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Dear Matthew,

Unlike a passage for conveying my gratitude, I would like to write a timed letter so if you are reading this from many years later, I could remind you some of the best human beings you have met during your journey of the Honours Thesis.

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Matthew, if you could reboot your life, will you still live the life that you're living now? For now, my answer is a definite yes and I hope by the time you read this. You will give the same answer.

Best wishes,

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Abstract

Deception has been a taboo in the hospitality industry as the public expects all service providers to be sincere and genuine. However, deception is inevitable in human interaction. When a hotel staff filters away some unpleasant information in order to not upset the guests, deception is already in practice.

Being well-researched in other disciplines, deception in guest services has never been properly studied by previous scholars. As such, this research aims to break the ground and launch a new path in the academia. The main objectives of which are to examine the effectiveness of deception in guest services, the rationales of practising so, the perceived ethicality from the perspective of hospitality employees, and thereby offer insights for both operational and managerial staff on how to deal with deception.

Upon completion of reviewing literature from other disciplines as a foundation to discuss the findings from the data collection, 20 hospitality frontline employees from different industries were interviewed.

The results generated were captivating and it is found that unlike other disciplines, deception in the hospitality industry has its own unique features. Implications and recommendations for practitioners are also offered in the end of the paper.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

‘I did not commit such a crime.’ Defended by a burglar in the Court of Final Appeal. ***A lie.*** ‘You look gorgeous in this pastel dress, madam.’ Complimented by a saleslady who believes the opposite in an apparel shop. ***A lie.*** ‘Your mummy has travelled far far away.’ Stuttered by a father to his 5-year-old son, whose mother has just passed away from lung cancer. ***A lie.***

Every day, humans lie under various contexts with different intentions (DePaulo, Kashy, Kirkendol, Wyer, & Epstein, 1996). Indeed, even faking a smile is considered a lie (Ekman, Friesen, & O'Sullivan, 1988). Theoretically, this behaviour contradicts a highly desirable social value - honesty - which has been one of the major virtues being universally and constantly emphasised (Shulman, 2007). From kindergarten lessons to international corporate workshops, honesty remains to one of the most frequently reinforced ethical topics. The deceptive behaviour is very often associated with misconducts by the general public. Examples provided in academia include covering up infidelity in a romantic relationship (Brewer & Abell, 2015), cheating on an examination (Azizli et al., 2016) or simply being innately Machiavellian (Geis & Moon, 1981).

Despite the perceived unethicity on distorting the truth, the intentions behind the behaviour arouse a vast interest for scholars. Instead of a traditional view towards deception, which an individual purposely manipulates the factual information to gain personal benefits, more in-depth ideas and justifying assertions, such as white lies and strategic deceptions, are proposed over the years. In contrast to the opposing party, another set of scholars support deception as an altruistic act or a polite manner to avoid conflicts or hurt one's feeling (Camden, Motley, & Wilson,

1984; DePaulo et al., 1996; Levine & Schweitzer, 2015).

Besides its commonness in casual conversations amongst friends and families, deception is also widely adopted in the business world (DePaulo et al., 1996). Amongst different industries, hospitality - an industry with unique characteristics - the application of deception is especially ubiquitous (Elliott, 2011).

For decades, travelling has been a way for people to acquire positive psychological experience (Cohen, 1972; Dann, 1977; Hsu, Cai, & Wong 2007; Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, & Huan, 2015; Iso-Ahola, 1983; Plog, 1974), which generally could be happiness, contentment, satisfaction, delight, optimism and mental wellness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Even for those who do not travel primarily for enjoyment such like business travellers, a pleasant and smooth experience is still highly expected (Chu & Choi, 2000; Xue & Cox, 2008).

In sight of the soaring desire for a quality travel experience (Jayawardena, McMillan, Pantin, Taller, & Willie, 2013), the standard of hospitality has been correspondingly escalating from selling basic commodities such as hotel beds and flight seats, to providing hospitable service (Fuchs, 1968), further to staging memorable experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), until the most recent transforming their experience (Gilmore & Pine II, 2002; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). That is, when people travel nowadays, everyone wishes to have a utopian journey, where errors and service failures do not exist. Nonetheless, reality is not always perfect. Hence, in order to create such a blissful illusion for guests, the service staff sometimes would choose to exaggerate, conceal or understate a truth.

For instance, a guest service agent may say to a guest who is upgraded to a suite solely due to hotel overbooked situation. *“Ms. Sánchez we know you have*

travelled far away from Spain and would only stay for a night. In that case we would like to upgrade your room to our best suite on complimentary basis so that you could enjoy your short time with us.” In a usual sense, any guest hearing this positive message would immediately form a favourable impression towards the hotel, which directly enhances their travel experience.

Besides, when a staff would like to recover a failed service in order not to irritate a carnival visitor who has been queueing up for a ride which was shortly suspended due a technical failure, he or she might express that, *“Ladies and gentleman, please accept our sincere apologies as there was a little puppy in the track. Now everything has resumed normal.”* However, this intention may raise ethical questions for hospitality practitioners.

In case of a demanding guest, deception may be employed to manage the guest’s mood while politely turning down the unreasonable requests. For that, an airport ground staff may deal with an economy class passenger who fiercely insists to get a free upgrade because of his 15th time flying with the airline by stating *“Mr. Mercado, we would like to express our deep gratitude on your loyalty but today both business and first classes are all full. How about a complimentary cocktail in our lounge?”* In this way, the degree of harshness of the rejection shrinks.

In addition to the travel experience manipulation, the usage of deception also attributes to the special relationship required with guests. In hospitality field, neither being too passionate nor too indifferent would be beneficial (Mattson, 2010; Knight, 2016). Thus, relationships with guests should be maintained at a sense of ‘friendly and professional acquaintance’, where scholars (Bell & DePaulo, 1996) believe that lying than telling the truth is more preferable at this early stage of a relationship.

Even though deception is perhaps an open secret in hospitality industry, the behaviour still needs to be carefully studied to foster a healthy evolution of service culture. On one hand, a handsome amount of fresh workers may not know what would be the appropriate scenarios for bending the truth, resulting in unintentionally offending guests or worsening whose travel experience. On the other hand, the managerial staff may be confused about to what degree should deception in hospitality be banned, accepted and welcomed.

Especially in Hong Kong, where hospitality and tourism is one of the major economic pillars (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2015), there are over 270,000 local hospitality employees, which altogether accounts for 7.2% of the total employment (Tourism Commission, 2016). Beside, with the expected continuous growth of the local tourism industry, more hospitality corporates will expand their businesses. The Hong Kong Disneyland is finalising the new resort area, Disney Explorers Lodge, which is scheduled to be opened in 2017 (Hong Kong Disneyland, 2015). Plus, the Hong Kong International Airport has initiated the third-runway construction and the opening of Kai Tak Cruise Terminal in 2013 marked the future of cruise tourism in this Pearl of the Orient. All the above expansions denote a larger need of workforce in the hospitality sector in upcoming years. Thereupon, understanding the application of deception has become a more relevant work-related issue for hospitality practitioners.

As Spiers (2013) and Firestone (2013) indicated, constant lying would ultimately develop into habitual lying, where individuals might begin to deceive in a more serious sense. For example, a bakery shop assistant might manually reprint and lengthen the expiry date on plastic bread bags in order to clear inventory. The aggravated behaviour could eventually lead to a potential backfire as the service

receiver might react even more outrageously than usual sense when the deception is discovered. That is, when a service provider gradually learns that a problem could be resolved easily, at least in a temporary sense, through deceiving the message receiver, the tendency to intentionally misrepresent crucial information is likely to increase. Thereby, it is essential for both operational and managerial employees to recognise the equilibrium of deception for service delivery.

However, in spite of its strong relevance to the industry, the application of deception in guest services is barely researched previously in the academia, which the phenomenon might be explained by deception being a taboo in the industry as sincerity and genuineness are forever and always marketed to be the most basic elements in a service.

Therefore, to address the existing research gap and suggest directions for future research, this study carries the following objectives:

1. Examine the effectiveness of deceptive behaviour in guest services.
2. Explore the rationales behind deception of hospitality employees
3. Investigate the perceived ethicality by hospitality employees
4. Offer insights for operational staff on the appropriate contexts to adopt deception
5. Provide guidelines for managerial staff to better manage the deception issue in hospitality industry.

By applying the concept of deception previously researched in various disciplines, an industry-customised study could be initiated in regards to the effectiveness of and the rationales behind deception in hospitality context, as well as the perceived ethicality of employees. Overall, this paper contributes to the study of

deception from a hospitality perspective and give advice to both front liners and managerial staff.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Given the limited amount of research work dedicated to deception in hospitality, most current related studies were conducted in other specific disciplines, which generally include psychology, sociology, criminology, politics, journalism, medicine and economics (Azizli et al., 2016; Carson, 2010; Clementson, 2016; Logue, Book, Frosina, Huizinga, & Amos, 2015; Rockmann & Northcraft, 2008; Sethi, 2016; Shulman, 2007; Wanasika & Adler, 2011).

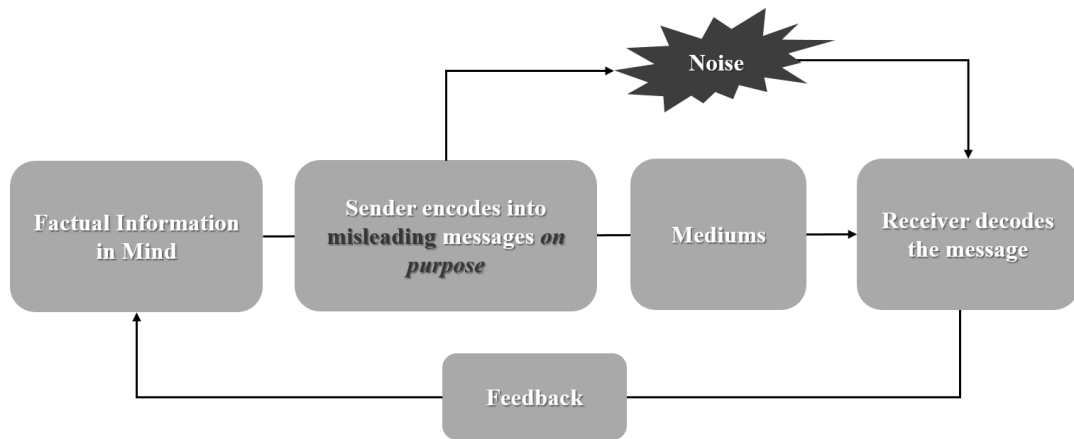
The terms ‘deception’, ‘lying’, ‘deceit’, ‘bluffing’ are used almost interchangeably by scholars. Nevertheless, each of the disciplines holds a different attitude towards deception in terms its ethicality and usefulness because the behaviour ranges from lying casually in everyday life, to deceiving professionally under unlawful circumstances. As such, substantial secondary data have been reviewed to lay a more solid foundation for discussing the deceptive acts in hospitality. In the following section, the types, concept, and ethicality of deception from the perspectives of various disciplines would be discussed.

2.1 Formulation and Types of Deception

By adopting the model of communication (Shannon, 1948), the process of deception could be better comprehended. When a person deceives, the message encoding process is deliberately done to convey inexact or non-factual information to the receiver, who would as a result interpret the factual information in the wrong way. The flowchart 1 below outlines the formulation of deception during communication, regardless of one-way or two-way.

Flowchart 1

Adapted Model of Communication by Shannon (1948) with Involvement of Deception



The complexity of deception can actually be decomposed into more distinctive types. DePaulo et al. (1996) have further studied and labelled the common lies into three kinds as follows:

I. Outright: A statement made by the liar is that completely opposite to the truth. An example would be ‘I attended the class’.

II. Exaggeration: Information purposely given which exceeds the fact. An example would be ‘The dress looks divinely on you’.

III. Subtle: Avoidance of relevant details to deliberately mislead. An example would be ‘I ate just a little bit of your cookies’.

2.2 The Concept & Ethicality of Deception in Different Disciplines

2.2.1 Economics:

Compared to other disciplines, deception in this field is generally viewed more negatively by researchers. Most cases studied are about an individual deceiving

to bring in more benefit or avoid loss for themselves (Gneezy, 2005; Holm, 2010). Becker (1968) claimed that the act of lying solely attributes to the intention to maximise monetary outcomes. On top of that, Grolleau, Kocher, and Sutan (2014) further discovered that people would also lie to avoid economic loss. The lopsided outlook perceived by many economists could attribute to the sensitivity of the industrial nature - profit maximisation - which results in deception being customarily deemed unethical accordingly.

2.2.2 Criminology:

In this area, most researches focus on suspects making false statements to mislead the police force and court judges, intending to flee from lawsuits (Logue et al., 2015). In comparison with other fields, most studies in criminology emphasise on detecting deception, which would vastly assist in criminal case investigation. Most researchers in this sector regard deception as a total misconduct (Azizli et al., 2016; Brewer, & Abell, 2015) as using deception to cover illegal acts is ordinarily perceived felonious.

In accordance with Hartwig, Granhag, and Strömwall (2007), when suspects know that they are to be interviewed, they will prepare their lies ahead. In such way, it is harder for detectives to spot the fake information. This complies with the finding from DePaulo et al. (2003), who claimed that the lies would be made more easily and comprehensive when there is more time for the deceivers to plan.

2.2.3 Social Psychology:

When it comes to deception, both sociologists and psychologists have very similar viewpoints and analyses since social interaction has a massive influence on the decision of deception. In these two social science disciplines, the topic is

explored in a more complex and comprehensive manner, whereby deception is classified into three major categories:

a. Self-serving Lies:

This type bears an intention to acquire benefit or avoid loss by purposely deceiving one or more message receivers (Abe, 2009). In terms of the degree of ethicality, self-serving lies are often rated very low by the general public as it is common for people to associate self-serving lies with ‘egocentricity’ and ‘selfishness’. For instance, a child lying to his mother about his failed exam grade in order to avoid potential punishment is considered an unethical self-serving lie. These lies are also identified as seriously toxic elements to interpersonal trust, which would impair human relationships (Boles, Croson, & Murnighan, 2000; Bok, 1978; Carr, 1968; Croson, Boles, & Murnighan., 2003; Ford, King, & Hollender, 1988; Tyler & Feldman, 2006; Schweitzer, Hershey, & Bradlow, 2006).

However, the ethicality of this type of lie should indeed be evaluated case by case. This is because apart from only lying in favour of themselves, there are also involuntary liars confronting unorthodox scenarios, where deception is perhaps the best solution. For example, an international movie star may lie about her travel plan to evade from paparazzi harassment.

In addition, particularly for self-serving lies, the degree of seriousness alters people’s acceptability. Dunbar et al. (2016) have studied that in most cases, lying in a small scale such as ‘I have brushed my teeth this morning’ to retain self-esteem, is understood and accepted by most people. In brief, self-serving lies often create more controversies than the following two types of lies.

b. Mutually-Beneficial Lies

As the term itself explains, this type of lies brings advantages or positive outcomes to both the deceiver and the person whom is lied to (Levine & Schweitzer, 2015). Such act is also often deployed by individuals to avoid conflicts and awkward situations when socialising. For instance, when a young lady asks her best friend if she cooks well, the friend would probably, out of politeness, say yes with the intention to not hurt her feeling and at the same time present herself as an ‘amiable friend’. In regards to acceptability, this harmony-oriented act is normally more welcome than the previous one (Dunbar et al., 2016), since shared-value for both the deceiver and receiver is created through the deception. Nonetheless, there could also be unethical scenarios involved, such as an accomplice pretends he has never met a theft as he has been offered half of the loot stolen.

c. Altruistic Lies

Broomfield, Robinson, E. J., and Robinson, W. P. (2002) and Talwar, Murphy, and Lee (2007) pointed out that ever since child stage, altruistic lies are used to serve as a socially polite etiquette. Understood as ‘White Lie’, this type of lie is made based on a virtuous intention of protecting the others from harm (Levine & Schweitzer, 2015; Sip et al., 2012) or offering interpersonal support (Goffman, 1955). As such, Levine and Schweitzer (2014) defined altruistic lies as ‘*untrue statements, which either have no effect or are hurtful to the liar, made to bring benefits to the recipient*’. Similar to mutually-beneficial lies, the altruistic lies are also often adopted to tactically deal with social occasions. For instance, a father would eat everything his little daughter cooks for him, even if the food quality is horrible in order to show support. In this case, the kind father is lying on altruistic basis. The acceptability of this type of lie is usually the highest amongst the three

major categories because altruism is favoured by most people, who actually could be the vested-interests in the circumstance.

Table 1

Summary of the Three Major Types of Lies Categorised in Social Psychology

	Self-serving Lies	Mutually-Beneficial Lies	Altruistic Lies
Benefited Party/ies	Deceiver	Deceiver and the Deceived	The Deceived
Intention	• Obtain Benefit • Avoid Loss • Protect Oneself	• Create Interpersonal Harmony • Foster a Win-Win Situation • Bribery	• Protect the deceived from negative feelings
General Impression	• Selfish • Inconsiderate	• Tactful • Harmonious	• Thoughtful • Virtuous
Example	A husband cheats on his wife.	A woman understates her friend's oversized body shape.	An ill daughter telling her elder mother she is feeling well.

Besides verbal lies, there is also an extensive coverage on nonverbal cues, which are recognised as critical success factors in deception formulation (Vrij, Meissner, & Kassin, 2015; Vrij, 2014; Zuckerman, DePaulo, & Rosenthal, 1981). Indeed, a mix of verbal and nonverbal signs in communication is an everyday practice. In the case of deception, when the message sender has purposely miscoded an idea, the nonverbal part should also be changed correspondingly.

Nonetheless, since deception is also a skill (Vasek, 1986), fresher liars may lie lamely both verbally and nonverbally, offering hints for deception detection. For example, most nervous liars deliberately seek eye contacts, trying to appear confident yet the deliberateness often stimulates suspicion from the message receiver (Mann et al., 2013). In other words, immature nonverbal cues could be a predominant contributor to deception failure, disregarding a proficiency in verbal lies (Vrij, Granhag, & Porter, 2010), which might cause greater dissatisfaction of the liar's counterpart.

2.2.4 Medicine:

Deception application in this industry raises numerous controversies with two major distinctive outlooks. In medical ethics, a dilemmatic issue is the battle between Autonomy versus Beneficence. Autonomy in clinical application refers the disclosure of all necessary information to patients to enable them to make their own decision; while Beneficence in medicine denotes the beneficial actions done for the patients, mostly for protecting their feelings (Dunbar, 2003; Pantilat 2008). Sasson (2000) and Richard, Lajeunesse, and Lussier (2010) mentioned that although honesty is the common practice in field, sometimes medical practitioners might adopt deception to preserve patients' hope, which such a case is normally applied to patients with terminal illness. This idea resembles the altruistic intention defined in the social psychology, only the controversy level is higher as the outcome brought from the medical staff's decision often has an immense impact in life. Apart from that, a sharing by Aitken (2000) proposed that if an individual would like to protect the other's feeling and at the same time does not want to deceive, dodging a question could be a helpful means. By not answering what is asked, one is not considered deceiving, even though the truth is still not voiced. Yet, this seems to be a makeshift

tactic, rather than a resolution to an issue.

2.2.5 Hospitality and Other Disciplines

In hospitality, faking a smile is perhaps the research topic which is closest to deception. As Rafaeli and Sutton (1987) mentioned, service employees have to display the smiles, regardless of their genuineness, in order to better satisfy customers. Such process of regulating one's emotion to fit in the social occasion or job nature is named Emotional Labour (James, 1989; Karimi, Leggat, Donohue, Farrell, & Couper, 2014; Mikolajczak, Menil, & Luminet, 2007).

Although researcher have been promoting authenticity in service delivery (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, & Sideman, 2005; Mattila & Enz, 2002; Tsai & Huang, 2002), a plenty of other business organisations encourage their staff to practise deception in exchange for a higher level of customer satisfaction (Jehn & Scott, 2008). Meanwhile, Wang and Groth (2014) claimed that surface acting, which could be detected by customers easily, would in fact harm the guest satisfaction.

In spite of a commonly negative view on deception, a group of scholars indeed associate it with reputation management (Cialdini, 1989; DePaulo, P. J., DePaulo, B. M., Tang, & Swaim, 1989; Jehn & Scot, 2015). That is, a staff lies 'for the sake of maintaining a positive image of the organisation'. However, all the above studies only explore the linkage between employee dishonesty and customer perception without a specific industry focus.

Therefore, deception in hospitality guest services is still a hardly discussed topic within the academia, which might attribute to its innate sensitivity by contradicting the marketed image of 'service straight from the heart'. For that, more exploratory research work concentrating on the motives of deception and current

situation in hospitality business should be conducted.

In conclusion, in light of all the definitions and interpretations from above disciplines, a theoretical definition of deception is rewritten for this study as:

'A message sender intentionally mislead a message receiver verbally and/or nonverbally by conveying the manipulated truth to either solely benefit the sender oneself, benefit both parties, or purely benefit the receiver.'

To better measure deception, an operational definition, with insights from the previous work, is presented as:

Deception: Purposely misrepresent the fact, Intent to benefit a party, Lie verbally and/or nonverbally

2.3 Harmony, Truth and Use of Deception in Hospitality

The battle between a hurtful yet authentic truth and a fake yet harmonious lie has been existing since always. With reference to Bell (2015), even though readers with a westernised education background might think 'Harmony' means 'consensus, homogeneity, and uniformity', the interpretation of 'Harmony' by Confucius, a vastly respected philosopher in Chinese culture, is a continuous and positive process of collaboratively balancing and improving interpersonal relationship.

A famous saying in Chinese - 'Harmony is more important than the truth' - shows the natural tendency for an individual to deceive in order to maintain a favourable relationship with the counterpart. Besides, by adopting different kinds of lies, deceivers also aim to 'save face', meaning to retain self-esteem, for themselves; the recipient; or both parties (Chen & Starosta, 1997).

Truth, instead, is sometimes hurtful and could create unpleasant stimuli.

Thus, the usage of deception to protect one's feeling emerges. Levine and Schweitzer (2014) found that when honesty harms other people and deception does not, honesty is perceived to be less ethical than deception. Actually, humans naturally practise deception. In human defense mechanism model, one of the major mechanisms - Denial – is a mental refusal to acknowledge the fact (Freud, 1894, 1896), which such a natural defensive act could indeed be regarded as a self-serving lie since the person rationally knows the truth.

In the context of hospitality, in order to create a positive atmosphere to the guests, any negative stimulus, such as a depressing topic or honest yet hurtful words would be intentionally avoided by the service staff in interaction with guests. As such, the proneness to practise deception to foster a harmonious ambience increases. For instance, even when a guest laughs at himself for matching a totally wrong tie to his suit, a staff should not join in and make fun of the guest. Indeed, the staff may lie and say '*Dr. Kothari if you ask me, I actually think that is actually quite a refreshing match.*' to make the guest feel better. In short, in hospitality operation, loads of dubious information is conveyed to customers every day (Matyszczyk, 2015). Thus, whether deception facilitates service excellence or not should be further explored.

2.4 Summary

With the underexplored status of deception in hospitality, this study aims to form an exploratory platform for offering insights to the industry and preparing a foundation for future studies. Nonetheless, collective concepts and ideas built formerly by scholars from different disciplines offer a variety of insights for the industry, and which are summarised in the table below:

Table 2*Summary of Major Outlooks on Deception*

Disciplines	Major Outlooks	Insight for Hospitality
Economics	1. Deception to gain personal benefit or avoid personal loss is a selfish act. (Becker, 1968; Gneezy, 2005; Grolleau et al., 2014; Holm, 2010)	1. Self-serving lies should be kept minimal. 2. Deception can be used not only for improving service quality but also alleviating service failure effect.
Criminology	1. Deception is a misconduct 2. Quality of a lie increases as preparation time lengthens 3. Deception detection can be trained (Azizli et al., 2016; Brewer & Abell, 2015; DePaulo et al., 2003; Logue et al., 2015)	1. Customers may detect lame lies. 2. Deception should be prohibited when legal issue is involved.

Social Psychology	1. Lies are categorised into Self-serving; Mutually Beneficial; and Altruistic. 2. Nonverbal cues are part of the deception behaviour (Abe, 2009; Dunbar et al., 2016; Goffman, 1955; Levine & Schweitzer, 2014, 2015; Vrij et al., 2015; Talwar et al., 2007; Sip et al., 2012)	1. Appropriate adoption of Mutually Beneficial and Altruistic deception could enhance service quality. 2. Be both verbally and non-verbally congruent.
Medicine	1. Inappropriate usage of deception could have drastic impact. 2. Dodging the question can be an option for ethical dilemma facer. (Aitken, 2010, Dunbar, 2003; Sasson, 2000; Richard et al., 2010)	1. Require general guideline for employees to learn suitable context to use deception

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

Since this research is to understand about the perception of effectiveness, rationales behind and ethicality of deploying deceiving acts from hospitality employees, a qualitative approach is thus more appropriate as data generated would be able to capture complex ideas and offer in-depth and rich meaning (Creswell, 2013; Galletta, 2013; Neuman, 2006). Besides, given the very limited number of existing research on deception in hospitality, the qualitative method enables initial exploration to develop new dimensions about the topic.

Amongst different common qualitative methods, focus groups and interviews are two most suitable choices for this study. On one hand, focus groups are effective in evoking data on cultural norms of a group, illuminating the variation of viewpoints held in a population and triggering inspired points among participants (Rabiee, 2004). On the other hand, individual interviews are often regarded optimal for collecting data on personal histories, perspectives, and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are being explored (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

Each of the above methods carries its own benefits and drawbacks, which are presented below:

Table 3*Benefits and Drawbacks between Focused Group and Interviews.*

	Focus Group	In-depth Interviews
Pros	• Time efficient in obtaining data • Lost memories can be triggered during group discussion (Acocella, 2012; Kitzinger, 1995)	• More privacy for discussing the sensitive topic. • Easier to schedule an interview given that most interviewees have shift work. (Hollway & Jefferson, 1997; Powell & Single 1996)
Cons	• One participant dominates the discussion • Easier to be sidetracked by participants • Participants may restrain from saying their opinions due to shyness or an unfamiliar group • As most hospitality employees work in shift, it is difficult to gather a similar group of people at the same time (Kidd & Parshall, 2000; Powell & Single 1996)	• Useful data can be lost if interviewees forget certain information • More time consuming in comparison (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013)

In summary, even though both focus group and in-depth interview serve similar purposes and possess different sets of benefits and drawbacks, the latter choice is more preferred given the unique features of this study. To begin with, given the sensitivity of this research topic, one-to-one interview tends to offer the interviewees a larger extent of privacy and eliminate the awkwardness of expressing freely in front of their colleagues or other industry practitioners in a focus group. Apart from that, with the shift work structure of hospitality, gathering a sufficient number of frontline employees (i.e. 6 to 8 in accordance with Powell & Single, 1996) in the same timeslot is strenuous. As such, individual in-depth interview was selected under the circumstances. The interview was set in semi-structure fashion to offer flexibility in exploring informants' thoughts and attitude (Galletta, 2013; Neuman, 2006).

3.2 Sampling

With the intention to explore deception in guest services, 20 frontline employees in the hospitality sector were invited to participate in the study. To achieve maximum richness of the information obtained, a few criteria had been established:

1. Interviewees were required to have at least 1 year of work experience in hospitality industry.
2. Interviewees must be the age of 18 or above.
3. Interviewees must be full time employees.

The personal network of researcher and snowball sampling method were both adopted to ensure an ample sampling size. The initial round of interviewees were industry practitioners befriended by the researcher during internship, conferences and university study. As to minimise biases and homogeneity, interviewees from

different hospitality industries were invited, where the majority were from upscale hotels (13 out of 20). The rest were from restaurant industry (3), airlines (2), theme park (1) and travel agency (1). In addition, the gender of the sample was an even distribution, with each party being 10. Amongst who, 12 were operational staff while 8 were employees of either supervisory or managerial grading. The average years of work experience in hospitality was 5.3. Table 4 below has listed the above information of the interviewees.

Table 4*Detailed list of Interviewees*

Interviewee	Gender	Job Title	Class of Organisation	Years of experience in the hospitality industry	Interview Date
A	Male	Guest Services Officer	Upscale Hotel	3	February 10
B	Female	Guest Relations Officer	Upscale Hotel	5	February 20
C	Female	Flight Attendant	Full Service Airlines	2	February 21
D	Female	Waitress	Bar & Restaurant	1	February 23
E	Female	Tour Guide (Inbound)	Travel Agency	3	February 23
F	Female	Assistant Club Floor Manager	Upscale Hotel	7	February 25
G	Male	Flight Attendant	Full Service Airlines	2	February 26
H	Male	Senior Duty Manager	Upscale Hotel	8	February 28
I	Male	Waiting Staff	Italian Restaurant	2	February 28
J	Male	Duty Manager	Upscale Hotel	9	March 2
K	Female	Guest Relations & Club Floor Supervisor	Upscale Hotel	7	March 2
L	Male	Assistant Guest Services Supervisor	Upscale Hotel	4	March 4

M	Female	Front Office Officer	Upscale Hotel	3	March 5
N	Male	Concierge	Upscale Hotel	7	March 7
O	Male	Assistant Chief Concierge	Upscale Hotel	14	March 7
P	Female	Club Floor Manager	Upscale Hotel	11	March 7
Q	Male	Housekeeping Supervisor	Upscale Hotel	6	March 9
R	Female	Club Lounge Butler	Upscale Hotel	5	March 11
S	Male	Cast Member	Theme Park	3	March 12
T	Female	Hostess	Hotel Fine Dining Chinese Restaurant	4	March 12
Total: 20	Male: 10 Female: 10	Operational Staff: 12 Supervisory/ Managerial Staff: 8	Hotel: 13 Restaurant: 3 Airlines: 2 Others: 2	Average Years of Work Experience: 5.3 Year	N/A

3.3 Data Collection Process

The 20 semi-structure interviews were conducted between late February to early March in the year of 2017. Interviewee's ideas have showed signs of saturation after the 17th interview. The last 3 interviews were done to reconfirm the data saturation status before officially finishing the data collection process. The medium of conversation was English as a means to eliminate the risk of translation error. Language barrier barely existed as most hospitality employees in Hong Kong were fluent in English. Suggested by the researcher and approved by the interviewees, the venues mainly included interviewee's workplace, cafeterias and university classrooms.

3.4 Development of Interview Schedule

As there was no previous research exploring hospitality deception in depth, no existing interview schedules could be directly borrowed. Thereupon, questions are developed based on the intended objectives of the research (Appendix I). Overall, The interview schedule was divided into three stages:

3.4.1. Rapport Building and Opening

To alleviate the sensitivity of this topic, rapport building approach was adopted in the very beginning of each interview to offer a more relaxed and spontaneous atmosphere in order that interviewees feel free to express their opinions (Gremler & Gwinner, 2008). Besides, there were four types of rapport building behaviour adopted throughout the interviews as follows:

1. *Attentive behaviour*: Demonstrate full attention on the interviewees, such as eye contacts and head nods (Bernieri, Gillisl, Davis, & Grahe, 1996; Grahe &

Bernieri, 1999).

2. *Imitative behaviour*: Internationally accord with the interviewees in terms of voice tone, style of diction, pace of speech, pattern of breath or facial expression (Hunt & Price, 2002; Thompson, 1998; Tickle-Degnen & Rosenthal, 1990).
3. *Courteous behaviour*: Project a cordial image of the interviewer to the interviewees. Behaviours include smiling, greeting, repeatedly addressing the interviewees with their names (Ford & Etienne, 1994; Hawes, 1994; Sutton & Rafaeli, 1988).
4. *Common grounding behaviour*: Explore mutual interest or similarity with the interviewees (Goleman, 2004). One of the examples is showing fondness in interviewees' watches or digital gadgets.

Once the ambience was eased, the background of the study, research purpose, confidentiality and interviewee anonymity were conveyed to the interviewees.

3.4.2. Development

A screening question of whether the interviewee has ever practised deception before was initially asked in order to ensure that the interviewee's responses were useful and relevant. Afterwards, questions about the effectiveness of deceptive behaviour in guest services, the reasons behind, the perceived ethicality and insights on deception were asked. Adhering to the semi-structure design, customised related questions were followed up to offer flexibility for insights while reconfirming the interviewee's ideas. Besides, when too little information was given by the interviewee, several probing questions were asked for obtaining more fruitful responses. Such questions were either asked from the prepared list such as '*How do you generally feel about deceiving the guests*' or improvised based on the topics

being discussed like ‘*Won’t the guests keep asking?*’ in Interview G. Through the probing questions, responses with deeper and more fruitful meaning were given by most interviewees.

3.4.3. Closing

In this final stage, interviewees were cordially invited to ask questions, if any, and recommend potential interviewees for enlarging the sampling size.

3.5 Recording and Privacy Issue

For accurate interpretation of data, the interviews were recorded with the advanced permission of the interviewees. Moreover, as deception is a rather sensitive matter to be discussed, only their job title and the class of their hospitality organisation were mentioned in this paper. Furthermore, the voice in the recordings were also digitally altered for anonymity. Amongst which, 15 of who agreed to be recorded while 5 of them refused so. Nevertheless, amongst the 15 recorded interviewees, 8 of them do not prefer to have their recordings submitted to the university but solely for the purpose of transcription. Thus, in the end only 7 interviews were included in the data file. As for the 5 un-recorded interviews, notes are jotted during the interview and special phrases or expressions were intentionally marked down. Promptly after the completion, the notes were re-organised and revised with a fresh memory in search of data accuracy.

3.6 Pilot Test

A pilot interview was conducted as Interview A. It appeared that the interviewee was not familiar with the word ‘deception’. As such, a more commonly-used word, ‘lie’, was used whenever needed. Plus, several questions have been fine

tuned in terms of choice of diction and their orders. Besides, the interviewee recommended that the list of interview questions could be sent via email to the interviewees in advance to provide some time to prepare for discussing this complex issue. The suggestion was accepted and as a result the rest of the interviews were completed in a smoother and deeper manner. In addition, by sending out the list of basic interview questions, the interviewees were enabled to truly assess their willingness to participate or not in regards to this sensitive topic.

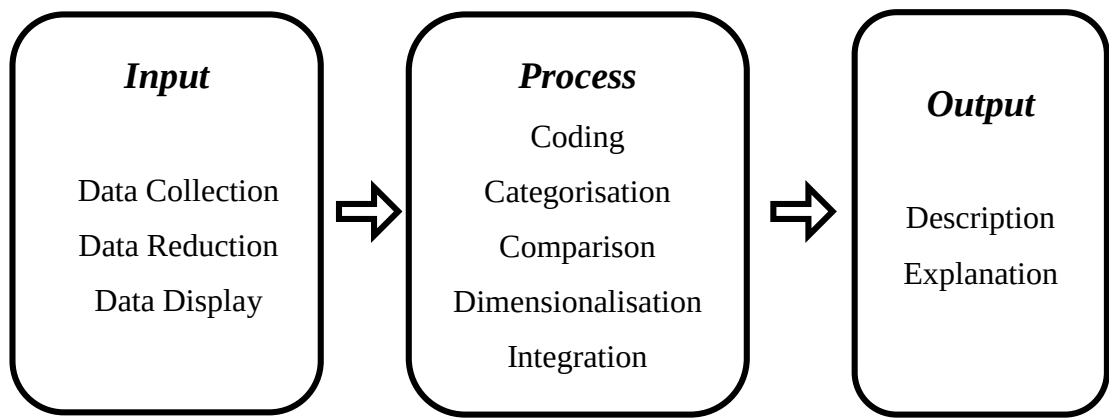
3.7 Data Analysis Process

To extract meaningful information from an interview, conventional (also known as inductive) content analysis technique was employed. The rationales behind are that by following this approach, the meaning of text can be systematically quantified, offering a higher level of reliability. Besides, through the analysis, underlying themes, terminologies, repeated phenomena and characteristics can uncovered amongst texts.

Extracting different approaches and methods suggested by scholars (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000; Service, 2009), the general analytic process followed the procedures listed below:

Flowchart 2

Analytic Process of Data



All 15 interview recordings were transcribed into written transcripts and 5 interview notes were further consolidated (Appendix II). From there, in-vivo codes, which refer to the exact words used by the interviewees, and in-vitro codes, which refer to the interpretation by the researcher, were assigned to initial set of materials. In the transcript, in-vivo codes are underlined, italicised and bolded and the in-vitro codes are coloured in blue and bracketed. Afterwards, similar phrases, patterns, relationships, sequences and differences such as word repetitions or contrast were identified.

During the processing, different key categories from the sub-categories (in-vitro codes) were gradually developed, and which in the end were linked to various themes. Each interview was completed with all the analytic steps first, before moving on to the next interview.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

By retrieving key in-vitro codes from the interviews, a summary table is presented as below:

Table 5*Coding of Interview Transcripts*

Frequency	Sub-categories (In-Vitro Codes)	In-Vivo Codes from Interviewee
<i>Theme 1: Deception in hospitality</i>		
<i>Category 1A: Inevitability of Deception</i>		
19	Deception is a usual practice in hospitality	• <i>Everyone who works in hotels has lied [A]</i> • <i>Yes, Of course I have lied [B]</i> • <i>Deception happens every day [B]</i> • <i>I think every GR [Guest Relations] has done the same thing before [B]</i> • <i>[Laugh] Of course I have. It is just so common in my job. [C]</i> • <i>A lot of her colleagues are also doing the same practice [E]</i> • <i>It is very common [F]</i> • <i>it's quite natural and common [G]</i> • <i>I think when I chat with the guests, I lie already. [I]</i> • <i>I have lied before, absolutely. [J]</i> • <i>It's very normal in our work. [K]</i>

	• <i>A lot of time. We are the guest relations team. And what do we do? Lie to the guests [Laugh] [K]</i> • <i>Yes. I have. And it's really normal. [L]</i> • <i>Because you'll need it every day [L]</i> • <i>Nearly all encounters with guests are lies [M]</i> • <i>I'd say they are tricks but yes [O]</i> • <i>A lot of lies are involved in serving the VIP [P]</i> • <i>A lot of time [R]</i> • <i>I think they do too. It's very common. [R]</i>
13 Deception is fundamental in guest services.	• <i>So that I think lying is a very basic thing in hotel [B]</i> • <i>So lying becomes necessary [B]</i> • <i>Deception as a normal element in service industry [E]</i> • <i>Lying may be necessary to some guests[F]</i> • <i>Lying is sometimes necessary [F]</i> • <i>Recommends them learning some basic ones for surviving in the industry [H]</i> • <i>Working in hotel we really need to use lies in some cases [J]</i> • <i>I say this because in hospitality, at times we have to use lies, as you say deception, to make the guest services better [L]</i>

		• <i>It's very important in the industry [K]</i> • <i>Lying is essential in hospitality [M]</i> • <i>[Laugh] Yes. I must have during this long period of time [O]</i> • <i>I think that's part of hotel work [O]</i> • <i>I think that's part of my job requirement [S]</i>
4	Emotional Labour as Deception	• <i>Even though we may not be very happy sometimes, we still need to become an actor or actress [B]</i> • <i>Not all smiles are real [K]</i> • <i>Actually to guests we also control our emotions too [O]</i> • <i>We are only humans and I think it's natural for us to think sincerely. But the key point is not to show it [S]</i>
Category 1B: Everyday Deception		
4	There are multiple reasons to deceive	• <i>There are so many reasons that I lie to a guest [A]</i> • <i>And there can be more than one reasons that we lie [C]</i> • <i>Then you know we lie in different aspects [F]</i> • <i>There are so many examples [J]</i> •

15

It's interviewee's will
to lie

- *I just lie and say that it's because the magnet in the key is affected by the mobile phone [A]*
- *I didn't tell her we didn't know she and her kids like chocolate actually [A]*
- *We will tell the guests that the food is nearly cooked. Then we will ask the kitchen to cook the food first [D]*
- *My staff usually just pretend there may be available room and we will randomly click a few button on OPERA [A Property Management system] to pretend we are searching for a room for the guest [F]*
- *And some of them will keep asking is anything wrong. That's when we lie. We will say it's normal anyway [G]*
- *But that was only the first few days I worked so I was very nervous and then I said it's free for them [I]*
- *We just pretend we are happy when we talk to them and congratulate them [K]*
- *When they ask why, usually I tell them it's because the taxi drivers are off now or have another appointment [N]*
- *But my practice is to pretend I know about it but need to double check for them to see if there is any newest update [N]*
- *When I approached the guest and try to explain to him, I told him that we've contacted the car company but the vehicle has accidents on the road and that's why it was delayed [O]*
- *So sometimes we make the service time longer and say that the wine is currently out and the*

	<i>staff is taking them from the stockroom [R]</i> • <i>So I always say something that the guests want to hear [R]</i> • <i>I always tell the children to believe in the fairy tale or how the cartoon character will come out to play with them. Like in Toy Story we all promote it as all characters will be alive in the evening [S]</i> • <i>When we walk around the park to take photos with the visitors, sometimes some parents will tell us their children are Birthday on that day and we will give the child a small gift [S]</i> • <i>And every time I will tell them I cannot guarantee at that time because there are other guests who have already booked it before [T]</i>
7 It's not interviewee's will to lie, which is due to job requirement	• <i>Some of them are just not nice. But then I will still need to chat with them and check how was their stay [B]</i> • <i>So the only thing I can do is stand there and listen to them and fake smile [B]</i> • <i>Sometimes we need to act happy even though we're not. It's basic requirement[B]</i> • <i>Guest Relations team has to show that we are nice and friendly, even when the guests are not nice [K]</i> • <i>Think about all the incognito guests [Incognito refers to the hotel conceal the identity of the guest who requests so]. We are required to lie [L]</i> • <i>Some guests are very annoying and not welcomed but since they have paid, we still need to</i>

		serve them [O] • <i>Has to lie because her job is to entertain the guests and in order to make them happy, she cannot reveal the truth [P]</i>
3	No standard or instruction of deception	• <i>There are actually no any proper instruction about when to lie. Each DM [Duty Manager] will have their own standard and way of handling a case [J]</i> • <i>It's quite difficult to establish a standard for lying because every situation is unique and is different. (Each circumstance requires different handling method [O]</i> • <i>There is not one fixed standard for people to follow. [O]</i>
1	Deceptions are initiative or responsive	• <i>Lies are either initiative or responsive. Initiative means the staff lies proactively to give a good feeling to the guests. Responsive means the staff lies when responding to guests. [P]</i>
Theme 2: Features of Deception in Hospitality		
Category 2A: Critical Elements For Successful Deception		
7	Deception should be conducted in a professional manner	• <i>If you don't believe in your own lies, no one will [B]</i> • <i>But of course you know we are not really searching. Then in the end just apologise and explain</i>

		<i>sincerely that there are really no available room for upgrade. [F]</i> • <i>Recommends them learning some basic ones for surviving in the industry [H]</i> • <i>But then I would look very serious and try to reason with them [J]</i> • <i>When she came back she suddenly ran a few steps to the couple and shouted 'Happy Honeymoon!' and gave them a really really fake and big smile [K]</i> • <i>That's the reason why we never respond so quickly. The usual practice is to pretend you are finding in on the computer system and then after a while just tell the guest you cannot locate the name [L]</i> • <i>Of course when we lie, we need to be sure that we lie professionally too [O]</i>
5	Deception should be consistent	• <i>I think as long as it is not a serious issue then yes, we should lie all the way [C]</i> • <i>But you have to make sure that the lie is consistent [F]</i> • <i>Always. One of the biggest lies [G]</i> • <i>Deception must be consistent. The consistency also comes from the same stance of all colleagues [H]</i> • <i>Lie the same most of the time [N]</i>
Category 2B: Involvement of Skills		
9	Deception in hospitality	• <i>Then that's related to your lying skills [B]</i>

requires skills

- *Skill is important in hotel* [B]
- *Know when to hide something from the guests* [F]
- *Lying in hotel needs some training* [F]
- *Lying is a skill which could be obtained and practised* [H]
- *We are good at lying* [Laugh] [K]
- *It's acting skill* [L]
- *Need to have good acting skills* [P]
- *Lying also requires skills* [Q]

Theme 3: Effectiveness of Deception in Guest Services

Category 3A: Successful Result of Deception When Properly Practised

18

Deception has brought
positive result

- *But then once I said it is because of his mobile phone, he became calm and okay* [A]
- *Yes. The guests are happier* [B]
- *Actually the customers are happier too* [D]
- *You partially lying is good for the service* [F]
- *Most of the time yes* [G]
- *But yes I think they are happy because I could hear them say 'Nice' or something like that* [I]
- *I think it's constructive most of the time* [J]

		• <i>Honestly, I think yes</i> [K] • <i>Surely useful</i> [L] • <i>A lot of time</i> [L] • <i>Useful</i> [N] • <i>And the guest is still angry, but not as angry as before</i> [O] • <i>Yes. His emotion was better. He was angry but compared to while he was waiting, he was more calm</i> [O] • <i>At that time no, they won't be happy if we serve it slow but after he wake up in the next morning, most of them will thank us</i> [R] • <i>Yes. The guests are satisfied when they know you are the same opinion with them and they think you're a good friend</i> [R] • <i>They are very excited of course</i> [S] • <i>Definitely a constructive tool</i> [S] • <i>Then they become super happy</i> [S]
9	Deception enhances service quality when appropriately used and vice versa.	• <i>That really depends on your lie. If you don't lie well, you will be in trouble</i> [F] • <i>I think there is no a correct answer for this. I think it depends on how you lie</i> [I] • <i>Constructive. But I think you need to use it wisely otherwise it can become a potential guest complaint</i> [K]

- *Lying could be both a good thing and bad thing [I]*
- *If you have a good lying skills, you can solve a lot of problems [L]*
- *And if your lie isn't good enough, as you say if the guests find out, they will become super angry and the situation is worse than telling the truth [O]*
- *Depends. If it is used in a proper way, then it is constructive [O]*
- *I think... it's constructive when we use it well [R]*
- *I think it has its goods and bads but overall it's useful because it helps us say the difficult things in an easier way [T]*

Theme 4: Major Reasons to Practise Deception

Category 4A: Enhancement of Guest Satisfaction

13

Maintain a professional image to guests

- *Because it makes us look stupid if we say we don't know [Laugh] [A]*
- *To show your professionalism, you still need to pretend that you are interested in talking to them [B]*
- *It's not professional to show your emotions at work, except happiness of course [C]*
- *We need to show that we care and we have tried to accommodate their needs [F]*
- *But some guests are very annoying and demanding so we have to pretend we enjoy serving [J]*
- *But of course we don't care at all. But to show the guests we care, we need to pretend [J]*

		• <i>We have to be professional to provide warm service even when guests are bad [K]</i> • <i>I think for service mistakes, it's okay to lie a little bit. Because it helps your image too [K]</i> • <i>When you confront really bad guests, you still have to be sophisticated and show the professionalism. That's hospitality [L]</i> • <i>And in that way the hotel looks more professional and coordinated [L]</i> • <i>I think it's also for our professional image [N]</i> • <i>It's because we will look very unprofessional if we tell the guests that we don't know and we can check online [N]</i> • <i>But since we are hotel service, we need to maintain a good image so we can't simply take away their drink, that's why we have to lie to them [R]</i>
12	Bring positive feeling to guests	• <i>At least the guest has some explanation and feel better [A]</i> • <i>So I just give him a good excuse. And in that way he's satisfied with the reason [A]</i> • <i>I lie so that the guests are happy [A]</i> • <i>When we lie we are trying to please the guest [B]</i> • <i>Make the atmosphere delightful and interesting [E]</i> • <i>I would say it's to keep the guests happy [F]</i> • <i>Like the honeymoon, you can lie about being happy when you talk to them and so that the guests feel good. That's okay [K]</i>

	• <i>What I said is simply told the guests that it was a treat from the hotel since we know she was travelling with her husband [L]</i> • <i>So if we tell them a good excuse, they feel better [N]</i> • <i>So I always say something that the guests want to hear [R]</i> • <i>Yes. And they will be so happy because they think he is the special one [S]</i> • <i>I think it's about creating a moment for the children [S]</i>
11 Avoid provoking negative feeling of guests	• <i>I think it's the peaceful feeling. I think peace is a reason to justify [D]</i> • <i>Exactly. If we just tell them directly it must be them who smoke because we have found some proof, they will be very embarrassed and angry [J]</i> • <i>Always. Lie or not we still need to make sure the guests have face [J]</i> • <i>They pretend to be a honeymoon couple and we could not pretend we know they are not even though we know [K]</i> • <i>The task is to make the guests okay [O]</i> • <i>And also if the guests are upset, they may lose their temper on us [N]</i> • <i>Yes, I am trying to protect the guest's feeling [N]</i> • <i>If we don't lie, then the guest will be angry [O]</i> • <i>She couldn't make the guests experience any negative feeling [P]</i> • <i>To avoid argument on politics [R]</i> • <i>Yes, it is to protect guest's feeling [S]</i>

7

To create a flawless environment

- *And the whole trip needs to be positive and error-free, so sometimes lies are used to cover for the minor mistakes [E]*
- *We have to make sure everything looks perfect [F]*
- *Both the couple and I are just lying so I think we both don't want to ruin it [K]*
- *And the guests don't always need to know the real reasons. We are here to fix problems for them so as long as the problem is solved, that's okay [O]*
- *People travel far away from their countries and when they come here, they don't want any accidents. So we should also give them a positive feeling [O]*
- *She couldn't make the guests experience any negative feeling [P]*
- *It's like we make a fake and happy world for them and everyone comes to the park can relax and enjoy their time there [S]*

7

Glamorisation of Reasons

- *It's better for them to accept that the food is coming slow than we have missed the order so that they need to wait for a long time again [D]*
- *Not to directly reject the guest [F]*
- *It's just a good excuse for the guests. [J]*
- *Like I don't really tell the guests he or she is not going to get the upgrade he or she wants directly But instead just tell them that the hotel is really full and other guests have reserved*

those room categories already [L]

- *It's because it is difficult for the tourists to understand the reasons behind [N]*
- *I think it's also because it is better to hear that someone has already booked the drivers instead of the drivers reject them [N]*
- *But it's very rude to say no we cannot and they guests will also be pissed off [R]*

Category 4B: Operation Efficiency

5

Prevent chaotic situations

- *Yes we lie because if one is scared, it causes the butterfly effect [G]*
- *To reduce unnecessary fuss [G]*
- *But what else can we say? 'It's dangerous?' We can't [G]*
- *In order to minimise the fuss the fans may create, they will lie about the visit of a celebrity [H]*
- *The staff should lie and say that the case is currently under investigation so more details will be given later as a ways to avoid causing fuss [H]*

4

To avoid being scolded or complained by guests

- *Like, if we lie, then we don't need to be told off by the business [class] passengers [C]*
- *It's because if we lie to them, they don't complain [D]*
- *Otherwise the guests may complain to the top management then it will be a serious issue. [J]*
- *Most of the time we lie so that we don't get complained by the guests [J]*

4

To handle tricky guests

- *It's very obvious that they lied about the smoking charge first. And then we have to lie too to scare them. It's a trick [J]*

		• <i>Both the couple and I are just lying so I think we both don't want to ruin it [K]</i> • <i>We couldn't tell them we know they lie so we just play our roles in the interaction [K]</i> • <i>Yes and we are not going to allow it so we will scare the guests and tell them smoking in hotel is also illegal and if the smoke detector goes off, police officers will come and investigate [L]</i>
Category 4C: A Service for Guests		
2	Deceive as requested by guests	• <i>We lie per guest request [H]</i> • <i>It's that when the guests can provide the exact name and room number and claim that the guest ask him or her to go up to the room, we still have to pretend the guest isn't there [L]</i>
Theme 5: Ethical and Appropriate Determinants to Practise Deception for Guest Services		
Category 5A: Direct Intention to Benefit Others		
14	The intention is to benefit guests	• <i>I think if your intention is good when you lie, it's more acceptable [B]</i> • <i>if your intention is good for the guests, then yes [B]</i> • <i>Actually the customers are happier too [D]</i> • <i>I think peace is a reason to justify [D]</i> • <i>Make the atmosphere delightful and interesting [E]</i> • <i>Sometimes she may go a bit far to make up some wrong but not crucial information to make the</i>

introduction more interesting [E]

- *If they lie to make things better and the guests will feel better [J]*
- *Like the honeymoon, you can lie about being happy when you talk to them and so that the guests feel good. That's okay [K]*
- *If you specify to the guests, I think it's acceptable as long as the purpose is to make them happy [L]*
- *We should really put the guests first if we need to lie [N]*
- *If they are lying to serve the guests better, I am fine with it [O]*
- *And the guests don't always need to know the real reasons. We are here to fix problems for them so as long as the problem is solved, that's okay [O]*
- *As long as the intention is beneficial to the guests, it's good for them because the guests are looking for a good experience [P]*
- *I think it's a good thing to do. And a right thing to do too. First of all, we really care the guests about their health [R]*

5

Maintain a professional
image to guests

- *The guests think we are professional and we have to act like we are. So if we are lying to cover for that, that's acceptable [K]*
- *I think for service mistakes, it's okay to lie a little bit. Because it helps your image too [K]*
- *I think it's okay. I think it's also for our professional image [N]*

- *Or you are trying to maintain the hotel image. [O]*
- *But since we are hotel service, we need to maintain a good image so we can't simply take away their drink, that's why we have to lie to them [R]*

Category 5B: Traits of Recipients

11

The recipient most probably would not mind if the truth reveals

- *I think that's okay. I think the guest will understand. She was very happy [A]*
- *I think the guests won't mind too because they know we want them to be happy [B]*
- *Cover for minor mistakes, which are defined as 'Mistakes that tourists don't care so much if you tell them [E]*
- *Sometimes she may go a bit far to make up some wrong but not crucial information to make the introduction more interesting [E]*
- *I usually just lie at unimportant things like talking to the customers I mean... things that are not- have no harm on the customers [I]*
- *Lying when it's for minor mistakes that the guests probably won't mind is my recommendation, yes [J]*
- *I think that's okay because it's just a minor mistake [K]*
- *I think the guests just don't care even if they find out [K]*
- *The guests did not suffer from any loss but only the company [M]*
- *Usually I would say that if no one is affected then it's okay to lie [O]*

		• <i>It has happened. And it doesn't really matter what causes the problem [O]</i>
4	Difficult for recipients to find out the truth	• <i>Nobody knows the answer so even if we lie, the guest doesn't know anyway [A]</i> • <i>The guests won't know whether I am really happy about their honeymoon or not [K]</i> • <i>To Hong Kong guests of course it doesn't work because they understand. But for other tourists, we can use the same lie [N]</i> • <i>It's quite difficult for them to find out [O]</i>
Category 5C: A Service for Guests		
2	Deception as a Service	• <i>Felt ethical about lying in this case. Because it was per guest request [H]</i> • <i>First, for sure we have to lie as per guest's request like the incognito case [L]</i>
Theme 6: Unethical and Inappropriate Determinants to Practise Deception for Guest Services		
Category 6A: Direct Intention to Benefit Oneself		
14	Sacrifice the guest's interest for the staff's interest	• <i>If the employee lies to the customer just to benefit himself or herself, it is bad [C]</i> • <i>It's not good to lie when it's related to money issue [D]</i> • <i>A tour guide shouldn't cooperate with any shop and lie to the tourists that the shop sells the best products [E]</i> • <i>He just made the customers feel bad about his past and he tries to make them pity him so that he gets more tips [I]</i>

- *When you lie to earn more money then it's a bad thing [I]*
- *Some of her colleagues even tell the guests there is no basic room type available temporarily and somehow force the guests to book a more expensive ones so the colleagues can earn the upselling commission. She personally dislikes the above practice because she thinks lying to the guests to earn the commission is unethical [M]*
- *But she doesn't recommend using deception to cause loss in guests [M]*
- *I think we shouldn't lie to a guest for ourselves [N]*
- *If my team lie to a guest to charge more for the services, then I don't accept it [O]*
- *But if they lie for themselves, then it's not fine for me [O]*
- *If you lie and charge extra to the guests then the guest is affected then it's not okay [O]*
- *Inappropriate contexts include stealing the guests' asset while making up the room and denying the action [Q]*
- *Such as if we make a cocktail that is replaced with cheap ingredients but the menu says we use the high quality ingredients, then it's not good. Because the guests don't enjoy the same quality drink [R]*
- *But if we lie to cheat the tourists, then it's bad [S]*

Category 6B: Emergency, Money and Privacy Issues

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>9</p> <p>In times of emergencies which threaten guest's safety</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not lying when emergency landing or any strong turbulence is always the number 1 rule to us [C] • When there is real danger, we are not going to lie [G] • If there is an obvious and serious emergency, such as fire breakout and gun shooting, all information should be translucent for them to evacuate on time [H] • I think emergencies? I think when there is something serious issues like fire, we shouldn't lie? [I] • My general rule is that if it affects guest safety, we must not lie. [J] • Because the guest may be in danger or have loss [J] • But when it's related to room rate, room payment or any life issues, they must be honest with the guests [J] • In that case no. Emergency as you say is emergency [O] • In times of emergency, it should be treated exception and lying is not recommended [P] |
| <p>3</p> <p>Sensitive issues such as guest privacy and monetary matters</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate to lie when it is related to the privacy of the guests or their personal issues [B] • Let's say you accidentally charge a guest to a wrong bill when you check out, you should be honest and apologise [K] • For serious issues like wrong credit card charges of course we must be honest [K] |

Theme 7: Other Types of Ethicality Perceived on Deception in Guest Services

Category 7A: Indifference

- | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 4 | No strong feeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hard to say. I guess it's okay for me</i> [A] • <i>I really don't know</i> [D] • <i>Normal. I don't have strong feelings towards lying to them</i> [K] • <i>I don't have strong feeling about lying to them</i> [T] |
|---|-------------------|---|

Category 7B: Negative Feeling about Using Deception

- | | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| 1 | Sense of Guilt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sometimes we are-- I don't know the word of 心虚 [Feeling Guilty] because it is still our problem that we missed the order</i> [D] |
|---|----------------|---|

Theme 8: Insights on Deception

Category 8A: Opinions on Existing Literature and Current Practices

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 9 | Dodging techniques can be used as the first buffer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It can be one of the ways yes. But I think it's better to change the topic too</i> [F] • <i>That's a possible solution too. We may just ask the passengers to fasten their seatbelts and fold up their trays instead of answering them</i> [G] |
|---|--|--|

		• <i>Dodging question is useful, but only for the entry level staff because guests don't expect so much from them. once a staff is promoted to managerial role, it's more difficult for them to shift the questions because they usually handle cases which are more serious and need to give an proper answer to the guests [H]</i> • <i>I think yes. But sometimes some customers may be very critical, then it might not be so useful. Maybe they can try that at first? [I]</i> • <i>Depends on if the guests insist to know. Some people they don't stop until they get what they want so I think it really depends on the type of people that you're talking to [N]</i> • <i>Depends on whether you are skillful. If you are confident in making the guests believe in what you say, then I don't think lying is a bad option [L]</i> • <i>Agree than dodging the question is one of the methods, but only temporary. If the guests are insistent, then the staff still has to confront it [P]</i> • <i>I think that's okay for some easy questions. I think it can serves as a first buffer [R]</i> • <i>Then it doesn't work because in the end you have to tell them the answer [S]</i>
8	Deception often affects both staff and guests due to inseparability	• <i>Since we are in the service industry, so it has the connection [C]</i> • <i>Yes. I agree [D]</i> • <i>So I think it's for the passengers as well as ourselves [G]</i> • <i>Like we think about ourselves first when we lie. But sometimes the guests are also affected, in a</i>

		<i>good way in this case [J]</i> • <i>I think it's good for everyone [K]</i> • <i>We, I mean the concierge team, look better and the information is more correct and accurate. And the guests think that we do an extra step for them [N]</i> • <i>Because everyone is benefited from the lies [S]</i> • <i>Because I think that's way to lower their expectation before they come. And at the same time helping ourselves [T]</i>
3	Similar concept to Arts of Speaking	• <i>Because working in hotels you need a lot of art of speaking [F]</i> • <i>I am quite sure the Art of Speaking is something similar to lying too [F]</i> • <i>'Art of speaking' is important in hospitality industry [P]</i>
Category 8B: Extremity of Deception		
3	Over deception may invite damaging consequences	• <i>I personally don't recommend it because then it looks like we are really lying for money [J]</i> • <i>It's dangerous too if the guests find out we fake about that [J]</i> • <i>Yes. I think a moderate lie is fine but if we lie too much and too big then it's very dangerous [J]</i>
2	Practice makes Perfect in Deception	• <i>And throughout my time in the industry I have trained myself to be a good liar [L]</i> • <i>But as time goes by, practice makes perfect [P]</i>

Category 8C: Staff's Incompetence in Deception		
1	Do not lie if the staff is not capable	• <i>He doesn't recommend his team to lie under any circumstance because generally the housekeepers are not good at tricks and lies [Q]</i>
1	Consult with manager if necessary	• <i>The interviewee suggested that the entry level staff can ask for managers to handle complex cases [Q]</i>
Category 8D: Other Fragmented Insights		
1	The Nature of the company is deceptive	• <i>[Laugh] But the whole business is a lie! [S]</i>
1	Balance avoiding fuss and information transparency in emergencies	• <i>In times of emergency, whether to inform the guests depends on the urgency on the matter. When the emergency is at confirmed stage, if it's not affecting the whole area, try to keep the information within the affected guests only [H]</i>
Theme 9: Other Approaches Than Deception		
Category 9A: Honesty		
6	Be honest with sincerity	• <i>When the guest check in at 2:00pm, and the room is not ready yet, don't lie and call to housekeeping to ask the cleaning process and tell the guest approximately what time [A]</i>

- *We can't cook it quickly, so we will apologize to the customers to see if they want to wait for it or cancel it [D]*
- *But if the passengers really ask, I think I will check with the cockpit first before making any answer [G]*
- *If it's really our staff's fault, it's better to apologise and do the service recovery Although some guests will get more angry if you say sorry, but then the key is to provide some possible solution to the guests too [J]*
- *I think being honest is always the best solution. Then suggest what solutions you can do to recover it. [K]*
- *And then you will give a sincere apology then if you can just free them something like a bottle of wine or snacks [L]*

Category 9B: Tactics in Avoiding Deception

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|--|
| 2 | Minimise Interaction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>But of course I am not giving any response but just reply a few words so the guests can't build on the same topic. Round up the conversation and then say something like 'oh if you need me I'll be around so just call me or find me in somewhere [B]</i> • <i>Just give them what they want and that's all [K]</i> |
| 1 | Shift the conversation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>We will try to calm the passenger and distract them. [G]</i> |

1

Offer ambiguous
responses

- *Then I will say 'Make a guess' or 'It's a secret' [S]*

Based on the in-vivo codes, sub-categories (In-vitro codes) were assigned, whereby categories were generated. Upon completion, corresponding themes were derived. In the findings and discussion section, key categories from the major themes will be presented in the following order:

- Inevitability of Deception
- Critical Elements in Successful Deception
- Successful Result of Deception When Properly Practised
- Enhancement of Guest Satisfaction
- Ethical Deception: Direct Intention to Benefit Others
- Unethical Deception: Direct Intention to Benefit Oneself
- Opinions on Existing Literature and Current Practices
- Other Approaches Than Deception

4.1 Inevitability of Deception

Despite the longtime negligence from researchers, deception has always been residing in the hospitality sector. Amongst the 20 interviewees, all of them have used deception before in their work life. Being perceived as a usual practice in the industry, deception is reported to be fundamental in guest services. The in-vivo codes ‘*normal*’ and ‘*common*’ are constantly reported by interviewees when discussing about the practice of deception in the industry. In other words, lying to the guests at some point is inevitable:

‘Everyone who works in hotels has lied’ - Interviewee A, Guest Services Officer

Every day, the frontline employees lie for various purposes under different

scenarios. Nevertheless, amongst all the deception examples given by the interviewees, most of which are practised voluntarily. That is, the interviewees are free to choose whether to deceive. However, there are also circumstances that the interviewees are required to lie, and which mainly attribute to their job nature or guest request.

Regardless of the voluntariness of deception, an experienced managerial hotel employee, Interviewee P, has classified lies based on its proactivity. In her theory, deceptive acts in the industry could be grouped under two main areas: ***Initiative*** or ***Responsive***. On one hand, initiative lies denote the deceptive acts that are proactively performed by the staff. On the other hand, responsive lies signify the deception involved in a response given by a staff to the guests. Between the two types of lies, the former one is usually perceived better by the interviewee as more control is offered to the deceiver in regards to the form and degree of deception whereas the latter one requires the deceiver to have a higher command of deceptive skill as the time given for a response is often limited.

Besides, the concept of emotional labour was also mentioned by few interviewees, whose ideas also revolve around ‘the process of managing one’s emotions to meet the job requirement’ as discussed by scholars (James, 1989; Karimi et al., 2014; Mikolajczak et al., 2007).

‘Even though we may not be very happy sometimes, we still need to become an actor or actresses’ - Interviewee B, Guest Relations Officer

This deep-rooted type of deception had been expected to be mentioned more often but most probably since the practice has become too natural to be recalled as a

form of deceptive acts, it did not appear in many interviewee's mind during interviews.

In spite of its prevalence in the industry, interviewees agree to the view of this research that no standard or instruction on deception has been established before in the industry, which gives rise to the importance of this study given the destined occurrence of deception.

4.2 Critical Elements for Successful Deception

Similar to other sectors like criminology and economics, deception skills are required in hospitality context. Besides a traditional perspective about deception being simply making up fake excuses, a few interviewees have also emphasised the importance of acting skill in the industry:

'It's acting skill and it's very important in the industry' - Interviewee L, Assistant

Guest Service Supervisor

Indeed, acting skill is a form of nonverbal cue that ensures the quality of a lie (Vasek, 1986). The outlook echoes with the one held by Meissner and Kassin (2015) and Vrij (2014) that nonverbal signs are crucial factors in the success of deception.

Upon a congruent mix of both verbal and nonverbal messages in deception, a hospitality staff has to make sure that the lie is at its most professional state. Succeeding a customarily high standard of service in the industry, even deception should be executed in a sophisticated way. Lies resembling young child's lame excuses, which are easily detected and challenged, should not exist during guest encounters. This is particularly momentous in comparison to our everyday lying because should guests detect the lies, would the brand image and reputation be

adversely impaired:

‘Even if you lie to make the guests happy, they will think you are not honest and they will have a bad impression to the hotel’ - Interviewee O, Assistant Chief Concierge

Apart from the professionalism, consistency happens to be another focal point of deception in hospitality, and which aims to eliminate any potential suspicions from guests. Furthermore, if the truth exposes, there is a high probability that the guests will be angry with the deceiving employees, harming the interpersonal trust in between:

‘Because the customer will then know we were lying the whole time and they will become even angrier’ - Interviewee C, Flight Attendant

As previous scholars (Bok, 1978; Boles et al., 2000; Carr, 1968; Schweitzer et al., 2006) conformed, the failure of deception could pose irreversible impacts on interpersonal relationships and the hospitality industry is no exception.

4.3 Successful Result of Deception When Properly Practised

A positive result from practising deception was reported by all interviewees. Almost every time a deceptive act was performed, the outcome matched with the original intention of the deceiver. This could possibly due to their advanced deception skills, given the number of years accumulating the experience in the industry.

‘Then they become super happy’ - Interviewee S, Cast Member

Having said that, it is critical to understand that deception is not the all-purpose elixir to every problem. A certain number of interviewees have reminded that if the deception is inappropriately used, catastrophic consequences could emerge. Examples include the impairment of reputation and breakage of trust as mentioned, as well as guest complaints, negative online reviews and so on. Following the same logic, the overall service quality could be enhanced when deception is wisely adopted.

'I think... it's constructive when we use it well' - Interviewee R, Club Lounge Butler

In brief, a conclusion can be drawn that deception is similar to a double-edged sword. Whether it is beneficial or inimical depends on the way of practice. As such, instead of treating deception as a taboo in hospitality, practitioners and researchers should confront and discuss about it in order to establish general guidelines in the industry to facilitate the quality of the workforce and eradicate potential service failure due to a wrongly-used lie.

4.4 Enhancement of Guest Satisfaction

From the interviews, most of the reported reasons to employ deception follow a similar pattern – to enhance guest satisfaction – which will be predominantly discussed. Nevertheless, some of the relatively less frequent yet significant reasons would also be briefly introduced for a more all-rounded discussion.

4.4.1. Maintenance of a Professional Image

There are a handsome amount of reasons generated from the interviews and which are coded under themes with same purposes. Amongst which, maintaining a

professional image happens to be the most frequently mentioned reason. A lot of interviewees have stated the importance of showcasing their professionalism to the guests whenever possible:

‘It’s because we will look very unprofessional if we tell the guests that we don’t know and we can check online’ - Interviewee N, Concierge

Such a phenomenon is most likely because of the upscale class of the organisation that the majority of the interviewees are in, where the image is one of the most influential determinants in the success of an upscale business unit (Martínez, Pérez, & del Bosque, 2014). Therefore, utilising deception to sustain the professional image of the company becomes natural.

4.4.2. Delighting Guests

Besides, the intention to bring positive feeling to the deception recipients, known as guests, was also recurrently reported. Being in the service industry, which entertaining guests is one of the core duties (Fuchs, 1968; Pine & Gilmore, 1998), deception was often tactically employed to raise the service quality. Many of the examples provided by the interviewees were related to making up false information to cause positive psychologic effects to the guests:

‘What I said is simply told the guests that it was a treat from the hotel since we know she was travelling with her husband’ - Interviewee L, Assistant Guest Service

Supervisor

Given the intensifying rivalry in the international hospitality industry, going above and beyond to exceed guest’s expectation has become one of the top priorities

of many legal entities (FarkiĆ, 2016; McColl-Kennedy, Cheung, & Ferrier, 2015).

Thereupon, deception is destined to be practised at some point in order to constantly surprise the guests.

4.4.3. Avoidance of Stimulating Negative Feelings

Apart from that, hospitality staff also deceive to avoid provoking any undesirable emotions in guests. These sentiments generally include sadness, disappointment, anger, stress, fear, embarrassment and guilt (Diener et al., 2010; Grinde, 2016). Indeed, this intention goes along with the previous justification - satisfying guests.

‘Lie or not we still have to make sure the guests have face’ - Interviewee J, Duty

Manager

Without the above negative elements in a guest cycle, the satisfaction level would be significantly raised. With that, today’s hospitality employees not only need to delight the guests, but also minimise any potential negative forces.

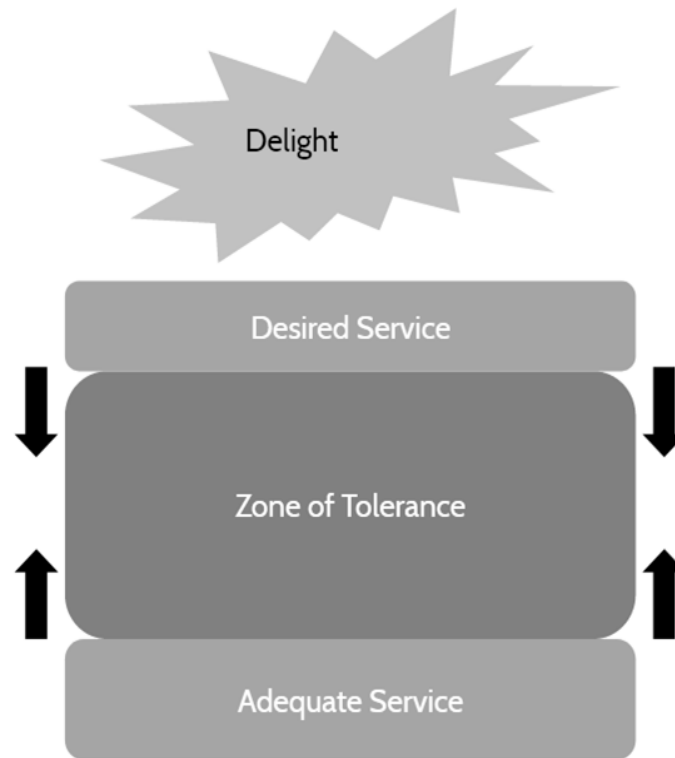
4.4.4. Creation of a Flawless Environment

In this day and age, guests are undoubtedly becoming more demanding (Jayawardena et al., 2013). In the perspective of customer gap model as shown in image 1 (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985), the degree of tolerance for any imperfect service is continually narrowing.

‘Guests don’t care who is the bad guy. They only know if we cannot get a taxi for them, we are useless’ - Interviewee N, Concierge

Image 1

Customer Gap Model by Parasuraman et al. (1985).



However, ‘to err is human’. In reality, service failure is doomed to occur. Therefore, the focus of practitioners should be keeping the frequency and degree of seriousness to minimal to cause least impact to guests. Nevertheless, to several interviewees, guests do not always need to acknowledge the existence of the service failure. As such, in some circumstances, the staff tend to hide the truth from the guests.

‘We have to make sure everything looks perfect’ - Interviewee F, Assistant Club

Floor Manager

Actually, in order to attain the level of delight in the gap model, the basic service must be delivered in a totally error-free manner. Hence, the need to create a paradisiacal environment for nowadays guests is highlighted in the industry more

frequently now, and where deception is often adopted as an aid.

4.4.5. Glamorisation of Reasons

As mentioned, not all service failures are necessary to be noticed by guests. Yet, there are also times that the guests must have already recognised the imperfection. For instance, an already-impatient guest has asked about the status of the food ordered, which is then found to be missing in the system. At this point, deception is sometimes chosen to balance the dissatisfying truth and guest feeling. That is, the frontline staffs may alter the truth to make the reasons more glamorous and decent:

'It's better for them to accept that the food is coming slow than we have missed the order' - Interviewee D, Waitress

Through the deception, the negative impact caused is kept to the minimal. In the meantime, the guest's emotion is perceived to be more stable too.

In addition to all the above sub-categories raising the guest satisfaction, several other purposes to deceive were also mentioned by some interviewees in the following section.

4.4.6. Prevention of Chaotic Situation

This reason is mainly raised by interviewees whose job duties include ensuring serenity. The general idea is that when a potential chaos might happen, such as a visit of a top celebrity and an emergency currently under investigation, the staff would strategically censor unnecessary information to eradicate any fuss, which could provoke undesirable feelings such as worry, fear and hyper.

‘When the captains haven’t made official announcement, we don’t know if it’s life threatening ether. So when passengers ask, we will say ‘it’s normal’ and try to calm them.’ - Interviewee G, Flight Attendant

However, this practice requires a high level of emergency handling skills as having the guests unprepared for the real danger could lead to a fatal finale. As such, it is better to leave such task to practitioners with rich industry experience.

4.4.7. Handling Tricky Guests

Besides the common purposes, some interviewees also introduced other unconventional reasons - To handle difficult or lying guests. From another perspective, deception is adopted as a trick to deal with the counterparts. A typical case shared by Interviewee J is that when the guest lied about not having smoked in the room, the interviewee would assert that proofs have been found as a tactic to bluff the guests in order that they would commit the violation of policies and rules.

4.4.8. Deception as a Guest Service

Especially in hospitality, deception actually serves as one of the services too. When a guest would like to keep their visit low profile or conceal their identity, ‘Incognito’ status is set. Afterwards, employees must neither reveal the guest’s presence nor offer any hint that might suggest so. Here, acting skills become essential.

‘That’s the reason why we never respond so quickly. The usual practice is to pretend you are finding in on the computer system and then after a while just tell the guest you cannot locate the name. And what I will also do is to ask the guest to write down

the name in a paper so that I can check if the name is spelled correctly or any reverse in first name and last name’ - Interviewee L, Assistant Guest Service

Supervisor

The above example has once again confirmed the inevitability of deception in the industry and with that, all employees should be capable of some deception skills to facilitate the service delivery.

4.5 Ethical Deception: Direct Intention to Benefit Guests

In a general sense, since deception could be a constructive instrument in guest services when properly adopted, hence the interviewees’ ethical perception towards deception also varies along. That is, there is no fixed ethicality held by these hospitality workers. If the deception was appropriately used, the interviewees would regard it as ethical and vice versa:

‘As long as the intention is beneficial to the guests, it’s good for them’ - Interviewee

P, Club Floor Manager

However, the majority of the viewpoints about ethical deception is related to benefiting the guests. In accordance to the interviewees, certain prerequisites for deception are established, which is discussed in the table 6.

Table 6

Main Determinants for A Suitable Context to Practise Deception

Main Determinants for A Suitable Context to Practise Deception	Explanations
★ The Intention is to benefit guests	It is generally more acceptable if the direct intention is to cause positive influence to the guests. The logic behind aligns with the concept of altruistic lies, which are usually perceived selfless and noble.
★ The recipient most probably would not mind if the truth reveals	This rule of thumb assists employees to determine whether the situation is too serious to deceive. For example, if a staff tells a businessman he looks fine when the guest obviously wears two different pattern of socks, the guest may think the staff purposely tricks him when he finds out the clumsiness later. Even though the staff embraces the intention to protect the guest's feeling, the businessman may not care because appearance matters to him in business meeting.
★ To maintain a professional image to guests	Since image significantly matters in hospitality (Manhas & Tukamushaba, 2015), interviewees agree that deception used to retain a healthy and positive image of the organisation is appropriate.
★ Deception as a Service	When deception is requested as a service by guests, such as incognito status, employees are simply delivering service as promised. Thus, such a manner is perceived ethical and appropriate by the interviewees.

Thereupon, it is vital for the hospitality practitioners to learn about what, when and how are the ethical and suitable contexts to use deception in order to utilise such a sharp tool to enhance service quality and avoid being backfired. From the discussion above, hospitality staffs could have a general reference on the suitable circumstances to deceive.

4.6 Unethical Deception: Direct Intention to Benefit Oneself

In contrast to the previous section, the perceived morality is significantly lower when the deceivers carry a direct intention to benefit themselves. Moreover, a number of informants also expressed that not using deception in emergencies, money or sensitive issues should be industry common sense. For that, another set of determinants on unethical and unsuitable contexts to lie is also presented to further ensure the backfiring is best avoided.

Table 7

Main Determinants for an Unsuitable Context to Practise Deception

Main Determinants for an Unsuitable Context to Practise Deception	Explanations
★ Guest's interest is sacrificed in exchange for staff's interest.	This point of view coded from most interviewees resembles the 'self-serving lies' derived from the social psychology. Such a practice is often deemed to be unethical, selfish and shallow. When employees only wish to benefit themselves, it often contradicts to the nature of hospitality, which is to care for the guests. For instance, if a staff purposely charged more

	for a drink because the guest is drunk, he or she would be regarded unethically and inappropriately practising deception as the staff tries to take advantage of the guest.
★ In times of emergencies which threaten guest's safety.	Generally speaking, it is common sense to all workers that no deception should be used when an emergency is confirmed as personal safety should be treated as the top priority of all time. This patterns also applies to hospitality industry, which interviewees all agree to the above stance.
★ Sensitive Issues Such as Guest Privacy and Monetary Matter	As the term itself suggests, sensitive issues are usually areas which the guests would concern more. Thus, deceiving about something which the guests would mind if the truth is found out is not appropriate. A point to be noted is that this rule is different from sacrificing guest's interest. For example, when a staff wrongly overcharges a guest's credit card by accident, he or she should be honest and inform the guest about the mistake. Otherwise if a guest discovers the truth later, the staff may be accused of intentionally mal-practising.

In short, deception is in most cases regarded as inappropriate when the deceiver forgoes the interest of the recipients, as well as in confirmed emergencies or

issues which guests most probably mind. By referring to the two sets of guidelines on deception suitability, hospitality workers are equipped with a clearer picture on how to strategically practise deception to optimise the advantages inhered within.

4.7 Opinions on Existing Literature and Current Practice

Throughout the data collection process, various unique and interesting points of views emerged. These insights and advice were mostly generated from interviewee's wisdom and profound work experience in the industry.

4.6.1. Attitudes Towards Dodging Technique

Proposed from the medicine discipline, dodging a question could be a useful tactic for practitioners who do not prefer to deceive. From the eyes of hospitality workers, the viewpoint is somewhat agreed. Without doubt, it does help an individual to avoid lying to the counterpart. However, this approach is easily defeated once the staff encounters a determinant guest who strives for getting the truth. Nevertheless, approving its partial effectiveness, the interviewees recommend treating this method as the first buffer:

'But sometimes some customers may be very critical, then it might not be so useful.

Maybe they can try that at first?' - Interviewee I, Waiting Staff

Yet, the perspective of managerial grading interviewees slightly differed. They agreed that dodging is useful for operational staffs, however when it comes to the managerial employees, such a tactic is not recommended as the issues they usually deal with are sterner, which it would be more appropriate to offer a concrete response, regardless of the involvement of deception or not.

'It's more difficult for them to shift the questions because they usually handle cases which are more serious and need to give a proper answer to the guests' - Interviewee

H, Senior Duty Manager

In brief, dodging technique in hospitality is believed to be useful to a certain degree. However, it shall not be regarded as a promising tool in addressing an issue. Instead, this may be used to buy the staff some time to investigate the truth behind before actually responding to the guests.

4.6.2. Overdeception

As discussed, when deception is detected, damaging finales take place. Hence, a competent deceiving capability is foundational in practice. However, Interviewee J, a Duty Manager in an upscale hotel, has repeatedly reminded that lying to an extreme extent could lead to destructive result.

'I think a moderate lie is fine but if we lie too much and too big then it's very dangerous'

Overdeception is not only confined to lies that go ridiculously far, but also signifies continuous using lies to cover for the previous lies. Whilst the stacking block of lies piles up, if it falls, the degree of devastating outcome multiplies. Thus, disregarding the level of sophistication, all deceivers should perform rationally and consider the overall risk.

4.6.3. Art of Speaking

Art of speaking was mentioned by a couple of interviewees, who both happen

to be managerial staffs in their respective organisation. The coincident may attribute to their polished service skills throughout the years in the industry. The idea indeed has long resided in human interaction. For individuals who are naturally sociable and presentable, very often they are following the art of speaking every day. If language is a resource, then art of speaking is the capability to choose the right choice of diction, theme, order of topics under different occasions (Lamy, Arnauld & Nicole, 1708).

To a certain degree, the art of speaking does touches the definition of deception, which is the manipulation of an original truth to intentionally mislead the message recipient. Sometimes, a message is understated or overstated to manipulate the focus of the audience. For example, ***“Ms. Lee, Ms. Lo and Ms. Shen, if you look at how amazing the view is, you will definitely not think about the slightly higher price because after all, it is the valuable memory of yours that matters”***

Having said that, the degree of deception involved is usually low. Unlike some of the examples obtained from the interviews, the speaker mainly exaggerates or lessens the importance of certain subjective elements in a message but barely making up false facts. Indeed, when it is acquired well, the communication flow could actually be facilitated (Mamas, 2016)

To conclude, the art of speaking, though is associated with deception, it is not the major concern due to its limited extent of risk.

4.6.4. Overbooking

Being perhaps the mostly neglected topic in deception, overbooking has been a routine in numerous hospitality organisations. Ranging from airlines, restaurants to hotels, this notorious practice has been constantly criticised (Enghagen, 1996).

The habit of overbooking originates from one of the features of service industry - Perishability (Guler & Yukselen, 2010) - which indicates the inability to store a service capacity for future sale (Jafari, 1974). That is, if a guestroom cannot be sold to a guest today, it cannot be saved for tomorrow and thus becomes a loss. Theoretically, when the products like seats in a flight are all purchased, overbooking should not happen. However, in reality there are many reasons which make the guests cannot be present to enjoy the service or product. In such case, many companies start to oversell to ensure 100% guest arrivals. Yet, when the guests are all present in the end, the latter ones are often apologised and offered compensation, without actually enjoying the promise delivered by the company during reservation.

This malpractice indeed fully matches the definition of deception and is categorised as an unethical approach as it sacrifices the guest's interest for self-interest (i.e. The guest's right to enjoy the service versus the assurance of company profit). Many guests who are not familiar with such a practice would become furious as they do not understand why a company will promise them a seat when the flight is already fully booked by other passengers. The guest is then forced to wait for the next flight departing in 6-hour with compensation because after all, there is no magic to create an extra seat by the airline company. Without a doubt, the satisfaction level will disastrously decline.

'Of course. Even you will feel angry about it' - Interviewee T, Hostess

Surprisingly, only one interviewee has mentioned this issue when discussing about deception. This is most probably because the practice has been deep-rooted in the industry that practitioners begin to forget about its unethicity (Enghagen, 1996).

Indeed, there two degrees of ethics of such a shallow practice, even though customers still perceive these overselling companies as equally devilish.

Table 8

Two Degrees of Unethicity of Overbooking

Degree of Unethicity	Types of Practice Adopted
Lesser Evil	A situation which prepayment is not required upon reservation. Guests could easily disappear without any penalty and the service providers suffer from perishability. A typical example is that in restaurants, if diners abandon their reservation, the team needs to urgently attract new businesses to fill up the vacancy. Therefore, based on history and forecast data, these service providers oversell to ensure a 100% occupancy. Yet, when all guests arrive in the end, there would be not enough seats.
Evil	A situation which full payment is already obtained upon reservation. Even if guests do not appear in the end, the products or services are theoretically sold already. Typical examples include flight seats and hotel rooms. However, recognising the trend of no-shows, the revenue management teams decide to further maximise the profit and thus sell more than their physical capacity to make a gamble between service failure and profit maximisation.

Until today, overbooking remains to be an unethical practice and more disapproving voices have emerged from the consumer market. Thereupon, hospitality

organisation should be aware of this issue and find a win-win solution.

4.8 Other Approaches than Deception

Although deception is found to be a possibly useful tool in guest services, it should be taken into account that not all industry practitioners favour this practice. As such, some other approaches are consolidated from the interviewees' ideas.

4.7.1 Honesty with Sincerity

Although in contrast to the main theme of this research, honesty is still a desirable solution to problems. Deception, though practical, is not the ultimate solution to all issues. Some guests actually do not mind the imperfect service when the staff demonstrates genuinely apologetic manner.

'When the guest checks in at 2:00pm, and the room is not ready yet, don't lie and call to housekeeping to ask the cleaning process and tell the guest approximately what time' - Interviewee A, Guest Service Officer

Besides, if the guests are not satisfied with the sincerity shown, some compensation could be offered as a token of courtesy, which would alleviate the guest's dissatisfaction (Gelbrich, Gäthke & Grégoire, 2015).

4.8.2 Interaction Minimisation

If deception is not preferred, employees may also try to minimise the encounters with guest. For sure some interactions are inevitable, but staffs could subtly diminish which:

'But of course I am not giving any response but just reply a few words so the guests

can't build on the same topic. But to guests who may be good talker, I will try to round up the conversation and then say something like 'oh if you need me I'll be around so just call me or find me in somewhere'' - Interviewee B, Guest Relations

Officer

By tactically ending the interaction with short phrases and round-ups, the chance of practising deception also decreases.

4.9 Summary and Theoretical Implications

In this chapter, deception is proclaimed to be inevitable in the hospitality industry. Several critical factors for smooth deception is also discussed. Apart from that, main reasons to use deception have been presented and discussed at the same time. When linked to the previous studies about deception by other disciplines, it is rather obvious that each of reasons possesses certain features of the three major types of lies classified in social psychology field, namely ***Self-Serving; Mutually-beneficial; and Altruistic lies***. If these reasons are roughly classified accordingly, a table of summary would then be generated as follows:

Table 9

Types of Lies of Claimed Intentions in Classification of Social Psychology

Direct Intention	Types of Deception and Explanation
Maintenance of a Professional Image	Altruistic lie: Guests feel better about the environment
Delight Guests	Altruistic lie: Guests are happier and their expectation is exceeded
Creation of a Flawless Environment	Altruistic lie: Guests enjoy the utopia-

	like atmosphere.
• Deception as a Guest Service	Altruistic lie: Guest's request is entertained
• Avoidance of Stimulating Negative Feelings	Altruistic lie: Guest's feeling is well taken care of
• Glamorisation of Reasons	Altruistic lie: Guest emotions are concerned
• Prevention of Chaotic Situation	Mutually-beneficial lie: Guests are not in unnecessary fear and employees could do the investigation smoothly
• Handling Tricky Guest	Mutually-beneficial lie: Guest's feeling is considered and employees could resolve the problem

On the surface, all the claimed intentions by interviewees appear to be mostly altruistic, where they genuinely put themselves in guest's shoes. However, unlike daily interpersonal interaction, where people do lie for a pure reason, the ultimate goal of most hospitality organisations - Profit Maximisation - may affect the authenticity of the claimed purposes. That is, there are underlying reasons to practise deception given the nature of business, and which are hereby defined as 'Indirect Intentions'

In spite of the seemingly complex concept, they actually refer to 'The ultimate intentions to be achieved through practising deception'. In the following table, several major intentions are proposed:

Table 10

Indirect Intention through the practice of deception

Indirect Intentions through Deception	Rationale
1. Obtain Guest Compliments	• Better work performance for promotion opportunities
2. Minimise Guest Complaint	• Avoid being Condemned by Senior Management and smoothen service delivery
3. Earn Extra Monetary Gratitude	• Obtain more tips from guests to increase disposable income
4. Better Brand Image	• The guests could spread positive word-of-mouth to bring in more businesses to the company
5. Enhance guest loyalty	• Reduce operating cost, especially in marketing
6. Maximise Guest's Willingness to Pay	• Invite guests for up-selling or booking a suite during next visit to increase company's profitability

With the above indirect intentions, all the altruistic lies are re-evaluated. Since profit maximisation is still one of the core values in all hospitality units, very rarely could a staff serve the guest without any indirect intention listed above. In fact, a number of interviewees have also mentioned that deception often has effects on both parties.

'I think it is like, for both the staff and the passengers. Since we are in the service industry, so it has the connection' - Interviewee C, Flight Attendant

As such, it is sensible to draw a conclusion that nearly all deception practised in the hospitality industry is considered mutually-beneficial under the classification model established in social psychology.

Indeed, the analysis results all match with the initial insights extracted from

the main outlook of other disciplines elaborated in chapter 2, methodology. The table below has shown the confirmation for the proposed insights generated from different disciplined.

Table 11

Summary of Major Outlooks on Deception (Adopted from Table 2)

Disciplines	Major Outlooks	Insights for Hospitality	Linkages to Findings
Economics	1. Deception to gain personal benefit or avoid personal loss is a selfish act. (Becker, 1968; Gneezy, 2005; Grolleau et al., 2014; Holm, 2010)	1. Self-serving lies should be kept minimal. 2. Deception can be used not only for improving service quality but also alleviating service failure effect.	1. Self-serving lies are perceived ethical and thus should not be practised 2. Deception can be adopted for managing the organization image or glamorising a reason.
Criminology	1. Deception is a misconduct 2. Quality of a lie increases as preparation time lengthens 3. Deception detection can be trained (Azizli et al., 2016; Brewer & Abell, 2015; DePaulo et al., 2003; Logue et al., 2015)	1. Customers may detect lame lies. 2. Deception should be prohibited when legal issue is involved.	1. Lies need to be professional so that the guests do not detect the deception 2. It is inappropriate to deceive in money or sensitive issues.

Social Psychology	1. Lies are categorised into Self-serving; Mutually Beneficial; and Altruistic. 2. Nonverbal cues are part of the deception behaviour (Abe, 2009; Dunbar et al., 2016; Goffman, 1955; Levine & Schweitzer, 2014, 2015; Vrij et al., 2015; Talwar et al., 2007; Sip et al., 2012)	1. Appropriate adoption of Mutually Beneficial and Altruistic deception could enhance service quality. 2. Be both verbally and non-verbally congruent.	1. Deception in hospitality is almost all mutually beneficial and when properly employed, guest services are bettered. 2. Acting skills are very important in contributing to the success of deception
Medicine	1. Inappropriate usage of deception could have drastic impact. 2. Dodging the question can be an option for ethical dilemma facer. (Aitken, 2010, Dunbar, 2003; Sasson, 2000; Richard et al., 2010)	1. Require general guideline for employees to learn suitable context to use deception	1. As mentioned by interviewees, there is no standard or reference in the industry to use deception and as a way to well manage the sharp instrument, guidelines should be established.

4.10 Implications and Recommendation for Hospitality Practitioners

Upon completion of analysis, a series of sound recommendations are derived respectively for hospitality employees of operation and managerial grades for a better management of deception in the industry. In table 12 and 13, several implications for the industry and more specific recommendations for practitioners are consolidated.

Table 12

Implications for Hospitality Industry

Implications for the Overall Hospitality Industry
1. Given the inevitability of deception in hospitality, all industry practitioners should therefore start to disregard this topic as a taboo but embrace it as a service-enhancing instrument.
2. A successful execution of deception in hospitality is highly related to its high degrees of professionalism and consistency.
3. The direct intentions to deceive should always be benefiting the guests.
4. Deception with direct intentions to sacrifice guests' interest for staff's interest is not acceptable and should not be practised.
5. The hospitality sector should start to address the issue of overbooking given its perceived shallowness.

Table 13

Specific Recommendation for Staffs of Operational and Managerial Grades

Specific Recommendations for entry-level employees	Specific Recommendations for managerial employees
1. Acquire essential deception skills	1. Sharpen the deception skills, as

through accumulating experience at work, observing the superiors' interaction with guests and case studies shared by colleagues.	managers are the one to handle complex cases, which were reported to have more involvement with deception.
2. Do not use deception if the staff is unsure of its suitability in a situation.	2. Take the initiative to coach about appropriate adoption of deception in guest services.
3. Always consult superiors when in doubt.	3. State specifically to subordinates about what kinds of deceptions are welcome and what are unwelcome at workplace.
4. Start with deception in smaller scale, such as art of speaking, to gradually improve the capability.	4. Overlook the teams to ensure employees do not lie extremely.

To conclude, through following the above implications and recommendations, operational staff would be able to steadily develop the competence in deception. As for the managerial staff, it is momentous for them to lead the inexperienced subordinates on their road to master the deception. When the workforce is capable of practicing deception appropriately, the service level of the organization is mostly likely to rise.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Deception, as long as being carefully and wisely used, enhances the service quality. However, if employees continue to ignore its significance and do not make effort in acquiring essential deceiving skills, the finale would most likely be undesirable. Nevertheless, readers should be noted that the guidelines established are not the absolute laws to follow. Each guest encounter has its own uniqueness and there is more than one fashion to practice deception. As such, they are recommended to treat the determinants of appropriateness as a reference or rules of thumb. In that case, by incorporating own wisdom and work experience into the interviewees' viewpoints, a more personalised set of deception guidelines could be generated.

In short, this study has acted as a pioneer in researching deception in hospitality and met the objectives set. Offering a better understanding of deception in the hospitality sector in general and its features, the findings also investigated the effectiveness of deception in guest services. Besides, the rationales behind the practice of deception was carefully analysed. More importantly, guidelines on ethical and appropriate contexts to use deception were established for operational staff to have a better command of this almost inescapable practice. In addition, managerial readers were also given some insights on the suitable circumstances to support their subordinates to practise deception. Apart from that, relative substituting approaches were presented for those not in favour of deception.

More significantly, 7 main categories of deception for the hospitality industry were found through this research, and which were that: deception is inevitable;

professionalism and consistency are the two major critical elements in deception, deception enhances service quality when properly adopted; raising guest satisfaction is the most common reason to deceive; deception with intentions to benefit guests is perceived ethical by staff; deception with intentions to benefit staff only is regarded unethical; and dodging a question can serve as a first buffer before using deception. With the above findings, the hospitality academia is now equipped with its own unique set of traits on the topic of deception.

Despite the exertion for perfection, there are still limitations in this study. To begin with, the majority of the interviewees were from upscale hotels, which could have hindered the heterogeneity of ideas. Besides, given the sensitivity of the topic, the tendency to offer socially desirable responses may rise even with the assurance of the identity anonymity. Apart from that, this research only approached deception from the perspective of hospitality employees. Therefore, future studies are recommended to study deception from other perspectives of other stakeholders. As the openness towards deception increases, it is positive that more fascinating findings will be discovered.

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Appendix I Interview Guide

Thank you for having the interview with me. My name is Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.
Part 1 - Rapport Building:
• How long have you been working in the hospitality industry? • What is the one thing you enjoy working in the industry the most? • Other related questions.
Part 2 - Screening Question:
• So far in your work life in hospitality, do you have any experience where you did not deliver the complete truth to a hotel guest/ diner/ air passenger? (Yes/ No)
<u>a. If No:</u> i. If you choose not to lie, was there a particular reason? ii. Do you have any useful approach which hospitality employees can remain totally honest with the guests and at the same time not irritating them? <i>The end of the interview, thank the interviewee for participation and offer gift vouchers.</i>
<u>b. If Yes:</u> i. What were your intention to lie to the guests? ii. Were you afraid that the guest may find out that you are lying and be angry instead?
Part 3 - General Questions (Questions to be asked are randomly selected from

Each Section)
Objectives 1: <i>Examine the effectiveness of deceptive behaviour in guest services.</i> 1. Was the end result successfully match your initial plan when deceiving the guests? 2. Do you always use the same tactic to address similar cases? 3. If the deception failed to serve its original purpose, what are the reasons? 4. Overall do you think deception is a constructive or destructive tool in guest services and why?
Objective 2: <i>Explore the rationales behind deception of hospitality employees</i> 1. What is the usual case that you deceive a guest? Why does that happen more frequently than others? 2. When you lied, were you trying to benefit the guests, yourself or your organisation?
Objective 3: <i>Investigate the perceived ethicality by hospitality employees</i> 1. From your own ethical perspective, how do you think about lying to the guests? 2. What is the one thing that justifies the most for deceiving the guests? 3. What is the one thing that least justifies for deceiving the guests?
Objective 4: <i>Offer insights for operational staff on the appropriate contexts to adopt deception</i> 1. In times of more serious issue such as robbery or death, which might cause a fuss in the hotel, would you think the frontlinestaff should always be honest with or hide some selected information from the guests? and Why? 2. When a guest asks a question and the staff does not want to lie, would you recommend remaining silent to the truth (e.g. dodging the question) or deceive instead? Why would you recommend so? 3. When are the inappropriate contexts to deceive a guest in hospitality? 4. [To managerial level staff] Under what circumstances, you would support your staff deceiving the guests, if at all?
<i>Other Questions or Follow-up Questions to be Asked According to the Flow of the Discussion</i>
Part 4: Closing
1. That's the near end of the interview, is there anything you would like more to share or ask? 2. Thank you for your time today and your contribution is surely appreciated. Before we end, I would like to ask if you have anyone whom you recommend to be another interviewee for this matter?

Appendix II Interview Transcripts

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (Pilot - Interview A)

Date of Interview: 10th February, 2017

Venue: Hotel Lounge

Title of the Interviewee: Guest Services Officer

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 3 Years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words being in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

[Rapport Building]

Interviewer: Hello [Name of the Interviewee], how's work?

Interviewee A: [Laugh] As busy as usual. You also saw the lines. [Referring to the queue of guests at Front Desk on the interviewing date.]

Interviewer: I know. That's why I thank you for helping me out. You're actually the first one I interview, so this is a pilot interview for me.

Interviewee A: WOW I'm the first. But anyway I don't do this for free, you owe me a dinner.

Interviewer: [Laugh] Okay how about Tai Hing? [A local restaurant]

Interviewee A: At least Peninsula [Referring to Peninsula Hotel Hong Kong].

Interviewer: [Laugh] Okay let's see. Anyway let's get to the part now. I need to read this out first. So, I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee A: Okay sure.

Interviewer: Did you take thesis or F&B [Food & Beverage] course for your FYP?

Interviewee A: I took the Bistro of course. I can freeride my groupmates [Laugh]

- Interviewee: [Laugh] What the heck is that reason. Anyway, let's focus. and let me go with the first question. So far in your work life in hospitality, do you have any experience where you did not deliver the complete truth to a hotel guest?
- Interviewee A: Sorry? Can you repeat?
- Interviewer: So far in your work life in hospitality, do you have any experience where you did not deliver the complete truth to a hotel guest? Oh that means you have lied to a guest.
- Interviewee A: Yes of course (Usual Practice) I have [Laugh] I think everyone who works in hotels has lied too. (Deception is a usual practice in hospitality)
- Interviewer: [Laugh] Maybe. And may I know why did you do that?
- Interviewee A: [Think] How do I say... but there are so many reasons that I lie to a guest. (There are multiple reasons to deceive)
- Interviewer: Then Do you have any typical example of you lying to a guest?
- Interviewee A: Let me think... [Think] One example is that when the guest comes down to front desk and says his key doesn't work, and mostly of the time we don't know why You know it could be because someone forgot to extend the keys when extending the stay or some other technical reasons (The interviewee decided to lie because the truth was unknown). But usually I just lie and say that it's because the magnet in the key is affected by the mobile phone (Voluntary Lie – Interviewee chose to lie). Then we ask him to not put the key and phone together.
- Interviewer: I have heard of it too. Aren't you scared that the guest will find out?
- Interviewee A: By how? Nobody knows the answer so even if we lie, the guest doesn't know anyway (The interviewee is more confident in lying because of the impossibility for the recipients to find out the truth).
- Interviewer: True. Speaking of room key though, for me I know a very common example which sometimes I do the same too actually. When the guest checks in before 2pm and the room isn't ready yet, the staff just say that the housekeeping is final checking the room or stuff like that. Do you also say the same?
- Interviewee A: No. Actually some guests would keep asking for an exact time and you cannot lie about it They will keep asking 'for how long?' and then after you told them the approximate timing, they really come

back to you to get the room. For some quests yes that excuse maybe works, but many guests are smart now so they know it's a lie (Not lie to customers who appear to be good at detecting lie).

Interviewer: Got it, thanks...So let's get back to the room key not working thing. Why did you choose to make up the reason?

Interviewee A: Because it makes us look stupid if we say we don't know [Laugh] (Intention to maintain a professional image of staff). And I think the guest will feel unhappy too, if there is no reason that the key fails. It just makes the hotel look bad if something doesn't work without a reason (Intention to maintain a professional image of staff). But if we create some reasons, at least the quest has some explanation and feel better (Intention to make guests feel better).

Interviewer: So... would you say by lying in this case, both the hotel and the guest are benefited?

Interviewee A: Yes I think so. (Intention to benefit all parties)

Interviewer: So in the end, did the guest feel better about the inconvenience?

Interviewee A: I think yes. When he firstly came to the front desk he was quite angry and he claimed that he had wasted 10 minutes trying to get in the room. But then once I said it is because of his mobile phone, he became calm and okay. (Deception has brought positive result)

Interviewer: [Laugh] Do you always say the same thing then?

Interviewee A: Yes and it works every time. The guest doesn't know how the key works anyway.

Interviewer: But how do you think about lying to the guest?

Interviewee A: What do you mean?

Interviewer: Like, if you have positive or negative feeling when you lie to a guest.

Interviewee A: Hard to say. I think it's okay for me. (No strong feeling towards practising deception) Because if I tell him we don't know the answer, I guess he will be more angry, so I just give him a good excuse. And in that way he's satisfied with the reason. (Intention to make the guest feel better)

Interviewer: Okay. Any other example of deception that comes to your mind now?

Interviewee A: [Think] There is one from yesterday. I don't know is it a lie actually. So, a guest came down and thanked us for preparing the

chocolate and nuts for them and her kids and she loved them. And she asked us how do we know she likes dark chocolate. But actually we don't know anything but we guess it's just the regular welcome amenity from the GR [Guest Relations] for the CIP [Commercially Important Person] guests. **But then I said to the guests it's a gift from the hotel. I didn't tell her we didn't know she and her kids like chocolate actually** (Voluntary Lie – Interviewee choose to lie)

Interviewer: Well I would say that as a GR, I often do it too. But in your view, how do you think about lying to the guest this time?

Interviewee A: **I think the guest wouldn't mind? She was very happy.** (It's okay to lie when the recipient most probably will not mind if the truth reveals)

Interviewer: How about if she found out you're lying?

Interviewee A: **I think that's okay. I think the guest will understand.** (It's okay to lie when the recipient most probably will not mind if the truth reveals)

Interviewer: Sure. So coming to the near end of the interview, what do you think is an inappropriate timing to lie to a guest in your hotel?

Interviewee A: I think you **shouldn't lie when the quest can easily challenge you or know.** (It's inappropriate to deceive if the truth is easy to be found out by the recipient)

Interviewer: Do you mean that... if the guest would probably know about the truth?

Interviewee A: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you have any example or scene where the guest has a higher chance of knowing it?

Interviewee A: I think the most typical one is still the one about checkin at 2:00pm. **When the quest check in at 2:00pm, and the room is not ready yet, don't lie and call to housekeeping to ask the cleaning process and tell the quest approximately what time.** (Be honest at some point)

Interviewer: Do you think the guests prefer you lying or telling the truth?

Interviewee A: [Laugh] **I think telling the truth of course.** (Different perspective in guest's point of view) When I go to travel I don't think I want the staff lie to me.

Interviewer: Such as... on what matters?

Interviewee A: [Think] For example, **if the harbour view is not 'harbour' enough**

then don't say it's harbour view room. (A lie that the interviewee minds)

Interviewer: [Laugh] okay I know what you're referring. But you have also lied to the guests too.

Interviewee A: But I didn't lie about something like that. *I lie so that the guests are happy.* (Intention to make guests feel better)

Interviewer: By 'something like that', do you mean the harbour view?

Interviewee A: Yes

Interviewer: So can I say that... when it's something factual or greatly affect the guests, we shouldn't lie?

Interviewee A: *You can say so, yes.* (Should not lie when the recipient would mind if the truth reveals)

Interviewer: Thank you. So... yes that's all I need for the interview. Thank you so much for your time and once again I will make sure what you said is only for academic purpose.

Interviewee A: Sure.

Interviewer: Anything you think you recommend I do to make the future interviews smoother?

Interviewee A: [Think] I think everything's okay. *But I think if you can send me the questions before the interview I have more time to prepare the examples and questions* (Recommendation for future interviews)

Interviewer: Oh yes that's a very good suggestion actually. But I am not sure if I can do that or not. I need to check online or ask my supervisor.

Interviewee A: Yes. you should check but except that, I think most things are okay and nice.

Interviewer: Thank you so much and thanks for your time, where are you heading to now?

Interviewee A: I think I will go out to buy Starbucks.

Interviewer: Oh okay then I will see you at work later this week.

Interviewee A: Okay.

Interviewer: Let me stop the recording here then. Thanks.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview B)

Date of Interview: 20th February, 2017

Venue: Hotel Back Office

Title of the Interviewee: Guest Relations Officer

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 5 Years

Words being underlined, bolded and Italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words being in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

[Rapport Building]

Interviewer: Hi [Name of the Interviewee]! Thank you for being my interviewee!

Interviewee B: That's okay. I know how difficult it is to find respondents.

Interviewer: Oh you did thesis too?

Interviewee B: Yes, but I do questionnaire and I needed to collect at least 300 forms so it was a really horrible time for me.

Interviewer: [Laugh] But at least now you don't need to do it anymore.

Interviewee B: Yes, I got out now.

Interviewer: So, let me begin my usual part first. My name is Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please

be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee B: Okay.

[Interview Questions]

Interviewer: So, first question: I know you have worked quite some time in the hotel industry after graduation, so, so far in your work life in hospitality, do you have any experience where you did not tell the complete truth to a hotel guest? That means lying.

Interviewee B: Oh yes. **Of course.** (Usual Practice of the interviewee)

Interviewer: [Laugh] ‘Of course’. Anyway, can you give me an example?

Interviewee B: [Think] It’s like sometimes when we talk to the guests even though we don’t like it, we’ll still have to talk to them. Some guests are very boring and you don’t know what they’re talking about, but **to show your professionalism, you still need to pretend that you are interested in talking to them.** (Intention to maintain a professional image of staff) **I think every GR [Guest Relations] has done the same thing before.** (Deception is a common practice for frontline employees)

Interviewer: [Laugh] I definitely understand that. How often does that happen?

Interviewee B: **Like every day?** (Usual practice for the interviewee) Like when I stand in breakfast time or afternoon tea or evening cocktail I need to mingle with the guests. Some guests are nice and friendly to talk to but then some of them are just not nice. But then **I will still need to chat with them and check how was their stay.** (The job requires the interviewee to socialise with guests regardless of the preference of the interviewee) And also some guests are too talkative. They always just talk talk talk and talk too long. **But I can’t just cut off the conversation; otherwise they will think we are being impolite to them. So the only thing I can do is stand there and listen to them and fake smile.** (Involuntary lie due to job requirement)

Interviewer: [Laugh] I definitely understand what you talking about. So do you always do this to the guests? Like lying in guest interaction?

Interviewee B: Sometimes. There are nice guests and family which I really want to talk to them and see how they are doing but sometime **if the conversation is so-so then I will lie and pretend to be interested. If the conversation is really bad, then I will try to go away with some excuses.** (Insight for frontline staff on a common scene in guest services)

Interviewer: Oh really? What are some of your excuses or tactics of getting away from the guests?

Interviewee B: Sometimes if I don't reply very often then the conversation will end very soon naturally. **But of course I am not giving any response but just reply a few words so the guests can't build on the same topic.** (Reply in short phrases to end the conversation naturally) But to guests who may be good talker, I will try to **round up the conversation and then say something like 'oh if you need me I'll be around so just call me or find me in somewhere'** (Round up the chatting) and then the conversation will end.

Interviewer: That's true, thanks. So... as you said pretending you are engaged in the conversation to make the guest feel good. So are the guests usually happy?

Interviewee B: **Yes I think so.** (Effective Result of Deception) Sometimes they just wanna talk. That's all. They actually just want to talk to someone. Some of them are also attention seeking. So I just need to talk to them and they will be happy. But of course you can't just keeping on talking for the whole time because otherwise you will have no time to do your other job tasks.

Interviewer: Yes I agree. And when you leave the conversation, you also mention about using excuses. Do you think excuses are also lies?

Interviewee B: I actually didn't think about that but if you ask me now then I think not really. I think lies and excuses are something different. **Lies are something I'll try to make up a fake thing but then excuses are some reasons for me to get away with something.** (Perceived difference between lies and excuses by the interviewee)

Interviewer: Actually that's an interesting area. I have never tried to look into the concept of deception and excuses but I will definitely look into the new aspect. Alright then, how do you personally think about lying to the guests?

Interviewee B: **I think that's normal.** (Deception is a usual practice and acceptable) Just like what we have learned at SHTM [School of Hotel and Tourism Management] - **hotel is a stage and we are the actors and actresses so it's all about acting so in my example of lying to the guest, I would say it's very normal.** (Acting is common in hotel industry)

Interviewer: Oh yes I think I have heard something similar before!

Interviewee B: Yes and as a GR [Guest Relations], **sometimes we need to act happy even though we're not. It's basic requirement.** (Involuntary lie due to job requirement) You don't want your guests see sad faces. **It's not professional to show your emotions at work, except happiness of course. But actually even for happiness, you can't be overly happy because you still need to maintain a professional image in front of the guests.** (Intention to remain a professional image and perform emotional labour) **So that I think lying is a very basic thing in hotel.** (Deception is a one of the fundamental skills in hotel industry)

Interviewer: That's true about the professionalism.

Interviewee B: Yes, and sometimes we are on a bad mood. Maybe because of personal reasons, but **when we stand in the public area we always have to look professional and positive.** (Frontline staffs need to remain professional and positive all the time)

Interviewer: That's true. In where you work, do you always need to pretend you're happy?

Interviewee B: [Laugh] I can't tell you that otherwise I betray my hotel. But I'm usually a happy person sometime but when I'm facing those R guests [Referring to guests who ask for a lot of free things] I am pissed off. You know how it is. Very annoying. **But this hotel is still a luxury hotel so we need to do full service.** (Using deception to assist in projecting a luxury feeling) **So even though we may not**

be very happy sometimes, we still need to become an actor or actress. (Involuntary lie due to job requirement)

Interviewer: Okay then. To you, what is the one thing that justifies the most for lying to the guests?

Interviewee B: [Think] if you have to name one thing... I think is our **intention.** (Justification for deception) I think most of the time, at least in my team, **when we lie we are trying to please the guest.** (Intention to make guests feel better) **I think the guests won't mind too because they know we want them to be happy. I think if your intention is good when you lie, it's more acceptable** (Deception is acceptable when the recipients most probably would not mind if the truth reveals)

Interviewer: Okay. To you personally, when are the inappropriate contexts to lie to a guest in hospitality?

Interviewee B: I think **it is inappropriate to lie when it is related to the privacy of the guests or their personal issues.** (Deception should not be practised when sensitive or legal issues are involved) Because I think that guests have the right to know any of their personal information being used, like their credit card payment, any sensitive information. Anyway I think it's common sense that we shouldn't lie about it, right?

Interviewer: Well to some staff who have bad intention, maybe not.

Interviewee B: That's true too.

Interviewer: But from my Casino class, I learn that that's how the 'Big Data' come from. Lots of our information is sold to the marketing company so they can have a better understanding of our spending pattern and etc. I think that's a serious thing too.

Interviewee B: Really?

Interviewer: Yes, but to me I don't really care about it.

Interviewee B: I am just afraid that they would do illegal things with our credit card info.

Interviewer: That's a common concern too. But anyway, so service-wise, is it okay to lie in your opinion?

Interviewee B: Oh as I said, **if your intention is good for the guests, then yes.** (Deception is acceptable when the intention is to benefit the guests)

Interviewer: Like in your case where you pretend happy just to make the guests feel good?

Interviewee B: [Laugh] Yes. Something similar.

Interviewer: Oh by the way, how can you be sure that the guests won't find out you're pretending?

Interviewee B: **Then that's related to your lying skills.** (Deception requires skills) I think the key is that you really have to believe in your words. **If you don't believe in your own lies, no one will.** (Even lies need to be professional at workplace) For example, people say that when a person smiles, the muscles around the eyes should also contract. So that's a real smile. But if there is no any movement around eye muscle, only the smile, then that person is lying. But of course in our positions, when we smile when chatting with the guests, no matter we are smiling for real or not we are already trained to smile together with our eyes too so we look genuine. And the guests won't notice. I think this **skill is important in hotel** (Lying skills matter in guest service) because there was a guest before who complained that our staff just faked the smile and that was quite a big thing within the management.

Interviewer: I agree to that. When I talk to the guests, I always fake a real smile too. It's very important.

Interviewee B: You don't need to be worried, AGM. [A joke between the interviewee and interviewer, who is mocked with the title 'Assistant General Manager']

Interviewer: [Laugh] If I am AGM then I don't need to study anymore!

Interviewee B: You can just drop out and come back to help.

Interviewer: Few months later. Let me finish my honours thesis first. Anyhow, what were we talking about? Oh yes I agree that faking smiles is important in hospitality setting.

Interviewee B: Yes, and nowadays quests always expect us to be happy (Guests have high expectation nowadays) and smiling every day without any reasons.

Interviewer: [Laugh] Yes as if we have no any other emotions.

Interviewee B: Yes, and when you smile not hard enough, they will think that you are angry then complain your service. (Guests are getting more demanding)

Interviewer: Agree. That's crazy.

Interviewee B: So lying becomes necessary. (Deception is a fundamental skills in hotel industry)

Interviewer: I can surely understand how that feels. Alright let me see. Okay, that's the near end of the interview, is there anything you would like to share or ask?

Interviewee B: [Think] No.

Interviewer: Thank you for your time today and your contribution is surely appreciated. Before we end, I would like to ask if you have anyone whom you recommend to be another interviewee for this matter?

Interviewee B: Let me check and tell you later.

Interviewer: Sure, thanks and it's nice talking to you. Let me just stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview C)

Date of Interview: 21st February, 2017

Venue: Pacific Coffee, Citygate Outlet, Tung Chung

Title of the Interviewee: Flight Attendant

Class of the Organisation: Full Service Airlines

Year of Experience: 2 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

[Rapport Building]

Interviewer: Good evening [Name of the Interviewee], it has been so long. How's your work?

Interviewee C: Yes it has been so long! And I am enjoying my work of course. How's your study in school?

Interviewer: It's okay, mostly working on the honours thesis now.

Interviewee C: [Laugh] I know that could be very time-consuming

Interviewer: That's why I am super grateful that you can be one of the respondents.

Interviewee C: You're welcome. I was doing the same thing before so I know it how much work it could be.

Interviewer: Thanks. Anyway, let me read the part first. So, I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But

for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee C: [Laugh] I remember I felt lucky to decide to do questionnaire so I don't need to say so many things.

Interviewer: [Laugh] That's what my friends are thinking too. But since my topic is more of understanding what you think, doing qualitative is inevitable.

Interviewee C: I see.

Interviewer: First of all, how long have you been working in your company? I remember it's around... 3 years? I met you in my year 1 and I think you were about to graduate.

Interviewee C: It should be 2 years. Remember I asked you about the interviewing process when I applied for the job?

Interviewer: Oh yes I nearly forgot about that! So it's 2 years.

Interviewee C: Yes.

Interviewer: Are you enjoying your work now? It's just so nice to see you every time. I think I have asked you the same question when we hanged out last time.

Interviewee C: Yes, still I love my job very much.

Interviewer: I remember you saying you treat it as your lifelong career.

Interviewee C: Yes. I still think the same. I enjoy flying around.

Interviewer: And with your boyfriend too.

Interviewee C: [Laugh] Yes he supports me a lot.

[Interview Questions]

Interviewer: That's so nice. Anyway, let me start with the first question. So far in your work life on board, do you have any experience where you lie to a passenger?

Interviewee C: [Laugh] **Of course I have. It is just so common in my job.** (Deception is a usual and common practice in guest services)

Interviewer: Why do you say so?

Interviewee C: **People are getting more demanding nowadays when they are on the plane.** (Guests are getting more demanding) And Hong Kong customers are really difficult to serve too.

Interviewer: Do you have any example of your lies?

Interviewee C: [Laugh] For example, the meal service. You know, when we do the meal service on board, very common there are no choices for the people sitting near the back end of the aisle. People always just complain and say why they pay the same price and don't get to have the same right to choose what they like. They will make a great deal about this. But honestly, I think for most airlines it's the same. **Food are there, just that they are reserved some for the business class.** (Voluntary Lie – Interviewee chose to lie) And of course the Business class has the priority in choosing their meal.

Interviewer: Oh really? I really thought that there are insufficient food prepared on board.

- Interviewee C: Sometimes it is the case but most of the time we just reserve some for emergency. **And if you really complain hard and so angry, the crew [are] always able to get you what your want in the end or at least something very similar.** (Staff always gives in to complaining guests) It's no magic. But afterwards the customer will just think he is the king and he gets anything he wants if he shouts loud.
- Interviewer: And do you think giving what the guests want, I meant for those who shout and act abnormal on plane, is a good thing?
- Interviewee C: **No.** (Giving in to complaining guests is not a good practice) Because the customer will then know we were lying the whole time and they will become even angrier. And then some customers will keep shouting to get more freebies. It's just so annoying.
- Interviewer: So, you suggest just lie all the way?
- Interviewee C: [Think] **I think as long as it is not a serious issue then yes.** (Deception should be consistent and is okay to be practised on non-serious issues)
- Interviewer: What do you mean by serious issue?
- Interviewee C: **Like emergency landing or any strong turbulence.** (Should not deceive in times of life-threatening occasions) Well we don't lie about that anyway since it's related to the passengers' lives.
- Interviewer: Yes, I don't see any reasons to lie about it anyway.
- Interviewee C: **It is always the number 1 rule to us.** (Not lying in life-threatening situations is the utmost rule) When we had the training in when we first joined the company, we all had emergency training. We needed to shout so loud, but it was quite fun actually.
- Interviewer: I have heard about it too. But the general public always think you guys are just waiters and waitresses in the sky.

Interviewee C: Because people don't really understand our job nature. We actually have all training on first aid and emergency handling. We are the only people they can count on if there is something wrong.

Interviewer: My sister-- I meant the daughter of my uncle, also works in Hong Kong Airlines now too. She always says the same thing.

Interviewee C: Oh really? That's nice. Then you can have 'beggar' tickets [Laugh] [Beggar Ticket: Slang for discounted ticket for flight attendants' family members]

Interviewer: Seats are limited. You know that.

Interviewee C: That's why they are called Beggar tickets [Laugh]

Interviewer: Anyhow, What were we on?

Interviewee C: Emergency.

Interviewer: Yes. Let me get back otherwise I will have a lot to write on the Transcript.

Interviewee C: [Laugh] Should I say many unrelated things?

Interviewer: [Smile and Signal the Interviewee C not to]. Then... When you lied, were you trying to benefit the guests, yourself or your organisation?

Interviewee C: You are talking about the meal service example?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee C: [Think] I think... we are benefiting ourselves? We lie so we can do our service better to the business class passengers. Wait... but we are also benefiting the business class... **I think it is like, for**

both the staff and the passengers. (Intention to benefit both guests and staff)

Interviewer: Can you elaborate more?

Interviewee C: Like, if we lie, then we don't need to be told off by the business [class] passengers. (Intention to avoid scolding from guests) even though we sacrifice the economy class passengers. (Sacrifice less valuable party for overall service) And at the same time we are just making sure there are enough choices for the business class. (Intention to benefit the guests)

Interviewer: So... lying from the staff must have something to do with the customers?

Interviewee C: [Think] Yes I think it's that since we are in the service industry, so it has the connection. (A lie in hospitality often affects both guest and staff due to its inseparability feature) And there can be more than one reasons that we lie. (Multi purposes to lie in hospitality industry)

Interviewer: That's actually a very good point. The inseparability. Let me think about how to make use of the concept.

Interviewee C: Okay.

Interviewer: And the last questions: What is the one thing that least justifies for deceiving the guests?

Interviewee C: Least justifies... I think it's selfishness. (Self-serving lies are not acceptable) If the employee lies to the customer just to benefit himself or herself, it is bad. (It is not okay when the staff lies only to benefit him or herself.)

Interviewer: Okay. Well I think I have got enough data, particularly the inseparability one. Let me look more into that when I do the analysis. Before we end, is there anything you would like to share more or ask me?

Interviewee C: [Think]. Not really.

Interviewer: Sure. Oh and can you refer your some other good friends who are also flight attendants for me to do the interviews?

Interviewee C: Okay I try try. [Try try is a local colloquial that denotes I can try]

Interviewer: [Laugh] How can I translate try try?

Interviewee C: [Laugh]

Interviewer: Anyway, thank you so much for the time and I will assure that all of the things you said will strictly be used for academic purpose and be confidential.

Interviewee C: Okay.

Interviewer: Let me stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview D)

Date of Interview: 23rd February, 2017

Venue: Restaurant (During Cleaning Hours)

Title of the Interviewee: Waitress

Class of the Organisation: Restaurant & Bar

Year of Experience: 1 year

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Good afternoon [Name of the Interviewee] and thank you for your participation in the study. [Name of Interviewee B] has previously told you about the study, yes?

Interviewee D: Yes, something about lying to the customers right?

Interviewer: Yes. It's about using deception in the hospitality industry. And of course it includes restaurant sector too.

Interviewee D: Okay.

Interviewer: So, I need to read out a part first. So I am Matthew, as you know already. I am a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title

and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee D: Okay.

Interviewer: Then, shall we start?

Interviewee D: Okay.

Interviewer: Let me start with something casual. How is your work life after graduation?

Interviewee D: [Smile] So far so good. I went on a grad trip [Graduation Trip, which is usually a travel after all courses are finished in university] to Japan, then I returned to Hong Kong and starting working here.

Interviewer: Why here?

Interviewee D: Actually during my study I have already worked here part time. So after graduation, they asked me whether I want to stay and I kind of like the place so I decided to work here.

Interviewer: Are you enjoying it?

Interviewee D: Yes. People around here are nice and friendly. And the management style here is cool.

Interviewer: I can feel it. And the decoration looks nice too. I am taking my Spanish class now I really likes the setting here.

Interviewee D: Yes.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: Okay. So, I know you have only worked for around a year. So far, is there an experience where you lie to the guests?

Interviewee D: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you elaborate more on that?

Interviewee D: Sometimes when the customers have waited a bit long, they will ask me to check the status of the food. Like whether the food is not yet cooked or nearly finished. And sometimes if we found out it's our mistake that we forgot to make the order to the system, and if the food just take around 10 to 15 minutes to cook, **we will tell the guests that the food is nearly cooked. Then we will ask the kitchen to cook the food first.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)

Interviewer: So for food that takes longer, you will just tell the truth?

Interviewee D: Yes. Like the paella [A traditional Spanish dish] which needs more time to cook in the oven, **we can't cook it quickly, so we will apologize to the customers to see if they want to wait for it or cancel it.** (Be honest when lies cannot be applied)

Interviewer: And what are the dishes that you guys can make it quickly?

Interviewee D: Like Tapas or burgers. It doesn't take long to prepare those. Usually within 15 mins it is ready.

Interviewer: Oh mind if I ask why would you choose to lie to the diners?

Interviewee D: **It's because if we lie to them, they don't complain.** (Direct Intention to avoid guest's complaints) **If they find out we miss the order, they become angry and starting complaining to us.** (Use deception to neutralise guest's emotions)

Interviewer: So can I say you are trying to benefit the restaurant?

- Interviewee D: Part of it. **Actually the customers are happier too.** (Intention to benefit restaurant, staff and customers) I think **it's better for them to accept that the food is coming slow than we have missed the order so that they need to wait for a long time again.** (A better reason to be accepted by guests)
- Interviewer: Actually that's a funny thing. During the last interview, I have a new idea about the inseparability in the hospitality industry. If you remember it back in year 1 or 2, when we learned about the features of hospitality, like perishability, inseparability and etc. It appears that so far my interviewees have also mentioned some examples which they lie and both parties [Staff and Guests] are benefited.
- Interviewee D: **Yes. I agree.** (Agreement to inseparability of hospitality where lies have effect on both customers and staff)
- Interviewer: Okay sure. Next question: so how do you feel about lying to the customers?
- Interviewee D: **Sometimes we are-- I don't know the word of 心虛 [Feeling Guilty].** (Sense of guilt after deceiving guests)
- Interviewer: It's okay.
- Interviewee D: **Because it is still our problem that we missed the order.** (Interviewee self-judgement on the ethicality of deception)
- Interviewer: I understand. After all it's still our problem and sometimes even when I work in the hotel and I lie, I also feel the same way about it. Like those guests really trust you and then I have to lie.
- Interviewee D: Yes.
- Interviewer: So actually do you recommend lying as one of the methods to facilitate the guest services?

- Interviewee D: [Think] **I really don't know.** (Uncertainty on the suitability of deception in guest services)
- Interviewer: Or if I put in this way, if you are asked to come up with one thing that you think it can justify your lies, what would it be and why?
- Interviewee D: [Think] **I think it's the peaceful feeling.** (Intention to create a harmonious environment) When we lie to the customers, they don't become angry, although they may be still a little bit. But generally the relationship between the restaurant and the customers are better. So **I think peace is a reason to justify.** (It is okay to lie in order to have harmony)
- Interviewer: Thank you so much. So one of the last few questions: When do you think it's not suitable to lie to a guest?
- Interviewee D: [Think] I think **it's not good to lie when it's related to money issue.** (It is not okay to lie for self-interest) Like payment issue. Such as collecting more money than it should or add more items to the bill?
- Interviewer: Yes I agree. So, I think that's all I need for the study. Thank you so much and let's not keep you from working. Before we end, is there anything you would like to share more or ask me?
- Interviewee D: No, thank you.
- Interviewer: Alright, so let's end here and thank you again for the participation. I will make sure what you've just said are all for academic purposes. Okay then let me stop the recording here.
- Interviewee D: Sure.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview E)

Date of Interview: 23rd February, 2017

Venue: Go Dutch Cafe, 10/F, Dundas Square, 43H Dundas Street, Mong Kok

Title of the Interviewee: Tour Guide (Inbound)

Class of the Organisation: Full Service Travel Agency

Year of Experience: 3 years

Interviewee refuses to be recorded digitally. Notes are jotted during the interview and further revised afterwards.

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

- Explained to the interviewee about the purpose and aim of the study.
- Example of Deception: Exaggeration on the Attraction Introduction
- The interviewee practise this deception because ***it better attracts the tourists.*** (Direct intention to make guests feel better) The way of introducing the attraction with deception is more exciting.
- ***The final goal is to receive more tips from the quests in the end of the trip*** (Indirect intention to earn more gratitude though deception), which the amount is not fixed.
- Example shared by the interviewee includes: When visiting the attractions, she will vividly introduce the history and background and ***sometimes she may go a bit far to make up some wrong but not crucial information to make the introduction more interesting.*** (It is okay to lie in casual context) Such as the attraction has been previously visited by Jackie Chan, a famous Chinese actor.
- She thinks it's okay because she is trying to ***make the atmosphere delightful and interesting*** (Direct intention to make quests feel better), which is good in service industry.
- The interviewee perceived ***deception as a normal element in service industry.*** (Deception is fundamental in guest services) ***A lot of her colleagues are also doing the same practice.*** (Common practice in guest services) And the whole trip needs to be positive and error-free, so ***sometimes lies are used to cover for the minor mistakes.*** (Intention to create a flawless environment)

- *She defined minor mistakes as ‘Mistakes that tourists don’t care so much if you tell them’* (It is more okay to lie if the recipients most probably would not mind if the truth reveals) such as wrongly going to a tourist spots prior to another one which is originally scheduled to be earlier for the chronological order of history tour.
- *A tour guide shouldn’t cooperate with any shop and lie to the tourists that the shop sells the best products.* (Should not lie for self-interest) She views this as a selfish action because the tour guide earns money and *maybe the tourists would buy items that shouldn’t be as expensive in the market.* (Should not sacrifice the interest of guests to benefit oneself)

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview F)

Date of Interview: 25th February, 2017

Venue: Hotel Club Lounge

Title of the Interviewee: Assistant Club Floor Manager

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 7 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Hi [Name of the Interviewee] and thank you for being my interviewee. It really helps a lot.

Interviewee F: You're welcome. I know you are finishing your university so I would like to show my support too.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. Really, from a assistant manager level like you, there must be quite a lot of new insights.

Interviewee F: [Smile] I hope I can help.

Interviewer: So, My name is Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be

mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee F: Wow that's long. [Smile]

Interviewer: [Laugh] Yes that's a must. Okay shall we start?

Interviewee F: Of course.

Interviewer: Let me ask you a warm up question first. What is the one thing you enjoy working in the industry the most?

Interviewee F: [Smile] But there are a lot of things that I enjoy doing in my work!

Interviewer: Well. One of the most?

Interviewee F: [Think] I believe it would be the creativity that I can use at work. The management really promotes creativity of the employees. When we handle the guests there is flexibility for us to make their stay really amazing.

Interviewer: And that's why you are the Assistant Club Floor Manager

Interviewee F: [Smile] Could be. You couldn't afford to be lazy in this level. You need to set an example for the team to see how to do excellent service.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: True. Speaking of service excellence, as you have already known my topic of the research, the coming questions are more of using deception to do guest service. So, so far in your work life in hospitality, do you have any experience where you did not deliver the complete truth to a hotel guest? At some point it just means lying.

- Interviewee F: Yes I have. **It is very common.** (Common practice in hotel industry)
- Interviewer: Can you explain a bit more about it?
- Interviewee F: You know I am in the club floor, and the guests are VIPs. I am not saying the other guests are not VIPs but they are the VVIPs who pay nearly HK\$5,000 for a night. So **we have to make sure everything looks perfect.** (Direction intention to create a flawless environment) You also have work experience in Club Floor Matthew, I am sure you have lied too.
- Interviewer: [Laugh] Yes I have. But I can't use my own example, this is my dissertation.
- Interviewee F: Yes I know. **Then you know we lie in different aspects.** (Lie for different purposes) My guests always want free upgrade to suites but to be honest, they are not the most high-paying guests. But we won't tell them no. Remember we discussed about that, **never say no?** (Never directly reject a guest)
- Interviewer: Yes I remember it.
- Interviewee F: That's why **my staff usually just pretend there may be available room** (oluntary Lie – Interviewee chose to lie) and we will randomly click a few button on OPERA [A Property Management system] to pretend we are searching for a room for the guest. But of course you know we are not really searching. **Then in the end just apologise and explain sincerely that there are really no available room for upgrade.** (Staff should lie in a professional manner, including showing sincerity)
- Interviewer: Actually my colleagues do the same too [Laugh]
- Interviewee F: **What we can do is that I usually arrange a better view or higher floor room for the guest and tell him that we have tried our best to offer something exclusive.** (Guideline for a commonly-encountered scenario: Project a sense of exclusivity to guests) It is just to make the guests feel like they have got at least

something. Usually those demanding guests will retreat after the arrangement.

Interviewer: Oh I do the same thing too! [Laugh] I agree, sometimes the guests just want to get something. It's their psychology.

Interviewee F: That's why I said you are smart.

Interviewer: [Laugh] Thanks. So... can you identify your objective of lying to the guest?

Interviewee F: [Think] *I would say it's to keep the guests happy.* (Direct intention to make guests feel better) *And stay away any negative words.* (Use deception to replace un-preferred words) Because working in hotels you would need a lot of *art of speaking.* (Deception is associated to art of speaking to a certain extent)

Interviewer: Art of Speaking! I love the term. How come I didn't include this concept in my research before? I think that's definitely one of the best feedbacks

Interviewee F: [Laugh] I am glad I can inspire you.

Interviewer: [Smile] Oh my god I feel so good now.

Interviewee F: *I am quite sure the Art of Speaking is something similar to lying too.* (Deception is associated to art of speaking to a certain extent)

Interviewer: I think so. The concept is to say what you want to say only. So it should be highly related to my topic. Anyway, let me go on with the interview first.

Interviewee F: [Smile] Sure.

Interviewer: So usually after your deception, or lie, do the guests react in a way that you planned?

- Interviewee F: **Yes.** (Effective result of deception) **Because most guests are actually very nice.** They don't really spend too much time dealing things with you as they are mostly business travellers who have a lot of meetings to attend.
- Interviewer: So would you say the guest service level has increased due to the usage of deception?
- Interviewee F: [Think] **That really depends on your lie.** (Service level would be increased if deception is appropriately used; worsened if it is inappropriately used) **If you don't lie well, you will be in trouble.** (Inappropriate use of deception can lead to a more serious issue)
- Interviewer: How do you say so?
- Interviewee F: I remember one of my staff lied and the guest found out later, then she had a hard time from the management.
- Interviewer: If you don't mind, can you tell me more about the story?
- Interviewee F: Sure. Then I don't mention her name. Or let's say she's Person A. So this A person has got an free upgrade request from a troublesome French guest and since the guest was not our regular guest, A just follows our usual practice to say that there is no any available room for upgrade for the whole period of his stay. Then the guest went away and later on he asked another staff B about the same thing. And B didn't know the guest has asked before and then she just treated the guest as a normal upgrade case and quoted an upgrade supplement to the guest. Then the next day the guest complained to the duty manager about the whole thing. Actually, it is the guest who is the bad one, **but the person A really forgot to alert the other teams about this case.** (Communication breakdown leading to service failure) And she was not new, so that's why the management were quite angry about this.
- Interviewer: Very unlucky for the staff indeed.
- Interviewee F: But it's true that she didn't pass the information to her colleagues.

- Interviewer: So when we lie, we have to make sure everyone does the same, right?
- Interviewee F: Yes. **Lying may be necessary to some quests.** (Deception is fundamental in guest services) **But you have to make sure that the lie is consistent.** (Deception must be consistent, from one person to the whole team) Otherwise things will be like the person A's story, where the communication broke down and led to a huge problem.
- Interviewer: And what would you say is the Person A's intention to lie at the first place?
- Interviewee F: Again, **not to directly reject the quest.** (Direct intention to not directly reject guests' request) We barely say no to the guests. **We need to show that we care and we have tried to accommodate their needs.** (Direct intention to care for guest's feeling)
- Interviewer: True. I agree. Thanks for the example.
- Interviewee F: It's okay.
- Interviewer: And how do you think about lying the guests?
- Interviewee F: As I mentioned, **lying is sometimes necessary.** (Lying is fundamental in guest services) Especially when serving those annoying and VIPs guests, **every word you say they will take it seriously** (Guests are getting more demanding nowadays) and if you say something wrong, they will keep chasing you.
- Interviewer: And as an assistant manager, how do you think about your staff lying the guests?
- Interviewee F: I trust my team that they **know when to hide something from the quests.** (Managers should ensure that the staff can appropriately adopt deception) I can accept it as long as my girls are not saying something completely wrong.
- Interviewer: Oh so you mean partially lying is good for the service?

- Interviewee F: [Think] **You can say so.** (Deception can be beneficial to guest services)
- Interviewer: And sorry I know I have asked you a lot of questions but we are getting to the end.
- Interviewee F: It's okay, I still have time.
- Interviewer: According to a researcher, he mentions that when a staff doesn't want to lie, the staff can choose to remain silent to the question, do you support this opinion?
- Interviewee F: How can a person be silent when a guest is asking?
- Interviewer: Oh [Laugh] it's not physically silent but it means that the staff can dodge the question and doesn't need to answer exactly.
- Interviewee F: **It can be one of the ways yes. But I think it's better to change the topic too.** (Remaining silent to a question could be an option, but the staff needs to shift the topic) If the staff doesn't know how to handle some tricky questions, they can do so.
- Interviewer: Okay. Thanks. That's' all I need for the research. Thank you so much again. Before we end, is there anything you would like more to share or ask?
- Interviewee F: Good luck on your study Matthew.
- Interviewer: Thanks and your help is already a big support. I will ensure all of your words are strictly for academic purposes and once I finish this, I will get rid of the recording.
- Interviewee F: Sure.
- Interviewer: Okay then let me stop the recording here.

Interviewee F: Sure.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview G)

Date of Interview: 26th February, 2017

Venue: Red Bar, International Finance Centre, Central

Title of the Interviewee: Flight Attendant

Class of the Organisation: Full Service Airline

Year of Experience: 2 years

Words being underlined, bolded and Italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Hello [Name of the interviewee]. Thank you so much for helping with my university project.

Interviewee G: It's fine. When [Name of Interviewee C] told me about your project, I feel it's very interesting. And [Name of Interviewee C] is my good flying buddy so I am happy to help out.

Interviewer: Thank you so much. Then do you guys always have buddy flight? [Buddy flight refers to two flight attendants who have undergone initial training together later on are randomly assigned to the same flight in operation]

Interviewee G: Sometimes. You know there are so many cabin crews. It's not easy to have buddy flight.

Interviewer: Yes I agree. Sometimes it's just luck or fate.

Interviewee G: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you often have long haul flights then?

Interviewee G: Usually once a month. Either to the U.S. or Europe.

Interviewer: Do you shop a lot? [Laugh]

Interviewee G: [Laugh] No. Usually only the female crew will spend all their allowance on buying bags. It's crazy. I'd rather go to have a good meal.

Interviewer: Absolutely. You must have tried a lot of exotic cuisines then.

Interviewee G: [Laugh] Yes quite a few.

Interviewer: Any particular countries you like flying to?

Interviewee G: Japan of course [Laugh]. People are so polite and the food is really good.

Interviewer: I can definitely see why. Many of my friends are also addicted to Japan. [Laugh] Anyway, shall we begin the interview?

Interviewee G: Sure.

Interviewer: Okay so first of all a bit of things to tell you. So, I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee G: It's okay. I don't mind anyway.

Interview Questions

- Interviewer: Thanks. So, first question: So far in your work life as a flight attendant, have you ever lied to the guests?
- Interviewee G: [Laugh] Depends on how do you define it.
- Interviewer: Well lying doesn't have to be telling the completely nonsense. Sometimes when people are not telling the complete truth, they are also considered lying. Or another word is called 'Deception', as in deceive someone.
- Interviewee G: [Laugh] Then sure. Yes.
- Interviewer: Can you share more on it? Like, any example?
- Interviewee G: [Laugh] The most common lie we will tell you is 'it's normal' to be honest. If you have flown before, you know there can be a lot of turbulence and the plane sometimes shakes and the passengers become very nervous. I think they must have read too much news about the plane tragedies. And some of them will keep asking is anything wrong. That's when we lie. **We will say it's normal anyway.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie) We don't know anything about the flight situation and we are also just passengers **but what else can we say? 'It's dangerous?' We can't** (Direct intention to avoid provoking the fear of guests), because in the end **we only do the emergency procedures when we receive command from the cockpit.** (Following operating procedures)
- Interviewer: So it's up to the pilot to decide?
- Interviewee G: Sure. They are in the cockpits and they know the best about the situation. **We cannot do the emergency randomly because it may scare the passengers.** (Decisions regarding serious matters cannot be done casually) Although it looks a bit inflexible, we must stick to the proper procedures.
- Interviewer: Okay. So are you saying that... you lie to the guests-- I meant the

passengers, just to not cause any fuss?

Interviewee G: [Think] **Yes. Because if one is scared, it causes the butterfly effect.** (Direct intention to calm the guests) Then when everyone is scared, we don't have enough crew to comfort all of them. You can imagine what will it be like if we have 200 people screaming and stuff. And the situation can become out of control then. To be honest, I never had this experience but we always hear similar things from other airlines' crew.

Interviewer: I see. So... can I say your intention to lie in this case is because you want the passengers feel safe?

Interviewee G: Partly. At the same time it's more for us. Like reducing the workload for us too. **So I think it's for the passengers as well as ourselves.** (Intention to benefit both guests and staff)

Interviewer: I really don't know shall I trust the cabin crew in the future after you tell me this [Laugh].

Interviewee G: [Laugh] You should. You can be assured **when there is real danger, we are not going to lie.** (Deception in times of life-threatening issues is not acceptable)

Interviewer: Oh yes, because your case actually lies between guest services and life-threatening issue, so why would you think it's okay to lie?

Interviewee G: [Think] It's similar to what I have said. **To reduce unnecessary fuss.** (Direct intention to avoid provoking guests' fear) When the captains haven't made official announcement, we don't know if it's life threatening either. So when passengers ask, we will say 'it's normal' and try to calm them.

Interviewer: I understand. So it's both you and the passengers.

Interviewee G: Yes.

Interviewer: So... do the guests usually feel better after you tell them 'it's

normal’?

Interviewee G: [Laugh] **Most of the time yes.** (Effective result of deception) But of course from time to time there are people who are really scared and ask you ‘are you sure?’ as if they are the experts.

Interviewer: Really? What do you do when you encounter this kind of guests?

Interviewee G: **We will try to calm the passenger and distract them.** (Shift the focus of the guests instead of using deception) Let them not think about this issue and put their attention on something else such as watching movie or offer them a cup of tea.

Interviewer: I think they really have read too much news on the plane accidents.

Interviewee G: Probably [Laugh]

Interviewer: Okay. Any other example on deception?

Interviewee G: I can’t think of any right now if you suddenly ask me.

Interviewer: It’s okay. Then, how do you feel lying to the passengers?

Interviewee G: [Think] I didn’t actually think about it because **it’s quite natural and common.** (Usual and common practice of deception in guest services) But now if you ask me... I think it’s okay? We lie so both our lives and the lives of the passengers are easier. We don’t have extra work to do and they feel safer. Why not?

Interviewer: That seems legit though.

Interviewee G: Yes. It does.

Interviewer: So I assume you always say ‘it’s normal’ to the passengers, right?

- Interviewee G: [Laugh] Yes. **Always. One of the biggest lies.** (Consistent practice of deception)
- Interviewer: Okay. So probably one last question. Let's say if the turbulence is really tough and even tougher than you've ever experienced, will you still tell the passengers it's normal, or you would say any other things?
- Interviewee G: [Think] If it is really serious, we will actually remain seated too.
- Interviewer: Oh really? Even if the passenger calls?
- Interviewee G: Yes. It's in our manual. We also value our own lives too [Laugh]. **But if the passengers really ask, I think I will check with the cockpit first before making any answer.** (Not using lies in times of serious situations)
- Interviewer: No more 'it's normal?'
- Interviewee G: [Laugh] If it's real emergency, we also need the passengers to prepare themselves mentally too.
- Interviewer: Because I was about to ask, do you think avoiding the question is one of the possible way.
- Interviewee G: You mean...?
- Interviewer: I meant like saying something irrelevant.
- Interviewee G: **That's a possible solution too. We may just ask the passengers to fasten their seatbelts and fold up their trays instead of answering them.** (Besides remaining silent, the staff could also shift the focus of the guests)
- Interviewer: Won't they keep asking?
- Interviewee G: Just walk away I guess. I know it may not look so good but it's

emergency and we have no time to answer each question anyway.

Interviewer: That's true.

Interviewee G: The most important thing is the passengers need to read the safety guide and know where is the closest emergency exit. A lot of passengers don't take it seriously and when there is slight turbulence and they will freak out.

Interviewer: True. For me I always read the safety instructions.

Interviewee G: That's good. You never know when accident happens.

Interviewer: I see. Alright. I think that's all I need for the work. Anything you want to share or ask me?

Interviewee G: No thanks.

Interviewer: Alright. Thank you very much and I will make sure your information is only used for academic purposes.

Interviewee G: Sure.

Interviewer: Okay then let me just stop the recording first.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview H)

Date of Interview: 28th February, 2017

Venue: Hotel Back Office

Title of the Interviewee: Senior Duty Manager

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 8 years

Interviewee refuses to be recorded digitally. Notes are jotted during the interview and further revised afterwards.

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

- Explained to the interviewee about the purpose and aim of the study.
- Example of Deception: Celebrities and Emergencies
- **In order to minimise the fuss the fans may create, they will lie about the visit of a celebrity.** (Involuntary lie due to job requirement: guest privacy)
- It was also professional to maintain guests' privacy at all time.
- The interviewee felt ethical about lying in this case. Because it was **per quest request** (Deception itself as a service for guests) and he is to entertain guests' appropriate order and request. So he doesn't see any big issue there.
- **Lying in hotel needs some training.** (Deception requires skills) Otherwise it is easy to be detected by experienced liars. And when there are in-house celebrities, a lot of outsiders will call in and try to confirm. If any staff is careless, it can become a huge problem because the hotel is also responsible for any reputational damage of the celebrities. If it's hotel's mistake to make the celebrities suffer, the hotel is subject to monetary compensation.
- **In times of emergency, whether to inform the guests depends on the urgency on the matter.** (Not always be completely honest in serious situations) To some extent, if the 'emergency' is not confirmed yet, which is still on investigation stage, the interviewee think it's no need to tell the guests yet as unnecessary disturbance should be avoided. **When the emergency is at confirmed stage, if it's not affecting the whole area, try to keep the information within the affected guests.** (In times of emergencies, keep the information open to the involved individuals only) For example, if there is a

serious water leakage from the water pipe and it's affecting 3 floors, only guests from those 3 floors should be informed. For the rest of the guests, even upon enquiries, **the staff should lie and say that the case is currently under investigation so more details will be given later as a way to avoid causing fuss.** (If other guests are not potentially affected, deception could be adopted to avoid provoking worries or fears of guests) But however **if there is an obvious and serious emergency, such as fire breakout and gun shooting, all information should be translucent for them to evacuate on time.** (Be totally honest when in emergency which affects everyone)

- He thinks deception in the above case is **acceptable as it's also thinking from the guests' perspective.** (Deception should be used from the guest's point of view) As quoted from the interviewee - 'They don't need to be scared' - and he believes that as a Duty Manager, suitable decision can be made, particularly they are equipped with a certain amount of industry experience.
- He thinks **deception must be consistent.** (Consistency in deception is necessary) Which an individual must tell the same lie, if he or she chooses to do so, all the time so that the guests won't realise that it's a lie.
- **The consistency also comes from the same stance of all colleagues.** (Not only a deceiver needs to be consistent, but also the whole service crew deceives the same thing) That is, everyone tells the same lies. So that the guest won't obtain different versions towards the same truth.
- **Lying is a skill which could be obtained and practised.** (Deception involves skills) Some people are naturally gifted whereas they need to control themselves. And for those who are poor at lying, **the interviewee recommends them learning some basic ones for surviving in the industry.** (Deception should be encouraged and learned due to its fundamentality in guest services)
- He thinks that **dodging question is useful, but only for the entry level staff because guests don't expect so much from them.** (Dodging a question is useful for operational staff) However, **once a staff is promoted to managerial role, it's more difficult for them to shift the questions because they usually handle cases which are more serious and need to give an proper answer to the quests** (Dodging is not very useful for managerial roles). So it's either lie or tell the truth.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (Interview I)

Date of Interview: 27th February, 2017

Venue: Room 307, School of Hotel and Tourism Management

Title of the Interviewee: Waiting Staff

Class of the Organisation: Italian Restaurant

Year of Experience: 2 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee
(**Words coloured in blue and bracketed**) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Hi [Name of the Interviewee]. Thank you for being my interviewee of the project.

Interviewee I: [Laugh] Of course I support you.

Interviewer: As a graduate from SHTM [School of Hotel and Tourism Management], of course you have to help me [Laugh]. Did you do thesis too before in your final year?

Interviewee I: Of course no. I took F&B course [Food & Beverage]. I don't want to write so many words.

Interviewer: Really? I like doing thesis better because I can have more control over it [Laugh]. And actually [Name of Interviewee C] did thesis too.

Interviewee I: It's different. [Name of Interviewee C] is smart. I was only from High Dip. [Higher Diploma].

Interviewer: [Laugh] But at the end you still graduated so that's alright. Anyway, let's start then.

Interviewee I: Okay sure.

Interviewer: So, My name is Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that

only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee I:

Okay.

Interviewer:

Alright then let me go directly and ask you the first question. What is the one thing you enjoy the most working in your restaurant?

Interviewee I:

The tips? [Laugh] I think that's the common goal for waiters.
(Tips as one of the motivators to work)

Interviewer:

[Laugh] I can understand why. Even as a Guest Relations at Hotel, I sometimes receive tips too. And even I don't work for those, I feel good when I receive it.

Interviewee I:

Yes. Of course it's nice to have more money. But it can also mean compliments from the customers.

Interviewer:

That's very true. How long have you been working there now?

Interviewee I:

Around 2 years. I became a full time after graduation.

Interviewer:

I thought you said you wanted to get into the Immigrant Department?

Interviewee I:

Remember the last time I told you I didn't pass the final round [Final Round of Interview Process]. And actually I am also training to get into the police force or a fireman team.

Interviewer:

Firemen! WOW. Impressive.

Interviewee I:

Yes. That's why I go to gym regularly now.

Interview Questions

Interviewer:

[Laugh] Yes I see it from your Facebook. Okay so, we really have to get going. First thing first: so far with your experience, did you lie to a restaurant customer and if yes, what was it about?

Interviewee I:

[Laugh] Yes I have prepared the answer. **I think when I chat with the quests, I lie already.** (Deception is used in guest interaction)

Interviewer:

And why would you say so?

Interviewee I:

As I just said, tips are one of the motivators for us to work hard. And in [Name of the Restaurant], it's more ABC style [American

Born Chinese: Denoting that the dining style is Western, which interaction between servers and customers is emphasised], **so we try our best to entertain customers and make them happy so that they will give us a good tips when they finish.** (Indirect intention of deception: Earn extra gratitude)

- Interviewer: That's legit [Legitimate] though. I think it's also because your basic salary is kind of low?
- Interviewee I: For me I think it's okay. **But of course more money is good.** (Earning more is important to the interviewee)
- Interviewer: True. But can you give me a more specific example on lying to a customer?
- Interviewee I: [Think] When I was first joined the restaurant, I didn't know too much about operation so I made quite a lot of mistakes. One time I delivered the wrong order to a table. I delivered garlic bread to them but actually it is for another table. Then the people at the table told me they didn't order garlic bread and I knew I made a wrong order. **But that was only the first few days I worked so I was very nervous and then I said it's free for them.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)
- Interviewer: Wait, what?
- Interviewee I: [Laugh] Yes I know I was stupid but I was nervous and **I didn't know what to say because I feel so embarrassed so I don't know why I lied.** (Using deception to get rid of nervousness and embarrassment)
- Interviewer: Well... That's a good approach I would say. Then how about the other table who actually ordered the garlic bread?
- Interviewee I: [Laugh] **I went back to the kitchen and asked them to do one more.** (The interviewee did not tell the chef team about his lie)
The chef team is very friendly so I am allowed to do that too.
- Interviewer: [Laugh] is that acceptable really?
- Interviewee I: I don't know. But no one asked me about that so I think it's okay. **I guess nobody really cares about the extra garlic bread order as during that time the restaurant is busy.** (Deception is barely investigated during busy occasions)
- Interviewer: Okay that's a really funny sharing, Thank you. And a great example too. Alright, so in the end were the guests happy about the free garlic bread.
- Interviewee I: [Laugh] **I think yes?** (Effective result of deception) I actually

walked away because I was so nervous.

Interviewer: [Laugh] That's cute.

Interviewee I: **But yes I think they are happy because I could hear them say 'Nice' or something like that** (Effective result of deception) when I went back to the kitchen area.

Interviewer: Do you think the customers know you were lying to them?

Interviewee I: I don't think so. **Why do they care about it when they have free food [Laugh]** (Guests do not tend to detect deception when they are benefited)

Interviewer: That's true [Laugh]. Then how about you? What do you feel about lying to the customers?

Interviewee I: Generally?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee I: **I think it's okay.** (It is okay to lie generally in guest services) I don't see any serious and big problem. **I usually just lie at unimportant things like talking to the customers?** (It is acceptable to lie about casual matters)

Interviewer: How do you define unimportant things?

Interviewee I: [Think] **I mean... things that are not- have no harm on the customers.** (It is unacceptable to lie when the guests are negatively affected) Like my example, when I told the customers the garlic bread for free, it's not a harm to them. **Actually it's a good thing for them too.** (It is acceptable to lie when guests are benefited)

Interviewer: Alright. So the rule of thumb is to keep your lies unarmful to the customers, am I right?

Interviewee I: **Yes you can say it like that.** (Always keep the lies non-harmful to the guests)

Interviewer: So, do you think overall, deception is a constructive or destructive tool in terms of guest services?

Interviewee I: **I think there is no a correct answer for this. I think it depends on how you lie.** (Deception could be a useful tool when appropriately adopted and vice versa)

Interviewer: What do you mean by that?

- Interviewee I: **I mean lying could be both a good thing and bad thing.** (Deception could be a useful tool when appropriately adopted and vice versa) Just like in some situation, ‘white lies’ are good things and **when you lie to earn more money then it’s a bad thing.** (It is not acceptable to lie to sacrifice guest’s interest for staff self-interest)
- Interviewer: Lie to earn more money?
- Interviewee I: **I had a co-worker before, now fired, always told the customers that he had bad times in life and in the end the customers will leave more tips.** (Purposely make the guests feel bad and pitiful for earning extra gratitude, which impairs the dining experience) We all think it’s a very bad thing to do and unethical too.
- Interviewer: I agree too.
- Interviewee I: Yes and **he just made the customers feel bad about his past and he tries to make them pity him so that he gets more tips.** (Purposely make the guests feel bad and pitiful for earning extra gratitude, which impairs the dining experience)
- Interviewer: That’s a bad practice. Any other scenes that you think a front line staff shouldn’t lie?
- Interviewee I: Sorry what’s the word?
- Interviewer: Scene, oh I meant like situation.
- Interviewee I: Oh! Let me think. [Think] **I think emergencies? I think when there is something serious issues like fire, we shouldn’t lie?** (It is not okay to lie about serious issues such as life-threatening scenario)
- Interviewer: That’s okay. Alright. One last question: According to a researcher, he mentions that when a staff doesn’t want to lie, he or she can choose to remain silent to the question, do you support this opinion?
- Interviewee I: Like not replying anything? **But that looks odd.** (Staying silent is not professional)
- Interviewer: [Laugh] Of course it’s not saying nothing but it means that the staff can dodge the question and doesn’t need to answer exactly. They can answer something not directly related to the question.
- Interviewee I: [Think] **I think yes.** (Dodging can be an effective substitute for deception) **But sometimes some customers may be very critical, then it might not be so useful.** (Dodging cannot fully resolve every guest) **Maybe they can try that at first?** (Dodging can be

used as the first guard before deception)

Interviewer: That could be one of the ways to do so. Okay so, that's the end of the interview. Thank you so much for all your information today. Is there anything you would like to ask me or share more?

Interviewee I: No, that's all.

Interviewer: Alright then. I will make sure all your information will only be used for academic purposes.

Interviewee I: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay then let me stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview J)

Date of Interview: 2nd March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Sitting Area

Title of the Interviewee: Duty Manager

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 9 Years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Good afternoon. Thank you for being my respondent once again.

Interviewee J: My pleasure. I haven't seen you for a while too.

Interviewer: Indeed. Ever since the conference, we didn't get to see each other. It's so nice for your help.

Interviewee J: Oh, when will you graduate?

Interviewer: I will finish my school course in May but my graduation ceremony is in November.

Interviewee J: Have you started searching for jobs?

Interviewer: I actually have an offer already

Interviewee J: Oh really? That's very good! What's it? Can you tell?

Interviewer: I will tell you later in private. Because right now we are on recording.

Interviewee J: [Laugh] Sure.

Interviewer: So, shall we start?

Interviewee J: Sure.

Interviewer: So, I need to read a part first. My name is Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee J: Sure.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: So, first question: You definitely have quite some experience in the industry now. So far in your work life in hotel industry, have you ever lied to the guest before?

Interviewee J: **Absolutely.** (Deception is a usual practice in guest services) You won't believe me if I say no, right?

Interviewer: [Laugh] I have to be objective. I can't judge.

Interviewee J: [Laugh] Sure.

Interviewer: Alright. So, any example which you lie to a guest?

- Interviewee J: **There are so many examples [Smile].** (Multi-purpose of deceptions)
- Interviewer: I understand as a duty manager you definitely use a lot of deceptions or lies every day. Particularly when handling those difficult cases. Or you can just use your last case as an example.
- Interviewee J: Okay then. [Think] Few days ago during check out time a guest approached the desk [Front Desk] and checked out and the alert said he was found smoking in room. Then, my colleague call us for dealing with the guest **because we need to be the one to tell the quests about the charges.** (The interviewee's position requires him to handle more complex cases)
- Interviewer: Charges for smoking?
- Interviewee J: Yes because our rooms are all non-smoking rooms.
- Interviewer: Okay.
- Interviewee J: **And as usual the guest denied and said he didn't smoke in the room.** (The guest lied in the first place) And then we just said we found the cigarette butt near the toilet bowl. Then the guest immediately admitted that he smoked and then agreed to pay the charge.
- Interviewer: Sorry I don't get it. So he didn't smoke?
- Interviewee J: **No, thequest has smoked, The whole room is filled with smoke when housekeeping entered the room** (Interviewee's certainty on guest smoking) and because the guest didn't lose any trace in the room. **Probably he have thrown the cigarette away in the toilet. Or in the rubbish bin outsides the room.** (The guest deliberately planned for the lie)
- Interviewer: Oh so you lied that you have found the cigarette butt to force the guest to admit?

- Interviewee J: Yes. (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie) Most of the guests will immediately admit when we told them we have proof. Only few guests will insist and pretend they haven't. (Only a small number of guests will continue to lie after the first lie has been proven wrong) Because once they know we have actual proof, they will admit because they know we can actually call the police to handle the case. And then they will know it's a serious issue. (Sense of seriousness from guests when legal forces are involved)
- Interviewer: I never knew about that because back in where I work when there was no cigarette butt we can't challenge the guests.
- Interviewee J: [Laugh] Because your hotel is a teaching hotel that's why. They need to do everything in the right way and follow the proper instruction. (Most hotels, according to norms, do not follow the most ethical and proper procedures)
- Interviewer: But I apologise if you finds this a little bit offensive, but how could you be so sure about the guest smokes?
- Interviewee J: [Laugh] It's okay. We just know it because of previous experience. It's nearly 100% sure that the guests. (Judgement from interviewee's work experience) Imagine, a room with very strong smell of smoke. It's obvious actually.
- Interviewee: Okay. But how do you feel about lying to the guests?
- Interviewee J: I think it's just a game. A psychology game. (Deception is a psychological activity) It's very obvious that they lied about the smoking charge first. And then we have to lie too to scare them. (Use deception to deal with lying guests) So that they know we have proof and it is serious. In this way they will know they couldn't lie to us anymore, most of the time. It's a trick. (Use another lie to counter a lie)
- Interviewer: But how about those still deny the charge? What do they usually say?
- Interviewee J: Oh yes. Most of them will keep repeating that 'it's impossible, I didn't smoke' and everything. But then I would look very serious and try to reason with them. (Deception also needs to be

professional and consistent with body language) Usually my points is, we find cigarette butt and ashes in your room and maybe it isn't you who smoke but then maybe your friend or the other person smoke, you may want to ask them to clarify. **Then we will give the quests some time to think about it.** (Spare some time for the lying counterpart to be prepared to admit)

Interviewer: Why?

Interviewee J: Because after some time, maybe one or two days. They will understand they couldn't lie and tell us oh it's others who smoked in the room not them. But of course it's them. **It's just a good excuse for the quests.** (Use lies as a platform for the guests to admit their shameful actions. It is also an intention to care for guest's feeling)

Interviewer: I see what you mean. So you are saying you say maybe it's their friends who lie so that after some time the guest can have a good way to admit the whole charge?

Interviewee J: **Exactly. If we just tell them directly it must be them who smoke because we have found some proof, they will be very embarrassed and angry.** (Practise deception to avoid provoking negative emotions in guests and as a direct intention to care for guest's feeling)

Interviewer: That's brilliant! I never thought about that. It's so...smart.

Interviewee J: [Laugh] So next time if you have a chance you can use it too.

Interviewer: Sure. So let me recap: So when we lie, we have to also consider the 'face' of the guests? [Referring to Guests' Self-Esteem]

Interviewee J: **Always. Lie or not we still need to make sure the quests have face.** (Deception can be used to retain the self-esteem of the guests and make the situation less embarrassing) **Like even when you know the quest lies, you cannot just reveal the truth.** (Never uncover the lie of the guests in front of them) **Sometimes we can also lie to subtly let the guests know we know the truth so don't lie anymore.** (Use deception to gently convey the alert to guests in order that they do not lie anymore)

Interviewer: That's a very good point! I think I only had one other interviewee who mentioned about staff lying when the guest lies or something. But I think that'd be super useful in supporting the view.

Interviewee J: Oh really? That's good.

Interviewer: Oh wait, but how about if the guests ask for any photo proof? Then you can't lie anymore.

Interviewee J: That's true too. **There were guests who really asked for a photo for proof. Then usually when I said is we have already cleaned up the room for the next quests and we do not take any photo.** (Use lies to cover previous lies) And the guest will of course say then there is no proof that they smoke. Then what we usually do is let the guests know that our housekeeping staff won't lie and then immediately ask them to talk to their friends or any visitors to see if they have smoked in the room. So it's the same. **Giving them more time to admit.** (Spare some time for the lying counterpart to be prepared to admit)

Interviewer: So what if a guest keeps denying?

Interviewee J: Good questions. And there are really guests who are shameless to lie all the way. **But then we couldn't argue with them forever so it is really that extreme, we would just wave the charge and most probably blacklist the quests.** (Following the rules that to the benefit of the doubt goes to the defendant, the lying guest would succeed but also be blacklisted) But that's not common. Only very few guests will do this.

Interviewer: Okay. Got it.

Interviewee J: Actually we are already subtle. I know there are hotels out there which they will create a fake photo to show proof too.

Interviewer: How?

Interviewee J: What they do is they will take a photo which the cigarette butt is

near the toilet-- the bowl area, and then send to the guests as a proof.

Interviewer: Can they do that?

Interviewee J: *I personally don't recommend it because then it looks like we are really lying for money.* (Creating fake proof is perceived unsuitable by interviewee) *And it's dangerous too if the guests find out we fake about that.* (The consequence of fake proof creation could be damaging)

Interviewer: Do you know if the management team supports that?

Interviewee J: *Most probably not. I think most top managers won't risk that.* (Overly lying to counter against lying guests is not recommended by the managers)

Interviewer: So when we lie we can't go too far?

Interviewee J: *Yes. I think a moderate lie is fine but if we lie too much and too big then it's very dangerous.* (Overly lying to counter against lying guests is not recommended)

Interviewer: Speaking of lying too much. I know as a duty manager, you may, let me touch wood first. Where is the wood. Oh. [Laugh] So, there can be some life-threatening cases like fire, faint and death. And so what are your judgement what and when to lie?

Interviewee J: [Laugh] This one is not on the question list isn't it. Let me think... *There are actually no any proper instruction about when to lie.* (No guidelines on the suitable context and timing to use deception) *Each DM [Duty Manager] will have their own standard and way of handling a case.* (Every manager has their own ways of coping with cases) *But my general rule is that if it affects quest safety, we must not lie.* (It is not okay to lie when guest's safety is involved) For example, when there is a fire, I don't think anyone to lie to the guests and tell them nothing is going on, right? And if someone breaks into their room, we couldn't just pretend nothing happened. *Because the quest may be in danger or have loss.* (It is not okay to lie when guest's safety or monetary matters are involved)

- Interviewer: So under what circumstance you would say lying is okay?
- Interviewee J: First of all of course the example I just gave you. **We can tell lie to trick the quests who lie.** (It is okay to lie when guests lie in the first place) **And secondly is that... serving the quests** (Using deception in guest service is acceptable). Why I say so, it's that when I was in my entry level. I started in Guest Relations.
- Interviewer: Oh really? I didn't know about that! I thought you got up from Front Desk!
- Interviewee J: Surprise! [Laugh] No, I started in Guest Relations. **Most of the time we serve with sincerity of course.** (Deception is not necessary in all guest encounters) **But some quests are very annoying and demanding so we have to pretend we enjoy serving.** (Use deception to directly project a professional image) But of course we hate them.
- Interviewer: I understand what you said. A few of the previous interviewees also mentioned similar points too.
- Interviewee J: Yes. And you are also a guest relations. I am sure you are very familiar with the whole thing.
- Interviewer: [Laugh] Only a tiny part. Anyhow, overall, do you think deception is a constructive or destructive tool in guest services and why?
- Interviewee J: **I think it's constructive most of the time.** (Deception generally facilitates guest services) **Working in hotel we really need to use lies in some cases** (Deception is fundamental in guest services). For example, **when a quest is surprised why we remember his preference, of course we will say because he is important. I don't think any staff will be so stupid to tell the quests we input all guest preferences' in the system.** (Using deception to make guests feel better is sometimes common practice)
- Interviewer: [Laugh] That one I am not sure. It could be.

- Interviewee J: And when a guest complains about the service and it's only the guests too demanding. You know those very picky guests. **We still need to apologise and look very sincere. But of course we don't care at all. But to show the guests we care, we need to pretend.** (Direct intention to remain a professional image of staff) **Otherwise the guests may complain to the top management then it will be a serious issue.** (Indirect intention to avoid guest's complaint)
- Interviewer: That's true. So when you usually lie, were you trying to benefit the guests, yourself or your hotel?
- Interviewee J: Honest answer?
- Interviewer: Yes.
- Interviewee J: **Then I think it's for us.** (Deception is usually for benefiting the staff) **I meant either for the staff or the hotel it's the same to me because we are working for the company.** (Staff and their companies could be treated as one entity as the staffs are representative of the companies) **So if we are in trouble, the hotel image also is damaged too.** (The organisation reputation is also affected if the personnel is perceived negatively) But I think **most of the time we lie so that we don't get complained by the guests.** (Direct intention to avoid guest's complaint)
- Interviewer: That's a good point too. So you think the guests are not benefited by the lies, am I correct?
- Interviewee J: [Think] I think not really. **The guests receive more positive words and their mood is better too that's a good thing.** (Guests are also benefited sometimes) What I am saying is we usually lie because of us. **Like we think about ourselves first when we lie.** (The priority of whether to lie depends on the interest of staff) But sometimes the guests are also affected, in a good way in this case.
- Interviewer: I think it's also related to the inseparability, which is actually mentioned by another interviewee.
- Interviewee J: **Potentially yes.** (Inseparability also matters in deception in guest services)

- Interviewer: Alright. So, one last question, I know you also need to get back to work. As a managerial role, under what circumstances, you would support your staff deceiving the guests, if at all?
- Interviewee J: The same rule as I have for myself. **If they lie to make things better and the quests will feel better.** (It is okay to lie if the intention is to benefit the guests) I don't ban it. **But when it's related to room rate, room payment or any life issues, they must be honest with the quests.** (It's not okay to lie when it is related to monetary matters, sensitive information or life-threatening issues) And being honest and saying sorry is helpful too sometimes
- Interviewer: I like that philosophy!
- Interviewee J: [Laugh] Yes. **Although some quests will get more angry if you say sorry, but then the key is to provide some possible solution to the quests too.** (If the staff chooses to be honest, when apologising, the staff should offer options for solution too) Not just saying sorry and not making any progress for the issue.
- Interviewer: Such as?
- Interviewee J: Such as if a guest asks whether our housekeeping staff forgot to clean their room, we can't lie and say because he has turned on a DND sign [Do Not Disturb] and we couldn't get in. We need to investigate first, **if it's really our staff's fault, it's better to apologise and do the service recovery** (When it's staff's fault, deception should not be used) such as giving them a round of free drinks in lounge.
- Interviewer: So when it's our fault, we shouldn't lie?
- Interviewee J: **Yes. I think that's quite important too.** (Deception should not be used to cover for staff's mistake)
- Interviewer: So it's okay to lie when it's for minor mistakes that the guests probably won't mind?

Interviewee J: *That's my recommendation, yes.* (It's okay to lie if the recipients probably would not mind if the truth reveals)

Interviewer: Okay. Thanks. So, that's the end of the interview. Before we end this, is there anything you would like to share more or ask me?

Interviewee J: My name won't be on the report right?

Interviewer: No. Never. Even your voice will be changed.

Interviewee J: [Laugh] Then it's all good.

Interviewer: Alright, thank you so much and let me stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview K)

Date of Interview: 2nd March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Back Office

Title of the Interviewee: Guest Relations & Club Floor Supervisor

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 7 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Good afternoon and it's so nice to have you as my interviewee.

Interviewee K: No worries. It's also a nice thing for me to support students too. I miss student's life.

Interviewer: [Laugh] Oh really? But still thank you so much, really. I know you are very busy.

Interviewee K: [Smile] It's okay.

Interviewer: So, let me read out the following part first. My name is Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and

your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee K: [Smile] Sure.

Interviewer: Alright. So, let's start?

Interviewee K: Yes.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: So the first question: so far in hospitality context, have you lied to a guest before?

Interviewee K: Surely yes. **A lot of time. We are the quest relations team. And what do we do? Lie to the quests [Laugh]** (Usual and common practice in guest services).

Interviewer: [Laugh] Is it really appropriate to say something like this!

Interviewee K: [Laugh]

Interviewer: Now, tell me one example then.

Interviewee K: Just like the guests I just served. Those fake Korean honeymoon couple again.

Interviewer: Oh I understand what are you talking about then. But perhaps we need to say it to the recording so I can use it in my study.

Interviewee K: Okay. **So, from experience, out of 10 Korean couple who claim they are on honeymoon, 9 of them are lying.** (Korean couples claiming to be honeymooners are usually fake) It's obvious. It's also because that previously a few Korean famous blogs have written about this and makes us famous so now those Korean

young couples know how to lie. The worst case was last time that the couple booked two rooms and travelled with their parents. You may ask, travelling with parents might only be because the couple is nice. But we can feel it that they're not married couple.

Interviewer: By how?

Interviewee K: By their eye contact. And sometimes it's so easy to spot out. *Some couples don't prepare enough.* (Some guests do not lie professionally) When we chat with the guests during check in and asked 'Oh when did you two get married?', both of them will have different dates. If they are on honeymoon, how could they forget such important date? Then we will know they are just faking their honeymoon to get free stuff again. And some others once they arrive they will say they're on honeymoon and what will we do for them. Personally I really don't like these people and real honeymoon don't show off too much.

Interviewer: I understand what you mean definitely.

Interviewee K: And last time too. A couple brought along their baby and said it's their honeymoon. The baby is already 3-year-old! The only possible reason is that they didn't get marry after they have the child for three years. But I don't think so.

Interviewer: [Laugh] Honeymoon with a 3-year-old baby? That's something new.

Interviewee K: *That's how crazy it is.* (More guests lie nowadays)

Interviewer: Alright. So what did you lie to them?

Interviewee K: From the first minutes we receive these couples we lie. *We just pretend we are happy when we talk to them and congratulate them.* (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)

Interviewer: I understand.

Interviewee K: Last time we had a fake honeymoon and so then my colleague

went to the lounge [Refer to the Club Lounge] and got two glasses of Champagne. It's a usual practice for the honeymooners but then **when she came back she suddenly ran a few steps to the couple and shouted 'Happy Honeymoon!' and gave them a really really fake and big smile.** (Deception also needs to be professional) It was so funny and all the GR [Guest Relations] were laughing at the back.

Interviewer: [Laugh] That's so funny. How was the couple reaction?

Interviewee K: I don't know. I didn't ask.

Interviewer: [Laugh] But it's such a hilarious story. Anyhow, so usually how did the guests react to your lying? I meant for the fake honeymoon couples.

Interviewee K: Nothing special. **Both the couple and I are just lying so I think we both don't want to ruin it.** (Use lies to respond to guest's lies) So we just let it be.

Interviewer: So what makes you lie to them?

Interviewee K: Well the guests lie first and so we need to lie too. **They pretend to be a honeymoon couple and we could not pretend we know they are not even though we know.** (Direct intention to care for guest's feeling)

Interviewer: But then would it affect the guest services?

Interviewee K: I don't think so. They just want extra stuff like wine and cake. **If the guests are sincere, I don't think we need to be sincere too.** (Sincerity of staff is mirrored from guests) Of course **I don't mean to be bad and harm the guests but we don't need to serve them straight from heart.** (If the guests are not honest, it is okay for the staff to not be honest too) **Just give them what they want and that's all.** (If a guest has a particular intention for lying, staff can focus on catering that need)

Interviewer: So you are saying that when the guests lie, a staff can also lie?

Interviewee K: I think yes. **If they lie, we don't need to be so honest with them too.** (Sincerity of staff is mirrored from guests)

Interviewer: But in the case of the fake honeymoon, you lie to the guests for what purposes?

Interviewee K: To match with the guests? **We couldn't tell them we know they lie so we just play our roles in the interaction.** (Intention to care for guests' feeling when they are the ones who lie first)

Interviewer: Okay. Then how about the real honeymoon couples then? Do you also lie to them?

Interviewee K: Depends. Most of the time don't have too. Because it's also nice to see them. They are really sweet and care for each other and they are usually in a good mood so it makes the whole operation a lot more easier.

Interviewer: Then when is the situation that you need to lie to them?

Interviewee K: When they are not nice guests? Guest Relations team **has to show that we are nice and friendly, even when the guests are not nice.** (Involuntary lie due to job nature)

Interviewer: You meant there are honeymoon couples that are not nice?

Interviewee K: Of course. There are a lot of weird guests.

Interviewer: I never met any honeymoon couple that is not nice.

Interviewee K: Then definitely you need to work more. There are a lot too.

Interviewer: [Laugh] I guess so. So why you lie to them?

Interviewee K: **To provide service?** (Using deception in performing guest

service) **We have to be professional to provide warm service even when quests are bad.** (Involuntary lie – intention to maintain a professional image of staff) Like when we are talking to the unfriendly guests, we have to be friendly and nice. Like we smile. **Not all smiles are real.** (Front line staffs need to conduct emotional labour) I think you know what I mean.

Interviewer: True. I agree.

Interviewer: But how would you be sure that the fake honeymoon or real honeymoon couples won't find out you're lying?

Interviewee K: They don't. **We are good at lying [Laugh].** (Lying involves skills)

Interviewer: So how do you know you're good at lying?

Interviewee K: Because no guests have ever complained that we are lying? **I think the guests just don't care even if they find out.** (It is okay to lie if the recipients most probably would not mind even if truth reveals) And it's just chatting, **the guests won't know whether I am really happy about their honeymoon or not.** (It is okay to lie if it is impossible for the recipients to find out the truth)

Interviewer: Okay that's legit. Then when you lied, were you trying to benefit the guests, yourself or your organisation?

Interviewee K: I think everyone? The guests are happy because we are happy, and we are happy because the guests won't complain about us and the hotel looks better with the services. **I think it's good for everyone.** (Intention to benefit all parties)

Interviewer: So how do you feel about lying to the guests?

Interviewee K: **Normal. I don't have strong feelings towards lying to them.** (No particular concern over the ethicality on deceiving guests) **It's very normal in our work.** (Common and usual practice in guest services)

- Interviewer: And do you think guest services level increases because of using lies?
- Interviewee K: [Think] **Honestly, I think yes.** (Effective result of deception)
- Interviewer: So it's a constructive or destructive tool for you?
- Interviewee K: **Constructive. But I think you need to use it wisely otherwise it can become a potential quest complaint.** (Deception is useful when appropriately practised) Some guests are smart.
- Interviewer: Can you briefly explain it?
- Interviewee K: What I mean is, you should lie to guests when you make mistakes. **Let's say you accidentally charge a guest to a wrong bill when you check out, you should be honest and apologise.** (Be honest when it is related to money issues) **Then suggest what solutions you can do to recover it.** (Outline what could be done instead of just apologising)
- Interviewer: So, never lie when one makes mistakes?
- Interviewee K: **I think being honest is always the best solution.** (Honesty could be a rule of thumb for staff)
- Interviewer: But one of my interviewee has mentioned that once time he delivered the wrong food order to a table and he was nervous so he said it's free. How would you think about this then?
- Interviewee K: **I think that's okay because it's just a minor mistake.** (Although a staff should be honest when he or she makes mistake, it is also okay to use deception in minor mistakes)
- Interviewer: So using lies to cover for minor mistakes is acceptable?
- Interviewee K: To me I think so. **For serious issues like wrong credit card charges of course we must be honest.** (No deception in money

matters) but I think for service mistakes, it's okay to lie a little bit. **Because it helps your image too.** (Using deception to maintain a professional image is acceptable)

Interviewer: Image?

Interviewee K: **The guests think we are professional and we have to act like we are. So if we are lying to cover for that, that's acceptable.** (Using deception to maintain a professional image is acceptable)

Interviewer: Okay sure. So next question, what is the one thing that justifies the most for deceiving the guests?

Interviewee K: **I think it's the Reason. Like, why do you lie to the guests.** (The intention of deception is the main determinant of its suitability)

Interviewer: Such as?

Interviewee K: Such as for many reasons. **Like the honeymoon, you can lie about being happy when you talk to them and so that the guests feel good. That's okay.** (Intention to make guests feel better)

Interviewer: Alright. So as a supervisor, under what circumstances, you would support your staff deceiving the guests, if at all?

Interviewee K: I think it's the same. **The reasons why. Like why do you lie.** (The intention of deception is the main determinant of its suitability)

Interviewer: Okay sure. Okay at last. That's the near end of the interview, is there anything you would like more to share or ask?

Interviewee K: [Think] No.

Interviewer: Well thank you so much for your time. It is really useful and I am sure I can get a lot of nice data from your words!

Interviewee K: You're welcome. We count on you to do the honeymoon and anniversary guests.

Interviewer: [Laugh] I will try my best. I will make sure everything you said is only used for academic purpose.

Interviewee K: Okay.

Interviewer: Then let me just stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview L)

Date of Interview: 4th March, 2017

Venue: Staff Canteen

Title of the Interviewee: Assistant Guest Services Supervisor

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 4 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: So, thank you for being my interviewee. It's very nice of you.

Interviewee L: [Laugh] It's okay.

Interviewer: It's great because you've just finished your Master's Degree so you should know better how I need to conduct the interview. And I also need your comments on my topic too. Have you received the email I sent to you about the questions?

Interviewee L: Yes. I had a brief look on it.

Interviewer: That's great. So as I shared with you before, it's about deception in hospitality industry.

Interviewee L: Yes you have mentioned about it before.

Interviewer: Anyhow, before I start the interview, I still need to record the starting part first. So, I am Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually

disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee L: No problem.

Interviewer: Alright, let's start the interview?

Interviewee L: Sure.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: So, I know you have quite some experience in the hotel industry by now. So the first question: so far in your work life in hotel, have you ever lied to a guest before?

Interviewee L: **Yes. I have. And it's really normal.** (Usual practice in guest services)

Interviewer: Why would you say so?

Interviewee L: **I say this because in hospitality, at times we have to use lies, as you say deception, to make the quest services better.** (Deception is fundamental in guest services and has the direct intention to facilitate the service) **Like I don't really tell the guests he or she is not going to get the upgrade he or she wants directly. But instead just tell them that the hotel is really full and other quests have reserved those room categories already.** (Use deception as a substitute of negative words)

Interviewer: Service-wise yes, previously I have also talked to other respondents and they have similar points as you mentioned.

- Interviewee L: And the thing in hotel is that sometimes we have to lie. **Think about all the incognito quests [Incognito refers to the hotel conceal the identity of the quest who requests so]. We are required to lie.** (Involuntary lie due to guest request)
- Interviewer: Wait I didn't think about that. You're right. Incognito is one of the areas where we have to lie on behalf of the guests as per request. Thank you.
- Interviewee L: It's fine. **It's that when the quests can provide the exact name and room number and claim that the quest ask him or her to go up to the room, we still have to pretend the quest isn't there.** (If the deception is as a guest service, the staff has to follow)
- Interviewer: Actually I have also given some thoughts about it. What would you say, like if the visitor can really provide everything?
- Interviewee L: I will still say there is no any reservation under this name. **It's the absolute rule to follow. When the quest set incognito, it's a must.** (If the deception is as a guest service, the staff has to follow)
- Interviewer: And usually do the guests believe?
- Interviewee L: For those who can provide actual proof, such as the Whatsapp chat, of course they don't. **But then what we have to do is that just ask them to contact their quests directly because perhaps their friends stay in another hotel.** (Continue to lie for the guest who requests incognito)
- Interviewer: But if you just say there's no such guest here immediately, is that convincing?
- Interviewee L: **That's the reason why we never respond so quickly. The usual practice is to pretend you are finding in on the computer system and then after a while just tell the quest you cannot locate the name. And what I will also do is to ask the quest to write down the name in a paper so that I can check if the name is spelled correctly or any reverse in first name and last name.** (Deception)

also needs to be professional)

Interviewer: Does that work?

Interviewee L: **Yes. It's acting skill and it's very important in the industry.**
(Deception is fundamental in guest services)

Interviewer: Because?

Interviewee L: **Because you'll need it every day.** (Deception is commonly used)
When you confront really bad guests, you still have to be sophisticated and show the professionalism. That's hospitality.
(Direct intention to maintain a professional image of staff) **And throughout my time in the industry I have trained myself to be a good liar.** (Practice makes perfect in deception skills)

Interviewer: [Laugh] Really?

Interviewee L: Sure it is. When you work longer in the future, you will understand what I am talking about.

Interviewer: Probably. And do you have other examples where we have to lie even though we don't want to? Like the incognito one?

Interviewee L: Yes. If you think about standing up for other teams. If a guest makes a complaint about the restaurant staff service. You won't say bad things to agree with the guest. Instead, you could either shift the topic or lie for her. Such as saying 'Oh maybe she was rather new in the restaurant but then I will definitely pass your words to the management so that no any other guest will experience the same again'. **And then you will give a sincere apology then if you can just free them something like a bottle of wine or snacks.** (Deception can also be paired with apologies and compensation to enhance satisfaction)

Interviewer: I agree. Sometimes it's just for the teammates.

Interviewee L: **And in that way the hotel looks more professional and coordinated.** (Direct intention to maintain a professional image)

of staff and hotels' image) Without doubt, we should never agree with the guests about some bad services because it makes us look like we are dissing our colleagues behind their back.

(Staff should not amplify the negative feeling of guests)

Although you may think the guest will be happy to find someone who thinks the same as he does, it will greatly impact the hotel image and guest's impression. Then we will become a disorganised and not friendly hotel.

Interviewer: I definitely understand what you are talking about. But then in terms of guest services, how would you say about lying. Do you think it's useful or not useful?

Interviewee L: Surely useful. (Deception can enhance guest service) If you have a good lying skills, you can solve a lot of problems. (Deception requires skills and is useful when appropriately used) Not limited to external guests, but also internal guests. Imagine we always have disputes with other teams, like Front desk and Engineering. The engineers in our hotels are, pardon me, not responsible at all. It's very difficult to get them doing an urgent task. But then we figure out if we say the guest has checked in and now gone out and then return in the evening, the engineers will do that immediately. (Using deception can avoid disputes amongst departments and also serves as a means to urge other teams to be efficient) Probably it's because they don't want to get any complaints because in our hotels if you get a guest complaint the seniors will be crazy about it.

Interviewer: Sorry, you mean the engineers do faster when the guests have checked in or something?

Interviewee L: What I meant is that the engineers won't do your request if there is no guest waiting or involved, such as lamp broken in a vacant room. They always say they can't fix it and need to call for contractors and then the room will be blocked for a few days. But whenever some of the directors or even the general managers have mentioned about it, they will fix it immediately. (Some staff are only efficient towards the orders from the ones with authority)

Interviewer: That's not very good.

Interviewee L: Exactly. And housekeeping also. Whenever we rush a room, they just don't give us that room. We found out the pattern and we

don't know if they do it on purpose. But now if we need a room, for example room 901 and 905, if we rush the room 903 or 4 or any room on that floor other than 901 and 5, they will release the room we want very soon.

Interviewer: Why does that happen? Did you talk to them before?

Interviewee L: For many times already. Communication don't always work. Some people, including quests, don't want to talk to you at all. So if saying the truth doesn't work, we have to lie to get things done. (If disputes cannot be resolved, deception can be used)

Interviewer: And that's why it's important, right?

Interviewee L: Yes. But not always lying. Lie when it makes your life easier. (Deception could be used if the end result would facilitate the process of guest services)

Interviewer: Then in that case, under what circumstances you would recommend a staff lying?

Interviewee L: [Think] First, for sure we have to lie as per guest's request like the incoognito case. (It is okay to lie if it is a guest's request)

Interviewer: Yes

Interviewee L: And second, I think we can lie if the others don't do their jobs properly.

Interviewer: In terms of guests or coworkers?

Interviewee L: Both. (It is okay to lie if the recipients purposely impact the service delivery)

Interviewer: Can you explain a bit more on the guests' side?

- Interviewee L: Let's say it's the smoking penalty. When we explain that the guests cannot smoke in the room, or else there will be a \$5,000 cleaning fee, some guests will say 'then charge me for the \$5,000' then.
- Interviewer: I have heard about it too.
- Interviewee L: **Yes and we are not going to allow it so we will scare the guests and tell them smoking in hotel is also illegal and if the smoke detector goes off, police officers will come and investigate.** (It is okay to lie if the guests do not conform to hotel rules) Then those arrogant guests would immediately hold back.
- Interviewer: [Laugh] That's weak.
- Interviewee L: Yes I know.
- Interviewer: So... when the guests don't cooperate, we can also lie?
- Interviewee L: **Yes I would say so.** (It is okay to lie if the guests do not conform to hotel rules)
- Interviewer: Okay. That's a new aspect too. How about in daily operation, is there any scenario where you lie and the guest feel better?
- Interviewee L: **A lot of time.** (Effective result of deception) One example is that once a guest approached the desk and let us know that it wasn't their honeymoon or anniversary because there was a bottle of wine in their room. I don't know what's the matter and I didn't call In-room dining to find out what's wrong in front of the guests because it's weird to do it in front of the guests. **What I said is simply told the guests that it was a treat from the hotel since we know she was travelling with her husband.** (Direction intention to make guests feel better) The guest was very happy and thanked us. That was obviously a lie.
- Interviewer: And by that you also covered the mistake made by other department?

- Interviewee L: Maybe. Maybe it wasn't a mistake. Usually the Guest Relations will also make a card to send together with the amenities but it seems like the guests didn't receive the card but only the bottle. Maybe the In-room dining forgot about it
- Interviewer: I see. And from your own ethical perspective, how do you think about lying to the guests?
- Interviewee L: **If you specify to the guests, I think it's acceptable as long as the purpose is to make them happy.** (It is okay to lie if the intention is to benefit the guests or make guests feel better)
- Interviewer: Sure. So, few last questions for the interview. When it's optional to lie, would you recommend remaining silent to the truth like dodging the question or go ahead and lie instead? Why would you recommend so?
- Interviewee L: **Depends on whether you are skillful. If you are confident in making the guests believe in what you say, then I don't think lying is a bad option.** (Dodging a question could be an alternative for the staff who are not good at lying too)
- Interviewer: Could you give us an example?
- Interviewee L: [Think] Such as the wine example. If an employee couldn't react fast and think of a good excuse, then maybe he can say 'oh really? We can check with our teams later.'
- Interviewer: So transferring the matter to someone else first?
- Interviewee L: **You can say so.** (Shifting the responsibility to answer the enquiry to the others instead of practising deception)
- Interviewer: Alright. Thank you. Let me see... I think I have got enough information from you and thank you very much for all the sharing. I will let you finish your break and before we end the interview. Is there anything you would like to ask me?
- Interviewee L: No thank you. Good luck on your study.

Interviewer: Thank you so much and then let me stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW NOTE

(Interview M)

Date of Interview: 5th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Lobby

Title of the Interviewee: Front Office Officer

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 3 years

Interviewee refuses to be recorded digitally. Notes are jotted during the interview and further revised afterwards.

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

- Explained to the interviewee about the purpose and aim of the study.
- Example of Deception: Upselling
- Regardless of whichever room types the walk-in guests would like to book, **create a reservation with the cheapest room rate in system. Then input upselling code into the system to mark it as self's effort to convince the quest to book a more expensive room, although the truth is not.** (Cheat on the upselling system)
- **The reason is to earn more commission.** (Direct intention to benefit herself monetarily)
- **Interviewee thinks it is okay because everyone in her team is also doing the same thing.** (Perceived suitability of deception because others are also doing the same. The concept is related to group polarisation.) **Also, the quests did not suffer from any loss but only the company.** (Guest services is not affected but the company only)
- When asked about loyalty to the hotel, the interviewee reported 'So-so'.
- Sometimes she and her colleagues make effort in persuading the guests to book for a more expensive but then they will still do the same deception to the hotel.
- **She is confident in doing it because firstly it's difficult to be checked** (Difficulty in finding out the truth) and secondly nobody will usually check (Inexistence of monitoring system)

- **Mainly benefit for herself through the fake upselling.** (Direct intention for self-interest)
- The guest doesn't know anything about it.
- She mentioned that **some of her colleagues even tell the guests there is no basic room type available temporarily and somehow force the guests to book a more expensive ones so the colleagues can earn the upselling commission.** (Sacrifice the interest of guests in exchange for self-interest)
- **When asked about the incongruence between staff's statement and online real-time inventory, which in the others means that the guests can check online if there is the basic room type available for reservation online, the interviewee responded that her colleagues will say some guests have just cancelled the booking and then they will give up the intention to earn the commission.** (Use another lie to cover for previous lies) But usually the attitude to those guests is slightly worse.
- **She personally dislikes the above practice because she thinks lying to the guests to earn the commission is unethical.** (It is not okay to sacrifice guest's interest in exchange for self-interest)
- **However when asked about lying to the hotel to earn commission, the interviewee said 'The hotel earns a lot'.** (The staff who does not have a high loyalty level might try to get more benefit from their company)
- **She also justified her action by expressing that the hotel doesn't give them enough monetary reward for a real upsell, so the front line staff cheat the system.** (Use deception to earn extra money from the hotel because the interviewee is unsatisfied with the pay condition)
- When persuading the guests to book for a more expensive room, they will attract the guests by offering them some free amenities such as wine, cake and cheese platter. The staff are empowered to give the mentioned amenities for the guests on complimentary basis.
- She regards it as a win-win situation, but agree that the hotel has lost.
- **She said that 'Nearly all encounters with guests are lies'.** (Common and usual practice in guest services) which she meant that all the thank you, nice to meet you and welcome are not sincere from her point of view. Because, as the interviewee said, 'You are working when serving the guests. How can working make you happy?'

- ***She thinks lying is essential in hospitality.*** (Deception is fundamental in guest services) ***But she doesn't recommend using deception to cause loss in quests.*** (It is not okay to sacrifice guest's interest in exchange for self-interest) But to the company is a different story.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview N)

Date of Interview: 7th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Seating Area

Title of the Interviewee: Concierge

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 7 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Thank you again for being my interviewee. It helps a lot to my final year study.

Interviewee N: [Smile] Sure.

Interviewer: How's your work in this new hotel for you?

Interviewee N: Oh it's good. It's not too hard for me because it's the sister hotel so the procedures and systems are very similar.

Interviewer: That's great. How about your colleagues?

Interviewee N: They're good. They're good.

Interviewer: Good to know that. I am sure they are nice to you. Anyway, before we start the interview, I have a script to read out. So, I am Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake

of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee N: Okay.

Interviewer: Okay then let's start the interview.

Interviewee N: Okay.

Interviewee Questions

Interviewer: So, you're the first concierge that I interview so far. I want to know that so far in your work life in hotel, have you ever lied to a guest before?

Interviewee N: Yes.

Interviewer: Could you tell me more about it with an example?

Interviewee N: Okay. A lie we always use is about taxi. Because a lot of taxis don't go to the other side [Referring to crossing the harbour between Kowloon Peninsula and Hong Kong Island], and around 3 in the afternoon, it's also the time for the drivers to change shifts. So sometimes the guests have to wait for a long time to get on a taxi. But they don't know the condition in Hong Kong and they will ask why the taxis don't take them.

Interviewer: And what do you lie in here?

Interviewee N: **When they ask why, usually I tell them it's because the taxi drivers are off now or have another appointment.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)

Interviewer: May I know why do you say so?

Interviewee N: *It's because it is difficult for the tourists to understand the reasons behind* (Use deception as a reason that is easier to be understood) and *it looks bad if we tell them the drivers don't accept destination at the other side.* (Direct intention to retain a hospitable image of Hong Kong tourism) They will ask why and then it's embarrassing to tell them.

Interviewer: I understand.

Interviewee N: And also if they know why, maybe they will become upset. If you are travelling in other countries and then all taxis keep saying no to you, you will be upset too.

Interviewer: So can I say you're trying to protect the guest's feeling?

Interviewee N: *Yes.* (Direct intention to make guests feel better)

Interviewer: And is protecting the guests' feeling the only reason why you lie?

Interviewee N: [Think] *And also if the guests are upset, they may lose their temper on us.* (Indirect intention to avoid provoking negative feelings of guests)

Interviewer: How do you say so?

Interviewee N: *Because when they are in a bad mood, they will be more critical to the service and maybe they will complain more about the service and think it's your mistake to not get them a taxi.* (Unhappy guests are also more critical towards the service quality) *So if we tell them a good excuse, they feel better.* (Direct intention to make guests feel better)

Interviewer: That's true. But how do you feel about lying to the guests?

- Interviewee N: **I think it's okay. I think it's also for our professional image.** (It is okay to lie to maintain a professional image of staff) Because if we tell the guests about the drivers choosing customers, they may have a bad impression of Hong Kong and to the hotel.
- Interviewer: I understand why they feel bad about Hong Kong but why to the hotel too?
- Interviewee N: **Guests don't care who is the bad guy. They only know if we can not get a taxi for them, we are useless.** (Some guests take all the blame on the hotel, regardless of who is the creator of the problem) Not everyone think in this way but some of them yes.
- Interviewer: That doesn't sound good. Then do you always use the same lie to tell the guests?
- Interviewee N: **Most of the time.** (Lie consistently) **To Hong Kong guests of course it doesn't work because they understand. But for other tourists, we can use the same lie.** (It is okay to lie if it is hard for the recipients to find out the truth)
- Interviewer: And so, after you lie to them with some good excuses such as you say like they have another appointment, do the guests usually do better?
- Interviewee N: **Yes. Most of the time.** (Effective result of deception) **I think it's also because it is better to hear that someone has already booked the drivers instead of the drivers reject them.** (Use deception as a reason that is easier to be accepted)
- Interviewer: Yes, covering for the drivers.
- Interviewee N: Yes.
- Interviewer: So do you have another example of deception?
- Interviewee N: [Think] I think the other one is a practice instead of one example. Is it okay?

- Interviewer: Yes of course. Feel free.
- Interviewee N: Sometimes when the guests come to us and ask for some information about some restaurants and attractions, we don't know about them or forget the details, we will check online. **But my practice is to pretend I know about it but need to double check for them to see if there is any newest update.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)
- Interviewer: How do you usually say it?
- Interviewee N: For example, if they come and ask me about the how to get to ABC Restaurant and I forgot the exact location, I will tell them 'Okay ABC Restaurant. Let me check online one more time because I have heard they moved.' Then I will search on Google.
- Interviewer: And why do you do that may I ask?
- Interviewee N: **It's because we will look very unprofessional if we tell the guests that we don't know and we can check online. They expect us to know everything.** (Direct intention to maintain a professional image of staff) And if we look like we haven't heard of the restaurants they know, the guests don't trust you with your other recommendations too.
- Interviewer: I can understand why. But that's a smart move I must say. How did you figure out the trick?
- Interviewee N: [Think] I don't know, really. I didn't think about it.
- Interviewer: I see. So how do you think about lying to the guests then? Like how do you feel?
- Interviewee N: I think it is good? **We, I mean the concierge team, look better and the information is more correct and accurate. And the guests think that we do an extra step for them.** (Both the staff and guests are benefited in this deception case) So I think it's a good thing to lie in this example.

- Interviewer: Yes, I agree. So I want to ask you. Overall, do you think deception, or lying, is a useful tool or not a useful tool?
- Interviewee N: **Useful.** (Deception is useful in guest services)
- Interviewer: And the reason is?
- Interviewee N: It's because lying can help in a lot of situations in hotel. **Because nowadays people always want efficient services** (Guests are getting more demanding nowadays) and if we cannot meet their expectation, they become angry. **But if we lie, it can gives us an excuse.** (Deception can be used as a buffer for handling demanding requests)
- Interviewer: Alright. Got it. So, what are some of the situations you think a hospitality staff shouldn't lie to a guest?
- Interviewee N: [Think] **I think we shouldn't lie to a guest for ourselves.** (It is not okay to lie to benefit the staff him or herself) Such as we don't recommend a restaurant to a guest because the restaurant gives us some discounts to our staff. **We should really put the quests first if we need to lie.** (Whether to lie should be based of the benefit of guests)
- Interviewer: That's a good point actually.
- Interviewee N: Thank you
- Interviewer: So... one of the last few questions. If a staff wouldn't want to lie when the guests ask something, do you think ignoring the main point is a solution? In that way the staff doesn't have to lie, but then he or she didn't tell the truth too.
- Interviewee N: **Depends on if the quests insist to know. Some people they don't stop until they get what they want so I think it really depends on the type of people that you're talking to.** (Whether to dodge a question depends of the insistence level of the guests)

Interviewer: Okay sure. Alright I think that's nearly all that I need. Before I end the interview here, is there anything you would like to ask me or share more?

Interviewee N: That's all. No.

Interviewer: Alright then, thank you so much for your time. I know you have to return to work soon.

Interviewee N: It's okay. So you are interviewing [Name of Interviewee P] later right?

Interviewer: Yes but he isn't at work right now?

Interviewee N: He works at 3. 20 minutes left. If you want you can sit here or you can go outside to get a drink.

Interviewer: Oh I will figure that out later. I think I will tidy up the information I have just got.

Interviewee N: Okay. So I go back to work now, if you need me, I am at the concierge desk

Interviewer: Okay thank you very much. See you.

Interviewee N: Bye bye.

Interviewer: Oh

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview O)

Date of Interview: 7th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Seating Area

Title of the Interviewee: Assistant Chief Concierge

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 14 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Code** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Code** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: So, thank you for being my interviewee again. Particularly during a busy period like now.

Interviewee O: It's fine. Last shift isn't off yet.

Interviewer: Yes I have just talked to [Name of the Interviewee N] and he is really a nice guy!

Interviewee O: Yes he is. He has been a good one. How's your study?

Interviewer: Perfect! I am enjoying my final semester and then soon in May I will be finishing my university.

Interviewee O: Good to know.

Interviewer: Alright, then. Shall we start the interview now?

Interviewee O: Sure.

Interviewer: Then before we start the interview, let me read a part first. So, I am Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been

doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, all your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee O: Sure.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: Alright. Now, first question. As an experienced Assistant Chief Concierge. You have quite a long experience being in the hotel industry. So, so far have you ever lied to a guest before for guest services?

Interviewee O: [Laugh] **Yes. I must have during this long period of time.** (Deception is inevitable in guest services in a long period of time)

Interviewer: Do you have any example that comes to your mind now? Can you share with me?

Interviewee O: Sure. Previously I had a case about a missed limo [Limousine Vehicle]. A guest has booked a limo in the morning around 7am and when the guest was ready at the lobby, the car didn't come. We had confirmed with the car company the night before but still the limo was late. Then of course the guest was very angry because he needed to arrive to the airport on time. **And although it is not our fault, we still have to be responsible for any accidents.** (Hotels are to take care every stage of the guest cycle) We called to the car company and they said they missed the order and apologise and they tried to call the nearest available driver for us already. **When I approached the guest and try to explain to him, I told him that we've contacted the car company but the**

vehicle has accidents on the road and that's why it was delayed.
(Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie) And the guest is still angry, but not as angry as before. (Effective result of deception)
But in the end the guest still didn't want to wait for the limo so he took the taxi instead. We waived the charge of course and free him the taxi to the airport as a courtesy.

Interviewer: Oh may I ask why did you tell the guest in this way?

Interviewee O: Think in this way, Matthew. If you are the guest, you book a car and then the car forgot to come to pick you up. You would be angry, right?

Interviewer: I guess so, yes.

Interviewee O: But if you know it's because the driver has an accident, you won't blame him too much. (Use deception to cause the sense of pity in the guest)

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee O: That's why. If we don't lie, then the guest will be angry and when something goes wrong, the guests don't care who is responsible for the problem. (Some guests take all the blame on the hotel, regardless of who is the creator of the problem) They always think hotel should be the one responsible for everything during their stay. Sometimes when they eat at a very poor restaurant, they will come back to the hotel and complain, although it's not us who recommend the restaurant!

Interviewer: I see. But then don't you think telling them the truth is easier?

Interviewee O: It has happened. And it doesn't really matter what causes the problem. (The past is the past. Who is responsible for the problem is not the most urgent matter) The task is to make the guests okay. (Direct intention to make guests feel better) And the lies also help the limousine company too. (By lying to the guests, the failed service provider is also benefited)

Interviewer: That's true. So you lie because it is already a past event?

- Interviewee O: **If nothing can be changed, yes.** (It is okay to lie if it is not important for the guests to find out the truth) **And the guests don't always need to know the real reasons. We are here to fix problems for them so as long as the problem is solved, that's okay.** (The end result is what matters for the guests instead of the process)
- Interviewer: So... it's okay to lie when it doesn't cause any difference to the result?
- Interviewee O: **[Think] Yes.** (It is okay to lie when the end result will not be affected)
- Interviewer: Okay sure. So may I ask after you make up that lie to the guest, does the guest feel better?
- Interviewee O: **Yes. His emotion was better. He was angry but compared to while he was waiting, he was more calm.** (Effective result of deception)
- Interviewer: So do you always tell the same lies in times of this?
- Interviewee O: Not always. Because missing limo is a serious thing in the hotel's perspective. So it don't happen frequently.
- Interviewer: But then do you often lie to cover for mistake?
- Interviewee O: **I'd say they are tricks but yes.** (Using deception to cover for mistakes is a usual practice)
- Interviewer: Is there any difference between tricks and lies in your perception? What is it?
- Interviewee O: They both means the same thing but I just think it seems better to call tricks [Laugh].

Interviewer: [Laugh] Oh okay. Got it. So when you lie, are you afraid that the guests will find out you are lying in the end?

Interviewee O: I never imagine about it. *It's quite difficult for them to find out.* (The difficulty of finding out the truth gives confidence to the staff to lie) *Of course when we lie, we need to be sure that we lie professionally too.* (Deception needs to be professional)

Interviewer: Professionally?

Interviewee O: Yes, not only telling lies, which is quite low level. *And if your lie isn't good enough, as you say if the guests find out, they will become super angry and the situation is worse than telling the truth.* (If deception is not professional, the situation can be worsened) *Even if you lie to make the guests happy, they will think you are not honest and they will have a bad impression to the hotel.* (Deception should not be detected by guests)

Interviewer: So...you're saying that even lying should be professional, right?

Interviewee O: *Sure.* (Deception also needs to be professional)

Interviewer: Okay then, how do you generally feel about lying to the guests?

Interviewee O: *I think that's part of hotel work.* (Deception is fundamental in guest services) *People travel far away from their countries and when they come here, they don't want any accidents. So we should also give them a positive feeling.* (Direct intention to create a flawless environment for the guests)

Interviewer: But then in times of emergency, should we still lie?

Interviewee O: *In that case no. Emergency as you say is emergency. It's exception from the normal operation.* (Staff should not lie in times of emergency)

Interviewer: But then how do you decide when to lie and when not to lie? Is there any general rule?

Interviewee O: **It's quite difficult to establish a standard for lying because every situation is unique and is different.** (Each circumstance requires different handling method) **There is not one fixed standard for people to follow.** (Staff cannot follow a standard procedure regarding deception)

Interviewer: How about any general rules of thumb that you use?

Interviewee O: **Usually I would say that if no one is affected then it's okay to lie. (It is okay to lie if no party is negatively affected)** For example, **if you lie and charge extra to the quests then the quest is affected then it's not okay.** (It is not okay to lie to cause loss to guests)

Interviewer: Affected in a negative way right?

Interviewee O: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay sure. So to you, what is the one thing that is hard for justifying lying? Like what is the one thing that makes you not accept lying?

Interviewee O: [Think] **Selfishness. If my team lie to a quest to charge more for the services, then I don't accept it.** (It is not okay to lie for self-interest)

Interviewer: But does that happen a lot in hotel industry? Like selfish lies?

Interviewee O: Not many. That's ethical concerns and in some companies if you are caught doing it, you have penalties.

Interviewer: Okay. So overall, do you think deception, or lying, is a constructive and destructive tool in guest services?

Interviewee O: **Depends. If it is used in a proper way, then it is constructive.** (Deception could be a useful in guest service if it is appropriately practised and vice versa)

- Interviewer: That's true.
- Interviewee O: And not only to your guests or customers, it also helps in your operation and relationship with your colleagues. Like when you talk to other teams sometimes there is argument, and you have to stay calm and control your emotions. **Actually to quests we also control our emotions too.** (Emotional labour is also usual in guest services) **Some quests are very annoying and not welcomed but since they have paid, we still need to serve them.** (Involuntary lie due to job nature)
- Interviewer: I totally agree with you. And one last question from me. As an ACC. [Assistant Chief Concierge] under what circumstances, you would support your staff deceiving the guests, if at all?
- Interviewee O: Similar to the previous points. **If they are lying to serve the quests better, I am fine with it.** (It is okay to lie if the guests are benefited or facilitate the service delivery) **Or you are trying to maintain the hotel image.** (It is okay to lie to maintain a professional image of the hotel) However, if they lie for other reasons, I need to see case by case. **But if they lie for themselves, then it's not fine for me.** (It is not okay to lie for self-interest)
- Interviewer: Okay sure. I have got enough information I think. Before I end it here, do you have anything to ask me or share more on this matter or lies?
- Interviewee O: No. Is it all?
- Interviewer: Yes, and oh by any chance do you have any recommendation for interview referral?
- Interviewee O: Another concierge?
- Interviewer: Not necessarily. As long as they deal with guests every day then it's alright.
- Interviewee O: I can ask our Club Floor Manager to see if she is at work today.

Do you have time?

Interviewer: That'd be perfect! And sure I hope I don't bother her for work.

Interviewee O: I can ask. She is a nice person so don't worry. One moment. Let me call.

Interviewer: Okay so I will stop the recording here Okay?

Interviewee O: Sure.

INTERVIEW NOTE

(Interview P)

Date of Interview: 7th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Club Lounge

Title of the Interviewee: Club Floor Manager

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 11 years

Interviewee refuses to be recorded digitally. Notes are jotted during the interview and further revised afterwards.

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

- Explained to the interviewee about the purpose and aim of the study.
- Example of Deception: Encounters with VIP
- Because of job position, the interviewee needs to socialise with VIP every day. She needs to maintain a good relationships with those guests.
- When asked about whether she is afraid that the guests will find out, **the interviewee remained confident and mentioned when an employee is acting, he or she need to have good acting skills.** (Deception requires skills and a hotel staff should learn them)
- **A lot of lies are involved in serving the VIP.** (Usual practice in guest services) Some examples included pretending to know about their background and companies in conversation when she doesn't; acting amiable when she doesn't like the guests.
- **She has to lie because her job is to entertain the guests and in order to make them happy, she cannot reveal the truth.** (Involuntary lie due to job nature)
- The interviewee also mentioned 'Art of Speaking' is important in hospitality industry.
- **To her, lies are either initiative or responsive. Initiative means the staff lies proactively to give a good feeling to the guests. Responsive means the staff lies when responding to guests. Initiative lies are better to be controlled because the staff can decide what and to what level the lies are. But when it**

comes to Responsive lies, the staff needs to have higher command of lying skills in order to convince the quests. (Interviewees' classification of lies)

- She thinks lying to guests is essential in her job nature. **She couldn't make the quests experience any negative feeling** (Direct intention to create a flawless environment for guests)
- **She also stated that in times of emergency, it should be treated exception and lying is not recommended.** (It is not okay to lie in times of emergency)
- In Club Floor, because guests are paying extra, she needs to be extra careful with her words. **Those quests are not very tolerant** (Guests are getting more demanding nowadays)
- She wasn't very comfortable with all the lying when she first joined the industry. **But as time goes by, practice makes perfect.** (The skills of deception improves with time)
- She supports her team to use deception if it facilitates guest services, such as telling a guest that she looks very good when her staff sees the guest during breakfast time.
- **The interviewee thinks that as long as the intention is beneficial to the quests, it's good for them because the quests are looking for a good experience.** (It is okay to lie if the intention is to benefit the guests)
- **Agree than dodging the question is one of the methods, but only temporary. If the quests are insistent, then the staff still has to confront it.** (Dodging cannot be a total resolution to a problem)
- In Club Lounge, if any drinks such as juices, is out of stock, she will tell the guests they purposely didn't order it on that day because the ingredients aren't very fresh.
- **Recommend entry level staff to practise some deception skills.** (Deception is fundamental in guest services)

INTERVIEW NOTE

(Interview Q)

Date of Interview: 9th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Club Lounge

Title of the Interviewee: Housekeeping Supervisor

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 6 years

Interviewee refuses to be recorded digitally. Notes are jotted during the interview and further revised afterwards.

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

- Explained to the interviewee about the purpose and aim of the study.
- Example of Deception: Room Cleanliness
- Room is not deeply cleaned. When cleaning a bathroom, the housekeeper will reserve a driest used towel and send all the other used ones to the laundry bin. Then they will start the cleaning process. Chemical and detergent will be used as to kill the bacteria. However in the end, the housekeeper will use the reserved towel to dry the bathtub and washing basin instead of using a new towel or allowing natural dehydration.
- Because time is rush and guests keep asking for the room, **so as long as the room appears to be clean, the Supervisors will release the room to be Vacant Clean Inspected, that is, ready for checking quests in.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)
- This practice is only benefiting the staff themselves as if there is any problem arises, both the hotel image and guest satisfaction level would be impaired.
- Most hotels he has worked at before don't have strict policy in room cleaning because of the short time available.
- Personally strongly disrecommend this practice but he gave in due to high pressure from front desk.
- **Regarded this conduct as unethical and should be eliminated.** (Self-judgement of interviewee) But it's difficult to change the momentum of the industry as it has been a long history practice.

- Express that it's difficult to supervise the housekeeper to clean the room in the correct procedure because there is limited manpower to inspect the room.
- **Usually the guests don't know about the hygiene condition about the room because everything looks good.** (The interviewee is confident to lie because it is nearly impossible for the guests to find out the truth) But the interviewee highly suspects there is any potential virus or bacteria on the towel by the last guest who used it.
- **Lying in this case is a destructive tool because it potentially impacts the guests' health.** (It is not useful in guest service when guest is negatively affected)
- In daily operation don't have a lot of chance to socialise with guests and usually the conversation is very simple, without any chance to practise deception.
- **He agrees that lying also requires skills** (Deception requires skills) and **he doesn't recommend his team to lie under any circumstance because generally the housekeepers are not good at tricks and lies.** (If the staff is not good at lying, he or she should avoid doing so)
- **Inappropriate contexts include stealing the guests' asset while making up the room and denying the action.** (It is not okay to lie when it causes loss to the guest)
- Dodging can be useful for staff who don't prefer to lie and **the interviewee suggested that the entry level staff can ask for managers to handle complex cases** (When staff is uncertain about whether to use deception or now, he or she can refer to the managers), and who might be more experienced in deception.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview R)

Date of Interview: 11th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Club Lounge

Title of the Interviewee: Club Lounge Butler

Class of the Organisation: Upscale Hotel

Year of Experience: 5 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Code** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Code** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Good evening and thank you again for being my interview. I know you have just finished the cocktail time so it must be a busy time for you now.

Interviewee R: Don't worry. My colleagues are helping me.

Interviewer: Thank you anyway. So how's the business? Busy?

Interviewee R: So-so. Not too busy but more club guests nowadays so in the evening sometimes it can be busy.

Interviewer: Yes I just saw it myself too.

Interviewee R: Yes.

Interviewer: Alright so, do you have a brief idea what is my study and interview is about?

Interviewee R: Yes. It's about lying right?

Interviewer: Yes similar. We also call it deception. I will explain in a minute. Before we start off, let me read out the introduction part so you

have a better understanding.

Interviewee R: Okay.

Interviewer: So, I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee R: Okay I understand it now.

Interviewer: That's perfect. So, may I begin with the first question?

Interviewee R: Please.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: So far in your work life in hotel Food & Beverage side, have you lied to a guest before?

Interviewee R: Yes I have.

Interviewer: Can you further elaborate it with an example?

Interviewee R: Let's take an example about the club lounge. If a guest has drunk too much. Especially the foreigners, they love to drink till they're drunk. And if they start to get drunk or their behaviour is not

normal, we can stop serving any alcoholic drink to them. **But it's very rude to say no we cannot and they guests will also be pissed off.** (It is not okay to directly reject guests in hospitality industry) Especially when they're drunk, they can become violent. **So sometimes we make the service time longer and say that the wine is currently out and the staff is taking them from the stockroom.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie) So that it takes more time for the guests to get the wine or beer or cocktails, those alcohol.

Interviewer: But then in the end they still consume more alcohol, right?

Interviewee R: Yes.

Interviewer: Then I have a question. Can you always use the example to the same guests? Wouldn't they be impatient after a while?

Interviewee R: **Well first of all, they are drunk so they are impatient anyway.** (Unconscious about the lies)

Interviewer: [Laugh] True.

Interviewee R: **And they can't tell how long it is because they are half drunk already.** (Unconscious about the lies) **But you're right that we can't always tell the same thing to them.** (This practice is only a first buffer) So, what we can do is to take out the alcohol in the drink, especially cocktail.

Interviewer: Then it becomes mocktail, no?

Interviewee R: Yes you're right.

Interviewer: But the taste is different. Wouldn't the guests find out? I know they are drunk but then without alcohol the drink can be totally different. How would you do then?

Interviewee R: Some guests do. They do know the difference. **But most of them are drunk and can't tell the difference.** (Unconscious about the lies)

- Interviewer: Really? I never got drunk so I don't know.
- Interviewee R: That's good for you. Getting drunk is very bad for your liver.
- Interviewer: True. So may I ask how do you feel about lying to the guests? Like for the one about more time in stocktaking and mocktail cases respectively.
- Interviewee R: To me, I think it's a good thing to do. And a right thing to do too. **First of all, we really care the quests about their health.** (It is okay to lie if the intention is to benefit the guests) We don't mind serving more alcohol to them because it's their benefit [Refer to Club Floor Guestroom Benefits]. But we know if they drink too much, the next day they will feel very painful. And when they are drunk, they can't make decision. They only want to drink more and more and that's why we have to control them. **But since we are hotel service, we need to maintain a good image so we can't simply take away their drink, that's why we have to lie to them.** (It is not okay to directly reject guests in hospitality industry and thus deception can be used as a substitute) I think the guests understand why do we do that and actually a lot of guests will thank us the next time they see it and they apologise for their behaviour.
- Interviewer: Oh really. Did they regret about their misbehaviour?
- Interviewee R: Sure. And also, we have to control their drinking behaviour because when they are drunk or violent, sometimes they yell and do a lot of stupid things. **So their behaviour can affect other quests in the lounge too.** (Inseparability in hospitality: guest's behaviour affects one another) **So to prevent this happen, we have the right to control their consumption.** (Staff should ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for all guests)
- Interviewer: So overall, do you think deception, or level is a constructive or destructive in guest services?
- Interviewee R: **I think... it's constructive when we use it well.** (Deception is useful in guest services when it is appropriately used)

Interviewer: What are the contexts that you would say using deception is destructive?

Interviewee R: **When we lie for ourselves?** (It is not okay to lie for self-interest)

Interviewer: Such as?

Interviewee R: **Such as if we make a cocktail that is replaced with cheap ingredients but the menu says we use the high quality ingredients, then it's not good. Because the guests don't enjoy the same quality drink.** (It's not okay to sacrifice guest's interest for self-interest)

Interviewer: So are you saying that... we shouldn't harm the service quality level by lying?

Interviewee R: **Definitely. I think we have to keep the service quality high and when we lie, it should help the situation but not decrease the quality.** (Deception should only be used when the service quality could be enhanced)

Interviewer: Okay that's a good point, I agree with you. So would you say... an objective to raise the service quality can justify for using deception in hotels?

Interviewee R: **[Think] Yes.** (It is okay to lie if the intention is to raise the service quality)

Interviewer: Okay. Perfect. So I want to ask: when you stop serving alcoholic drink to the guests, or lengthen the service time, do the guests feel better?

Interviewee R: **At that time no, they won't be happy if we serve it slow but after he wake up in the next morning, most of them will thank us.** (Final effective result of deception) Or they will completely forget what happened the night before.

Interviewer: Okay. I see. And do you have any chance you directly talk to a guest and lie to them?

- Interviewee R: **A lot of time.** (Usual practice in guest services) Whenever we have time we will go around and chat with the guests.
- Interviewer: Are you the only one who does that or there is any Guest Relations or other person will do the talk?
- Interviewee R: We will have the Club Floor team doing it so my main duty is the bartending. But you see there are also stools behind the bar top so some guests also like to sit there and chat with us.
- Interviewer: Oh I see. So, what's the example of lie?
- Interviewee R: I think when we always lie when we talk to the guests. **Because some topics are sensitive and we can't avoid them if the guests start the conversation.** (Sensitive topics are not appropriate in guest conversation) Such as Politics, some guests really love to chat about it and although they know we may have different opinion on politics, secretly they are unhappy or disappointed that you are different from them. **So I always say something that the guests want to hear.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie) Like before when there was the US President advertising period, support Obama but one of the American guests is a fan of Donald Trump, and he asked me some questions about my opinions on the two presidents [Candidates], I had to pretend I am okay with Donald Trump too.
- Interviewer: I understand why. So why do you do that?
- Interviewee R: **To avoid argument?** (Direct intention to avoid dispute with guests on controversial matters) Although the guest says they don't care, I think they really care in the heart. Because Politics is very personal and core value. So if someone is different, they may feel that that person is not good.
- Interviewer: So is to make sure no negative feelings?
- Interviewee R: **Yes.** (Direct intention to make guests feel better)

- Interviewer: Perfect. So is it successful after you lie? Is it true that there was no argument when you pretend you are with them?
- Interviewee R: **Yes. The guests are satisfied when they know you are the same opinion with them and they think you're a good friend.** (Effective result of deception)
- Interviewer: That's perfect. Let me ask you another question.
- Interviewee R: Sure.
- Interviewer: When I researched earlier, a scholar also mentioned that if a staff doesn't want to lie to the guests, they can ignore the question. Like shifting the topic or not answering to the question directly. Do you think it's a solution for those who don't want to lie?
- Interviewee R: [Think] Kind of. **I think that's okay for some easy questions.** (Dodging can be used when answering casual topics) But some guests they are smart and they know you are not answering them.
- Interviewer: So is it okay for the first time to answer a question to use this method?
- Interviewee R: **I think so.** (Dodging can serve as the first buffer)
- Interviewer: Okay that's good. So do you know your colleagues also use deception in guest services too? Or not?
- Interviewee R: **I think they do too. It's very common.** (Common practice in guest services) **Particularly in the club lounge all the quests are club quests and usually they are more demanding and high-paying.** (Guests are getting more demanding nowadays) That's why sometimes we also fake too.
- Interviewer: I agree. But do you lie more to the club guests more than the normal guests?
- Interviewee R: [Think] I don't think so. **Even normal quests can be demanding**

and we need to pay attention to what we talk to them. (Guests are getting more demanding nowadays)

Interviewer: True. So, let me see... I think I have got enough data for the analysis. Thank you so much for your time today.

Interviewee R: Don't worry. You can always come back to ask me if you have more questions, or send me an Whatsapp.

Interviewer: So nice of you. Before we end the interview here, do you have any question to ask me or share with me?

Interviewee R: No thanks.

Interviewer: Then everything is fine here. What time will you be off tonight?

Interviewee R: 1am tonight.

Interviewer: That's so late.

Interviewee R: That's the closing time for the bar.

Interviewer: Then I hope you have good guests tonight that you don't have to lie to talk to them them [Laugh]

Interviewee R: I hope so too.

Interviewer: Finger crossed for you. So let me just stop the recording here.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview S)

Date of Interview: 12th March, 2017

Venue: Starbucks, Maritime Square

Title of the Interviewee: Cast Member

Class of the Organisation: Theme Park

Year of Experience: 3 years

Words being underlined, bolded and italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: Good afternoon and thank you again for inviting my offer to be my interviewee. It is really nice to have an outlook from a theme park employee's perspective. You are actually the first one that I interview?

Interviewee S: [Laugh] Really the first one?

Interviewer: Oh no the first one of the whole project. The first one from theme park.

Interviewee S: Oh I see.

Interviewer: Anyhow, are you enjoying your work in the park?

Interviewee S: Very much! I have always been a fan of [Name of the Theme Park].

Interviewer: That's good to hear. So are you familiar with my topic, deception?

Interviewee S: Yes. I read your attachment before.

Interviewer: That'd be perfect. So let me give you an introduction. Okay, ny

name is Matthew Kum. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee S: Okay. I don't worry about it.

Interviewer: Still [Smile]. Okay so, let's start the interview, shall we?

Interviewee S: Of course.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: So first question: So far in your time in the theme park that you work for, have you ever practised deception? Or lie to your guests?

Interviewee S: **[Laugh] But the whole business is a lie!** (The core value of the interviewee's organisation is naturally a deception)

Interviewer: [Laugh] That's so true. But still I need you to elaborate as a proof to the study.

Interviewee S: Okay then. So as you know it's all magical elements in the park and all the fairy-tale and magic are not real. **If you count in that way then the whole park is a lie.** (The core value of the interviewee's organisation is naturally a deception)

Interviewer: True. Okay let's not pay too much attention on the nature of the theme park since it's a lie already. In particular to your operation,

like when you serve the guests, have you ever lied to your guests before?

Interviewee S: **Of course.** (Usual practice of deception) **I always tell the children to believe in the fairy tale or how the cartoon character will come out to play with them. Like in Toy Story we all promote it as all characters will be alive in the evening.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee choose to lie)

Interviewer: That's cute. And how do they react usually?

Interviewee S: **They are very excited of course.** (Effective result of deception)
Children are very innocent and will believe what you say.

Interviewer: Although it seems a bit weird to ask, but why don't you choose to tell the truth to the guests?

Interviewee S: **[Laugh] I understand. But if we tell the truth, then my company won't exist anymore.** (The core value of the interviewee's organisation is naturally a deception) And if we tell the children that all the characters in the theme park are played by human, I think they will die.

Interviewer: I totally understand. So it's to maintain the business model as well as protecting guest' feeling?

Interviewee S: **Yes.** (Direct intention to make guests feel better)

Interviewer: Then may I ask how do you think about lying to the children then?

Interviewee S: **I think that's part of my job requirement.** (Deception is a fundamental element in interviewee's job) I don't really think I am lying. **I think it's about creating a moment for the children.** (Direct intention to create a utopia for guests)

Interviewer: 'Creating a moment'. I love that idea. Can you explain more about it?

- Interviewee S: *It's like we make a fake and happy world for them and everyone comes to the park can relax and enjoy their time there.* (Direct intention to make guests feel better)
- Interviewer: That's surely a positive and cheerful way of seeing it.
- Interviewee S: Yes.
- Interviewer: So are the guests-- the tourists, are happy after you create the moment for them?
- Interviewee S: *Yes.* (Effective result of deception) *They come for that.* (Guests want to be lied to) That magical experience and that's why they are satisfied.
- Interviewer: But then is there any example where you have lied to a guest like... you tell the parents that their children look cute but then you don't think so in your heart?
- Interviewee S: [Laugh] Sometimes yes. We are only humans and I think it's natural for us to think sincerely. *But the key point is not to show it.* (Do not show negative emotions to guests) The whole business focuses on magical and delightful feeling so whatever we say we have to be very careful. If we don't like something, we don't usually say it out directly.
- Interviewer: Instead, you would just lie?
- Interviewee S: *Yes, exactly.* (Use deception to cover for negative feelings)
- Interviewer: Alright. So overall, do you think deception is a constructive or destructive tool in guest services?
- Interviewee S: *Definitely a constructive tool.* (Deception is useful in guest services) Otherwise my company will shut down [Laugh].
- Interviewer: It could be [Laugh]. But I want to know, when you lie to the

tourists, let's say you're lying to the kids, are you trying to benefit the kids, yourself, or the company, I meant the theme park?

Interviewee S: **I think everyone. Because everyone is benefited from the lies.**
(Direct intention to benefit all parties)

Interviewer: So can you name one thing that can justify lying in your work field?

Interviewee S: [Think] I think it's the reasons behind the lie. Like my case if the business is based on lies, then it's okay. **But if we lie to cheat the tourists, then it's bad.** (It is not okay to lie to cause loss to guests)

Interviewer: Can you share any example?

Interviewee S: For example, if... a cast member points out the wrong direction for the visitors just for fun then it's very bad.

Interviewer: Nobody does that, right?

Interviewee S: [Laugh] I think so.

Interviewer: [Smile] But anyway, thanks. So what are the other situations that you use lies? Any more example you lie to a guests to make the service better?

Interviewee S: Yes. I can share one about the birthday arrangement. **When we walk around the park to take photos with the visitors, sometimes some parents will tell us their children are Birthday on that day and we will give the child a small gift.** (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)

Interviewer: Wait, where does the gift come from?

Interviewee S: Oh another staff have it.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Interviewee S: Yes, then we will tell the child we came to find him and the gift is just for him. **Then they become super happy.** (Effective result of deception)

Interviewer: You didn't know it's their birthday, right?

Interviewee S: Yes. Only the parents told us then we know.

Interviewer: What usually are the small gifts?

Interviewee S: Stickers, pins, small dolls, etc.

Interviewer: That's sweet!

Interviewee S: Yes! The childrens are really happy to receive a birthday gift from us.

Interviewer: I am sure. So you pretend that you know it's their birthday?

Interviewee S: **Yes. And they will be so happy because they think he is the special one.** (Direct intention to make guests feel better)

Interviewer: True. If I were I child I would be very excited about the whole thing too!

Interviewee S: Yes.

Interviewer: Anyway, so do you know whether your other colleagues also use the same practice?

Interviewee S: **I am not sure about it but I guess yes.** (Common practice in guest services) Each cast member has undergone the same training process so the acting should be similar.

Interviewer: Oh wait you meant the way you treat the birthday guest is trained?

Interviewee S: No not exactly. Because we all had a training session for cast member at the beginning of the job.

Interviewer: What was it about?

Interviewee S: Some history, background, and facilities and mainly how to be more real in your character.

Interviewer: And nothing related to the lying part right?

Interviewee S: No. I mean because we have received similar training on visitors handling, maybe they also do similar lies.

Interviewer: Oh okay I got it. So, another question. Have you tried to dodge a question, which means not directly answer the question, instead of lying?

Interviewee S: Sometimes. Like some children will ask if you are real.

Interviewer: Will they? They are suspicious but smart [Laugh]

Interviewee S: Yes!

Interviewer: Then how do you dodge the question?

Interviewee S: **Just not responding and take the photo with them?** (Remaining silent to the enquiries)

Interviewer: Don't they insist to know?

Interviewee S: **Then I will say 'Make a guess' or 'It's a secret'.** (Answer with ambiguous responses)

Interviewer: And how do they respond to it?

Interviewee S: They just smile or they don't ask anymore. Children are very innocent.

Interviewer: And why don't you lie instead?

Interviewee S: I can. But I tried to make it more mysterious for the children.

Interviewer: Oh I see why then. But then some scholars mention if an employee doesn't want to lie, he or she can use the dodging technique to avoid using lies, do you agree?

Interviewee S: But as you say, visitors will keep asking, right?

Interviewer: Usually yes.

Interviewee S: **Then it doesn't work because in the end you have to tell them the answer.** (Dodging cannot fully resolve the issue)

Interviewer: Okay yes, got it. Alright I think I have got enough information for my thesis. Before we end the interview here, is there anything you would like to ask me or share with me on this matter?

Interviewee S: No thank you. I am good.

Interviewer: Alright then. In case you have any further enquiries, you can contact me, okay? I will also make sure all the information you provided to me is used strictly for academic purpose only.

Interviewee S: Sure.

Interviewer: Okay then I stop the recording here first.

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

(Interview T)

Date of Interview: 12th March, 2017

Venue: Hotel Restaurant

Title of the Interviewee: Hostess

Class of the Organisation: Hotel Fine Dining Chinese Restaurant

Year of Experience: 4 years

Words being underlined, bolded and Italicised are **In-Vivo Codes** from Interviewee

(Words coloured in blue and bracketed) are **In-Vitro Codes** from Researcher

Rapport Building

Interviewer: So, here we go. Thank you again for being my interviewee. You're probably my last interviewee.

Interviewee T: Oh yes? That's good.

Interviewer: I know. Finally. Anyway, how's booking? Good?

Interviewee T: Normal level. Nearly full house tonight.

Interviewer: That's good!

Interviewee T: But we will be busy too [Smile & Shake Head]

Interviewer: Oh yes. But I am sure you can do it. No big deal for you at all.

Interviewee T: [Laugh] I hope so.

Interviewer: Alright then, do you know what's my topic is mainly about?

Interviewee T: Yes you have mentioned. Something lying right?

Interviewer: Deception in hospitality, right.

Interviewee T: Oh deception.

Interviewer: So shall we start the interview?

Interviewee T: Okay.

Interviewer: So before I start, let me read out an introduction paragraph for you first.

Interviewer: So, I am Matthew Kum, a final year student studying Hotel Management in Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I have been doing my dissertation about deception in hospitality and in the following interview I would like to ask you several questions and see your opinions and sharing. The research aims to study whether deception facilitates guest services and understand the rationales behind. For instance, we may tell a guest that he or she looks well in a dress when we actually disagree in our heart. But for the sake of the guest's happiness, we choose to not tell the truth. In the end, some insights are to be provided to hospitality practitioners. As such, your content will hugely contribute to the understanding of the industrial practice regarding deception. Surely this is a rather sensitive issue and please be assured that only your job title and the class of your company will be mentioned in the paper and your voice will also be altered in the recording. All content will strictly be used as academic purpose and destroyed upon completion of the dissertation.

Interviewee T: Okay.

Interview Questions

Interviewer: Okay so, first question, so far in your work life in hospitality-- hotel, have you ever lied to a guest before?

Interviewee T: Yes I have before.

Interviewer: Can you give us an example that comes to your mind?

Interviewee T: When the guests book a table, they always request window seat.

And every time I will tell them I cannot guarantee at that time because there are other guests who have already booked it before. (Voluntary lie – interviewee chose to lie)

Interviewer: But there are available window seats?

Interviewee T: Yes.

Interviewer: Then why did you do that? I want to know.

Interviewee T: **Because there are always a lot of changes in the end and if some in house VIP book for a book later, we will reserve the window seats for the VIP first.** (Direct intention to offer flexibility for the staff themselves) But that doesn't always happen. **So when the guests come, we will tell them we try our best to reserve a window seat for them so they are very happy and thank us.** (Direct intention to lower their expectation)

Interviewer: Oh so you're trying to manage their expectation!

Interviewee T: Yes.

Interviewer: And at the same time giving yourself some flexibility for serving the VIP guests.

Interviewee T: Yes.

Interviewer: That's smart. But what if the booking guest changes the date, do you still say no window seat available?

Interviewee T: If they ask to change the date only for the window seat, then we will reserve for them usually because they really want a window seat.

Interviewer: That's true. So how do you feel about lying to the guests?

- Interviewee T: *I don't have strong feeling about lying to them. (No strong feeling towards deceiving the guests) Because I think that's way to lower their expectation before they come. And at the same time helping ourselves. (The lie is beneficial to both parties)*
- Interviewer: So it's balance between the VIP and outsiders?
- Interviewee T: Yes. *Some VIP guests if they don't get the table they will complain. But the outsiders understand that window seats may not be available. (Involuntary sacrifice of one party for another one)* And sometimes other departments also call us to make a reservation for a guest so we try to assign a good table for those guests.
- Interviewer: Okay sure I understand your point. So overall, do you think deception, or lying, is a useful or not a useful method in guest services?
- Interviewee T: *I think it has its goods and bads but overall it's useful because it helps us say the difficult things in an easier way. (Deception is useful in guest services when it is appropriately used and vice versa)*
- Interviewer: You mean?
- Interviewee T: Like we don't call and tell the guests that the window seat isn't available because a VIP might book it. They will think that we only care about the VIP but not them. And then they will complain. So, to make them accept the fact easier, we lie about it
- Interviewer: As a way to protect the guests' feeling?
- Interviewee T: Yes.
- Interviewer: Okay. But actually does it happen frequently?
- Interviewee T: You mean we lie?

Interviewer: I mean suddenly a VIP pops up and books for a window seat.

Interviewee T: No. Only a few times.

Interviewer: But then all outside guests are affected, no?

Interviewee T: Why?

Interviewer: You said they all cannot book window seat.

Interviewee T: Oh no only the last few tables who want the window seats! Not all!

Interviewer: Oh! Sorry I got it wrong. So people who book the table early can be guaranteed with a window seat table?

Interviewee T: Yes. Only the last two guests who book a window seat we will make that arrangement.

Interviewer: Oh now I am clear. I was wondering why you guys reject all window seats.

Interviewee T: No no no. It's the last two.

Interviewer: Okay I got it now.

Interviewee T: Good

Interviewer: So, what are some of the situations we shouldn't lie to a guest?

Interviewee T: **[Think & Laugh] Overbooking?** ([A common lie amongst the hospitality industry](#))

Interviewer: Oh my god yes. I totally forgot this. Overbooking! I think this is

already the best example.

Interviewee T: [Smile] Yes. *We don't always overbook but it's so unlucky. When you do it, all guests arrive and then you need to keep apologise or ask them to wait for a while and then give them some free dishes.* (Always pair apology with compensation)

Interviewer: Exactly. Overbooking is a real issue too.

Interviewee T: Yes and the guests are angry because they don't understand why we make the booking for them when the restaurant is already full.

Interviewer: It's natural for them to not understand the mechanism behind.

Interviewee T: Yes. But they are very unhappy and some guests will really shout at us for that.

Interviewer: Yes I think that's a good part. I want to confirm with you. Will overbooking lead to service failure?

Interviewee T: *Of course. Even you will feel angry about it.* (It is not okay to sacrifice guest's interest in exchange for hotel's interest)

Interviewer: True. But anyway, thank you for all your time today. I think I have got enough information from you.

Interviewee T: You're welcome.

Interviewer: Before we end the interview, is there anything you would like to ask me or share more?

Interviewee T: No.

Interviewer: In that case, thank you again and let me stop the recording here first.

Interviewee T: Okay.