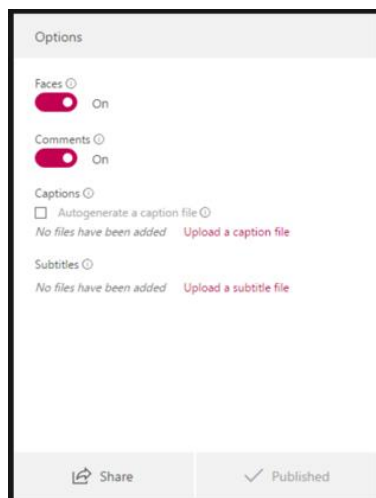
10.7 Appendix G. Export and clean transcripts

Upload a subtitle or caption file to an existing video:

- In [Stream](#), find the video to edit (e.g., through [My videos](#), [My channels](#), [My groups](#) or [Browse](#))
- Click the pencil icon to Update video details:



- In the Options window, upload Subtitles and Captions by selecting the required language and uploading the required file:

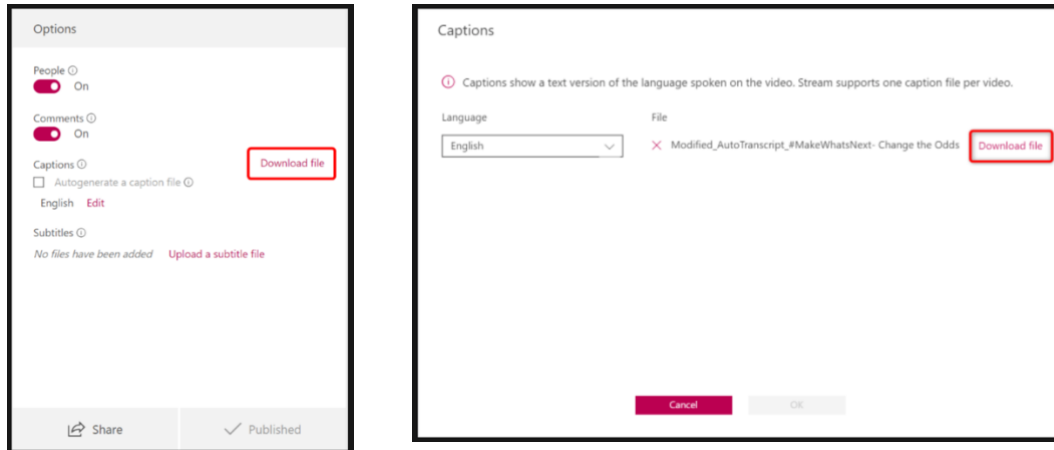


View subtitles or captions:

Subtitles and captions can be viewed with the video player on the [playback page](#)

Download subtitles or captions:

After uploading a subtitle or captions file, or autogenerated a caption file, download the WebVTT file from the Update video details page.



Edit captions:


To edit the autogenerated transcript/caption, download the caption file and edit it in a text editor before uploading it back to Stream, or edit the transcript directly in Microsoft Stream in the [transcript window](#).

Clean the transcripts:

To get a copy of a video's transcript without time codes, metadata, and extra lines, use a web utility to extract the transcript text from the downloaded VTT file.

Web utility: [Microsoft Stream transcript VTT file cleaner](#)

10.8 Appendix H. Ethical clearance – title change (post-viva)



**University of
East London**
Pioneering Futures Since 1898

[Change project title - Ms Janice Lalu](#)

The Business and Law Research Degrees Sub-Committee on behalf of the Impact and Innovation Committee has considered your request. The decision is:

Approved

Your new thesis title is confirmed as follows:

Old thesis title: Making hospitality about hospitableness – an internal stakeholder approach to the evaluation of meanings of ethical behaviour and implications for ethics institutionalisation in the social enterprise hotel sector

New thesis title: An internal stakeholder approach to the evaluation of ethical behaviour in a social enterprise hotel

Your registration period remains unchanged.

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