

Competencies for sustainability in hotels: insights from Brazil

Competencies
for sustaining
in hotel
industry

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Received 30 January 2019
Revised 14 November 2019
Accepted 6 January 2020

Abstract

Purpose – This study analyzes the competencies toward sustainability in hotel facilities in order to identify the level of implementation of sustainability practices, as well as individual competencies for sustainability in the hospitality companies.

Design/methodology/approach – Interviews and a survey with hotel employees were conducted in two important touristic Brazilian cities, Florianópolis, and Rio de Janeiro, considering the TBL (triple bottom line) dimensions. The data were analyzed with content analysis and descriptive statistics and conjoint analysis.

Findings – Preventive competencies in the companies' management were identified. The research also revealed that competencies for sustainability are fairly present in the hospitality context yet, which demonstrates the urgency to discuss the theme in both academic and business practices.

Research limitations/implications – The access to the hotel managers impaired the performing of a robust statistical analysis; the study provided new insights about the topics investigated and generated information for the theoretical framework about competencies for sustainability.

Practical implications – The research results emphasized the need for the hotel industry to invest in sustainable strategies to meet its target audience, but also to raise the level of its staff and reduce costs in the long term, offering benefits to society, the environment, and, to their businesses.

Social implications – The research socially contributes through promoting discussion on sustainability, which is one of the most challenging and relevant issues for society. Besides, it can assist the diffusion of the competencies for sustainability in the hotel industry, as an attempt to decrease their negative externalities on the environment and primary audiences.

Originality/value – It was identified a distance between practice and the triple bottom line concept, which is linked only to environmental practices. Besides, it was found limited knowledge about the concepts of competencies in the companies.

Keywords Tourism, Competencies, Sustainability, Hotel management, Triple bottom line,

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Studies have frequently discussed sustainability in tourism and its social and economic benefits. However, it is necessary to consider the basis of the tourism chain, the hotel sector, which promotes tourist destinations and stimulates the flow of people and the realization of events (ABIH, 2018). In the last decades, several studies were conducted on key competencies for sustainability (Barth *et al.*, 2007; Byrne, 2000; de Haan, 2006; Sipos *et al.*, 2008; Willard



et al., 2010). *Wiek et al.* (2011) proposed a competence-based scenario for problem-solving, anticipating future challenges, and creating and seizing opportunities for sustainability. For these reasons, we argue that to achieve the tourism industry's organizational outcomes, competencies for sustainability are considered vital, mainly in hospitality companies, in order to build proper and sustainable relations among employees and other strategic stakeholders.

Carvalho et al. (2015) highlighted the relevance of developing a management body sensitive to organizational sustainability practices. The authors argue that sustainability can find in competence management practical support for organizational awareness. Through competence management, the potentials of individuals are amplified, seeking to converge their objectives with those of the organization, and thus it is possible to assimilate socioeconomic and environmental issues (*Kuzma et al.*, 2017). *Aligleri et al.* (2009) pointed out that for sustainability to be institutionalized in the organization, it is necessary to attract the employees' attention and share with them this business view. Thus, the comprehension of the skills that promote organizational sustainability becomes paramount to the achievement of actions to promote the economic, environmental, and social development (Triple Bottom Line).

This article presents challenges for the debates on the labor context and the competencies required for performance and its effectiveness, focusing on the management of people aligned with business strategies in the hotel sector. Considering the theoretical body of work, it seems clear that the understanding of the relations between touristic hotels, its employees, and sustainability-driven competencies is needed. This study aims to analyze the competencies toward sustainability in hotel facilities in order to identify the level of implementation of sustainability practices, as well as individual competencies for sustainability in the hospitality companies surveyed.

The study is structured as follows: first, we conceptualize organizational sustainability and individual and organizational competencies for sustainability. Then we describe the methodological procedures used in the research. Finally, we analyze the most relevant results, aiming to provide an overview of the context of sustainability competencies in hotel organizations in two Brazilian touristic capitals, in the light of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL – economic, social, and environmental dimensions, by *Elkington*, 1997) precepts.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 Organizational sustainability and competencies

The first studies on competencies are from 1973 in the United States from the perspective of the individual with McClelland who published the article "Testing for competence rather than intelligence" where competence "is an underlying characteristic of a person who may be related to superior performance in the field, accomplishing a task or in a certain situation" (p. 45). In the French literature the concept emerges in the 1990s seeking to go beyond the understanding of qualification, with the notion of the event – which occurs in an unforeseen, unscheduled manner; communication – understanding the other and oneself; and the notion of service, of serving an external or internal customer of the organization. Working becomes the direct extension of the competence that the individual mobilizes in the face of an increasingly changing and complex professional situation (*Fleury and Fleury*, 2004).

It is understood that competencies are fundamental to achieve organizational sustainability. In this sense, *Wiek et al.* (2015, p. 241) defines sustainability as "...the collective willingness and ability of a society to reach or maintain its viability, vitality, and integrity over long periods, while allowing other societies to reach or maintain their viability, vitality, and integrity." *Elkington* (1997) defines organizational sustainability as the principle which ensures our actions today without harming the economic, social, and environmental resources for future generations. The author understands the organizational performance from the triple bottom

line, that is, economic, environmental, and social results. [Savitz and Weber \(2007\)](#) argue that an organization is sustainable when it generates profit for shareholders, protects the environment, and improves people's lives. [Hahn and Scheermess \(2006\)](#) emphasized that sustainability can never be achieved without the support of companies as they represent the productive sector of the economy. In this way, the private sector must not only create economic value and offer goods that improve the well-being of consumers but also actively engage to mitigate the several social and environmental problems caused by its activities.

Organizational actions cannot be considered sustainable when they meet, albeit efficiently, only one or another pillar of sustainability ([Munck, 2014](#)). It is not easy to fully develop the three sustainability dimensions, but it is perceived that organizations have focused on environmental and social issues, which have evolved in meaning and importance. Thus, sustainability is reflected in the organizations' management, raising a question about the competencies required for its development.

Business managers often lack the skills needed to consider sustainable aspects in their projects ([Silvius and Schipper, 2014](#)), which is a latent need in the field. [Hoff et al. \(2009\)](#) report that changes in individual and collective behavior imply transformations in the demands of organizations. The authors also point out that individual values influence organizational behavior and that there may be times when organizations influence individual behavior. It is evident, therefore, that the success or failure of implementing strategic sustainability programs in companies depends on a consensus on the part of managers. Companies will need to pay attention to new forms of organizational management, assuming changes in their beliefs and values. Organizational sustainability is thinking about changes in people's behavior. These changes impact the competencies that make up the functional structure of organizations, especially the role of leaders, who are central to the process of including sustainability in organizational routines ([Ramus, 2002](#)).

Literature in the area has highlighted the need to investigate how the relationship between the individual competencies of the employees occurs, the practical actions carried out by the enterprises, among them the hotel owners, and the managers' view on this. It is essential to highlight that the hotels of this study are in tourist areas with strong appeal to attractions involving the environment, such as beaches and natural reserves, making this study relevant to the segment.

2.2 Organizational and individual competencies for sustainability

[Renwick et al. \(2009\)](#) report that one of the critical roles of the human resources professional is to guide middle management in order to gain full cooperation from their teams. [Aligleri et al. \(2009\)](#) punctuate that for sustainability to be institutionalized in the organization, it is necessary to strengthen a culture through the exchange of knowledge among members of the organization, internalizing values, and attitudes.

[Fleury and Fleury \(2004, p. 30\)](#) define individual competence as a "responsible and acknowledged know-how, which involves mobilizing, integrating, transferring knowledge, resources, skills, which add economic value to the organization and social value to the individual." From the individual to the organizational competence, the notion of the company is introduced as a portfolio of competencies. Competencies involve the set of knowledge present in individual skills and organizational units, generating competitive advantage and differentiating companies. The Human Resources area needs to clarify the relationship between organizational and individual competencies, as well as guarantee its development, adding value to the individual ([Fleury and Fleury, 2004](#)).

Therefore, organizational sustainability can be developed through individual competencies from the standpoint of knowing how to act, take responsibility, and have initiative ([Dutra, 2001, 2012](#)). For [Fleury and Fleury \(2004, 2005\)](#), organizational competencies are divided into core competencies (higher organizational activities), distinctive (activities

that differentiate the organization from their competitors), business unit (related to the core activity of an industry or division), and support (which support organizational decisions).

Competence focused on sustainability must add value to the organization, the individual, society, and the environment. [Wiek et al. \(2011\)](#) divide the sustainability-focused competence in these: systemic-thinking competence (the ability to collectively analyze complex systems in different domains); preventive competence (the ability to collectively analyze and evaluate the future scenario related to sustainability issues and scenarios to solve sustainability problems); normative competence (ability to specify, apply, and negotiate sustainability values, principles, objectives, and measures); strategic competence (ability to implement interventions, transitions, and transformation governance strategies toward sustainability); and interpersonal competence (ability to motivate, enable and facilitate collaboration and research on participatory sustainability and problem-solving). These competencies are being investigated in different contexts. [Teixeira et al. \(2019\)](#), for example, found that the managers of a financial institution significantly identify all of them.

Sustainability is still a challenge for public and private institutions. [Silvius and Schipper \(2014\)](#) point out the use of projects as “instruments of change” that exert a strong influence on the dissemination of sustainable strategies in organizations. The authors identify the importance of developing competencies for sustainability on project managers, building on the key competencies of [Wiek et al. \(2011\)](#). [Wiek et al. \(2015\)](#) proposed the operationalization of key competencies in the context of learning, considering different levels. The researchers say that scaling sustainability competencies for more significant societal benefit requires specific professional profiles that will operationalize them for different fields. In a recent study in the Brazilian context, [Galleli and Hourneaux Junior \(2019\)](#) found out that despite the importance of human competencies for effective, sustainable strategic management, this idea has not been present yet, even in companies with a consolidated position in sustainable practices.

[Wiek et al. \(2011\)](#) presented the results of a comprehensive literature review identifying 43 relevant documents, with a significant focus on sustainability competencies, 28 papers in journals and books, and 15 reports and white papers, where the mainly sustainability competencies have been identified but not applied to the hotel sector. Recently [Macke and Genari \(2019\)](#) developed an extensive systematic literature review on sustainable human resource management, which aimed to analyze state of the art in the Scopus database, covering the period from 2001 to 2018, which resulted in a set of 115 articles. The results showed four categories: “The first comprised studies on sustainable leadership, based on individual and group power and embedded in its principles, processes, practices and organizational values. The second demonstrated the relationship between human resources management, environmental sustainability, and organizational performance. The third category considered the tensions and paradoxes between human resources management practices and sustainability: on the one hand, human resources management should focus on cost reduction and corporate profitability (in the short-term); on the other, their actions should provide long-term sustainability of organizational performance. The last category deals with the link between human resources management and the social dimension of sustainability, especially with regard to organizational social responsibility and the company’s relationship with its stakeholders” (p. 806). Thus, a gap in the international literature on competencies for sustainability in the hotel sector has been found.

Based on that, this study presents challenges for the debates on the working environment and the competencies necessary for the performance and its effectiveness, focusing on people management aligned with business strategies in the hotel sector.

3. Method

[Reid et al. \(2017\)](#) emphasize the critical role of adopting sustainability practices for coastal hotels and resorts. Thus, the study was conducted in two Brazilian tourist destinations: Rio

de Janeiro and Florianopolis. Two phases were taken: a qualitative one, through interviews with hotel managers, and a quantitative, with the application of questionnaires to employees of hotels. The collection period was from May to October 2017.

3.1 *Qualitative phase: interviews with hotel managers*

The qualitative part of this research consisted of interviews with 20 hotel managers from different categories, considering size and price range. Fifteen managers were from Florianopolis, and five from Rio de Janeiro. As a filter, the only requirement was that the hotels analyzed were located in the urban chosen areas since access to many hotel managers was not granted to the researchers involved. The main objective of the qualitative phase was to identify the organizational strategies and practices related to organizational sustainability and the competencies required from the hotel's staff. It is essential to state that the questions concerning the competence system were only answered by the organizations that already had a structured instrument at the time. As a complement to the interviews, information collected from the hotel's web pages was also used.

The interviews were scheduled by phone or e-mail, occurring mainly during researchers' appointments in the hotels' facilities and with an average duration from 10 to 40 minutes. It is known that qualitative interviews are generally considered semi-structured or unstructured (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996), but as Mason (2002) states, there is always an underlying structure to remain focused on the phenomenon under investigation. Considering this point of view, it was adopted an interview script that guided the researchers during data collection (Appendix 1).

3.1.1 Encoding interviews. Five representatives of hotels were interviewed in Rio de Janeiro, encoded as hotels RJ1, RJ2, RJ3, RJ4, and RJ5 to preserve the anonymous identity of the organizations. The nomenclature of interviewees was arranged as follows: IRJ1 IRJ2, IRJ3, IRJ4, and IRJ5. Fifteen hotel managers were interviewed in Florianopolis, and the identities of the hotels were encoded as SC1, SC2, (. . .), and SC15. In order to preserve the names of the employees, the interviewees were also encoded, respectively, as follows: ISC1, ISC2 (. . .), and ISC15. The number of interviews was determined considering the objective of the research and in order to ensure data saturation, as indicated by Goulding (2005, p. 297) "the researcher should not leave the field and stop sampling until saturation is reached, or when no additional information is found in the data."

3.1.2 Profile of interviewees. In Rio de Janeiro, there were predominant female respondents, four women, and one man. The professionals were working at the companies for six months, going up to fourteen years. Three respondents were managers at the Housekeeping department (IRJ1, IRJ2, and IRJ4), while one worked as a General Manager (IRJ3) and another in the management of the Human Resource department (IRJ5). Of the five interviewees, four had a college degree, and one had only a high school diploma.

Interviewees at Florianopolis's hotels also had a predominance of female respondents, with nine women and six men. The period of the professionals at that position begins with two months until twenty-six years of experience. Four interviewees were managers at the Human Resources sector (ISC1, ISC6, ISC9, and ISC15) while five worked as General Managers (ISC2, ISC3, ISC4, ISC7, and ISC10), three worked in the Administrative Sector management (ISC5, ISC11 and ISC12), one in the management of the Reception Sector (ISC8) and other two did not report (ISC13 and ISC14). Of the 15 interviewees, five had a college degree; six were graduate students, only one just had the high school diploma.

3.1.3 Hotels' characteristics. The hotels have different states of maturity, such as the RJ2 Hotel with five years and Hotel RJ5, which has more than 40 years of existence. The number of employees also varies from 35 (RJ3) to 600 employees (RJ5). As for the category, hotels A and C are classified as three stars, hotels B and D are classified as four stars, and Hotel RJ5 is

classified as five stars. Still, two of the five hotels interviewed are part of a hotel chain, in this case, RJ4 and RJ5.

In Florianopolis, the situation is very similar. Hotel SC12 has 31 years, and Hotel SC9 is in the market for eight years. Among the hotels with more than 20 years of operation are SC1, SC3, SC8, and SC10. With more than ten years of activity in the market are the hotels: SC2, SC4, SC5, SC11, and SC15. Four others did not report their time of existence.

3.2 Quantitative phase: questionnaire with employees

The quantitative stage focused on the identification of implementation level of sustainable practices and individual competencies for the sustainability of the employees in the hotels investigated. A total of 58 hotels were contacted in Florianopolis and Rio de Janeiro. However, due to a great refusal from the hotel community to participate in the survey and the difficulty of obtaining feedback, only 103 questionnaires were applied to employees of 20 hotels. Of these, 60 employees work in Florianopolis, while 43 are from Rio de Janeiro. To facilitate the employees' participation in the survey, this phase was developed during the hotels' low season, on either in person or online participation. However, even with those actions to broaden interest in the research, the sample could not reach a substantial number.

3.2.1 The instrument. The questionnaire was created to evaluate organizational and individual competencies toward sustainability. The questionnaire was developed based on [Wiek et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Fleury and Fleury \(2004, 2005\)](#) and contains five questions on the socio-economic profile of hotel employees (gender, age, working length in the organization, department, education, and marital status). Forty-five questions on the five competencies for sustainability (Systemic thinking – Q2 a Q4, Preventive – Q5 a Q7, Normative – Q8 a Q10, Strategic – Q11 a Q13 and Interpersonal Competencies – Q14 a Q16). And control issues on environmental (Q1control-En), social (Q1control-So), and economic (Q1control-Ec) sustainability dimension, measured with a six-point Likert scale ([Appendix 2](#)).

The Cronbach's alpha was 0.972 for Florianopolis and 0.955 for Rio de Janeiro. The analysis of the quantitative data was done through descriptive statistics and Conjoint Analysis ([Green and Srinivasan, 1990](#)) using the IBM SPSS software.

3.2.2 Profile of respondents. Most of the participants were between 21 and 30 years old, which represented 48.1 percent of the total interviewees. Regarding gender, men are the majority in the two states surveyed, comprising 58.5 percent of the total. As for the working length in the company, there were employees with less than one year (15 percent) and others with more than 20 years of company (1.8 percent) in the sample. It was observed that most of the participants had 1–3 years at the companies (39.6 percent) in both cities.

Regarding education, there was a high concentration of individuals with a high school diploma (41.5 percent) and 12.2 percent with complete graduate studies. Regarding the departments surveyed, the reception accounted for 21.6 percent of respondents, followed by housekeeping with 14.8 percent, food, and beverage with 12.2 percent and reservations with 10.3 percent. The main idea was to collect views from different departments inside the same hotel, considering the employees as a unity in a way to create a homogeneous perception of each hotel regarding sustainability practices in general.

4. Results and discussion

From the literature studied and the data collected in the qualitative and quantitative stages, it was possible to analyze the hotels visited.

4.1 Qualitative analysis

4.1.1 Mission, vision, and values of hotels. The first point to be analyzed concerns the beliefs of the hotels interviewed, that is, their mission, vision, and values. According to

Stefano and Alberton (2015), organizations that aim at organizational sustainability should identify and develop specific Mission, Vision, Values, and competencies for sustainability integrated into their strategy.

It was identified that most of the 20 hotels do not have Mission, Vision, and Values defined. Only seven hotels formally institute these concepts, being excellence in guest service the common factor cited by them. Also, two hotels indicate environmental issues (SC1 and SC11), and two others present issues related to ethics and diversity (RJ1 and SC11).

From the hotels that have an established mission, it is possible to observe the similarity in treating the guests with cordiality, working with enthusiasm, and offering an experience of excellence. Although none of the hotels uses the term “sustainability” in their mission, SC11 cites the focus on “eco-social responsibility” in its activities.

Five hotels have a Vision, and most aim to be a benchmark in excellence in hotel services. Still, the values are described by only four hotels, being diversified and having a strong relationship with sustainability, such as integrity, defense of ethical standards, social participation, the quest for excellence, respect for human beings and plurality, social, environmental, and cultural responsibilities. Stefano and Alberton (2018) developed an alignment model of organizational strategy and sustainability based on the concepts attributed by Wiek *et al.* (2011), Fleury and Fleury (2001, 2004, 2005) and Albuquerque (2002). The authors, based on the theoretical framework found, understood that the Business Vision “is the definition of goals and actions to achieve the organization’s objectives, and for this purpose, one must be committed to this vision of organizational sustainability” (Stefano and Alberton, 2018, p. 127). About the Mission, the authors established it as “the main objective of the company and should be balanced aligned with the mission of economic, environmental and social sustainability in the organization” (Stefano and Alberton, 2018, p. 127). Noting that the vast majority of hotels surveyed do not use the term sustainability and do not even come close to the definition of the TBL concept, which covers the three dimensions of sustainability, this reflects the inefficiency and lack of organizational strategies focused on this purpose. The omission of these terms, therefore, resulted in a few actions found in the hotels of the two cities investigated. Consequently, employees do not realize sustainability in the workplace, and therefore do not find support and incentive to develop actions considering the triple bottom line.

4.1.2 Organizational sustainability. Rio de Janeiro interviewees’ perceptions about the meaning of organizational sustainability are close to the concepts of environment and ecology. The construct generates uncertainty and is considered broad. Respondent IRJ5 commented: “Sustainability can have multiple ‘routes’. It’s a very complex issue.” IRJ4 was not even able to explain what he understood by sustainability. This reinforces the difficulty of a definition of the topic among hospitality professionals.

Among the policies, actions, and projects toward sustainability, they mentioned resources saving programs as concerning topics. Simple practices were cited: exchange of towels and linen only if requested by the guest, to reduce water and energy costs or even the practice of garbage separation and recycling. The RJ5 hotel, which is categorized as five stars, has a sustainability committee and claims it works in the social, environmental, and economic areas since it is an essential value for them. However, of the five interviewees, two reported that their hotels do not have policies related to sustainability. The interviewee IRJ3 stated that “(...) the priority of any contemporary hotel is more about having few expenses and much profit. So, that focus on sustainability, on recycling, on taking advantage of the sunlight and everything, is not very well seen in hospitality yet.” This statement is consistent with findings from studies in different areas. Teixeira *et al.* (2019), for example, analyzing sustainability competencies from the perspective of the TBL in a financial institution, found that only the economic dimension stood out.

When questioned about the changes that have occurred following the implementation of sustainable practices, interviewees differ in their responses. Respondent IRJ1 stated that

the change was based on requests from the hotel's guests, while professionals from Hotels RJ2 and RJ5 specified that the change comes from higher positions in the organization. The reflections of these changes are visible in the behavior of the guests, who respond positively. As IRJ2 explained, "You can only retain a customer if you really have good service, so that's our biggest goal, always aiming at that, the politeness, the excellence in receiving the guest."

Also, the relationship between employees and the HR department regarding sustainability practices is very close, with hotels including employee participation in such initiatives. IRJ5 stated: "The employees are tasked generally in why we do this and the importance to the environment, the saving we have." Meanwhile, the professional at the RJ3 Hotel said he was looking for qualified professionals.

The understanding of the organizational sustainability of Florianopolis hotels, in general, focuses on environmental issues. However, some hotels presented a more comprehensive thought on the subject. The interviewee ISC5, corroborating with [Elkington \(1997\)](#), defined organizational sustainability in three dimensions: social, environmental, and economic, stating that "(...) you first have to think about economic sustainability. Once you have it, I believe you can start thinking about other things." ISC8 understands sustainability as a means of optimizing the processes and the workforce: "(...) we try to do things the best way possible while saving, and at the same time getting the best of each one." Besides, ISC11 highlighted organizational sustainability as a benefit to the community. The respondent demonstrates this link between organizational sustainability and community through the actions he takes in the hotel, such as the purchase of products in the local market and hiring community employees.

The hotels understand that organizational sustainability is something continuous, and that demands financial investment, as identified in the statements of respondents ISC3, ISC4, ISC5, ISC6, ISC8, and ISC12. "We would like to implement a solar power system, but nowadays, you always stop at a question like this: sustainability items are still very expensive!" (ISC12).

The sustainability actions reported by the interviewees focus on environmental issues. The triple bottom line, as pointed out by [Elkington \(1997\)](#), was identified in the interviewee's speech ESC5 and partially in the ideas of other interviewees. Most respondents have a limited vision of sustainability to the environmental factor. In this sense, the initiatives are aimed at the preservation of the forest, animals, rivers, recycling, saving of water, and electricity.

Some hotels highlight consistent sustainability actions focused on the environment. The Hotel SC11, a 4-star category, promotes actions such as replacing lamps, saving energy, composting system, and saving water. The Hotel SC4 belongs to a worldwide hotel chain that develops an environmental project. Among the actions, they maintain an ecological boat and an organic vegetable garden. At the SC4, the correct disposal of the lamps is made, as well as recycling, and a saving water project is carried out, which enables the housekeeping maids to travel to the reforestation project in the São Francisco River, using the money saved in the laundry.

The interviewee ISC9 points out the employees as being executors, but the opportunity to see the results of sustainable actions causes an enhanced motivation: "And they see that it is real, after saving towels, they see the trees are in fact replanted... It's very cool! They come back renewed" (ISC4). In this perspective, it is seen the importance of the individual, the incentive to their actions, and their autonomy in the organizational environment ([Munck et al., 2012](#)). Also, it is notable that there was a relative distance between the perceptions concerning organization sustainability of hotels with mission and vision statements solidified in comparison with the ones that do not have it. These data imply that organizations and employees are directly impacted by the lack of management structure and the inefficient understanding of the business core values.

In Florianopolis, the managers' perception that employees should be "ready" is corroborated. The vision on the training and development of individual competencies is not highlighted by them, contrary to what [Carvalho et al. \(2015\)](#) proposed. This concern about

the development of individual competencies focused on sustainability is anchored by authors such as [Andrades and Dimanche \(2019\)](#), who found that even hospitality professionals need to improve competencies concerning sustainable management. All the interviewees affirmed that there was no project focused on sustainability. However, they note that there is a return with sustainable practices. The improved hotel's image on the stakeholders' perceptions is one of the points raised: "The main return of these sustainability actions is not financial, but on the image, both for the community and for employees" (ISC2). The interviewees ISC3, ISC4, ISC5, ISC8, ISC12, ISC14, and ISC15 agree that sustainable actions can bring financial returns. However, some point out that the actions also result in expenses: "Financial return, in some cases, is ok but in others is the opposite, we spend a lot" (ISC4). "The return is a sure thing, and the problem is that the return, sometimes is late, right? They are investments in the long term. The company has to have initiative to do it, because it will immediately have more expenses than before" (ISC8). Authors such as [Wu et al. \(2019\)](#) point out that eco-efficiency are the biggest problem in tourism sustainability.

4.1.3 Organizational competencies. [Macke and Genari \(2019, p. 813\)](#) believe that leadership plays a vital role in managing human resources for sustainability. "A formal and clear leadership definition is, in fact, the most important element for the implementation of sustainability principles in human resource management." In this research, the organizational competencies were raised, considering the individual, distinctive, and specific competencies focused on the sustainability of the hotels. In the interviews, it was noted a lack of understanding by the respondents in general. However, the IRJ2 emphasized the deployment processes as organizational competence, while IRJ3 said to be related to employees doing their jobs properly. Considering that hotel RJ2 does not have basic organizational premises such as mission and vision statements defined, it reflects clearly in the employees' point of view and common misunderstandings concerning the main topics discussed in this research, which are competencies and sustainability.

There is no homogeneity between the answers, or even as the understanding of the term "organizational competencies" among surveyed hotels. This observation alerts to the fact that organizational competencies come from organizational strategies established as selection processes, career planning, and training, as described in [Alberton and Stefano \(2015\)](#).

Regarding the perception of the respondents toward the competitive advantage of the hotels by their competitors, RJ1 said it would be the quality of the materials used, such as outfits, for example. Hotel RJ2 highlighted the services, in general, as the reception service and the cleanliness of the site. Diverging from the other hotels, RJ4 reported that there is nothing that differentiates it from the competition.

Many hotels mention specific competencies. Good service and customization of experience are in evidence, as in the case of hotels SC1, SC5, SC7, SC9, SC10, SC3, SC6, and SC13. It could be observed through different strategies, such as Hotel SC5 investing in elegance: "Elegance is not in the fact of being, showing off, right? It is the fact of preserving the guest, preserve that moment, whether on vacation or business" (ISC5). However, Hotel SC6 invests in personalized service: "If a guest likes cake, so let's make it for breakfast!" (ISC6).

The employee ISC11 highlights the investment in respect for diversity and personalized service: "For example, we are pet-friendly, GLBT friendly. We are eco-adventure and culture-friendly." Three hotels cite the location factor. "I think these 3,000 square / meters we have of green area, with a background to the lagoon, is something that no one else has. No one will have, no matter what they do to differentiate, they will not have that" (ISC12).

It is possible to see that the interpretation of organizational competence covers different points of view. The respondent ISC14 assigns its competence to profitability and the hotel owner's interests, "Making a profit for the hotel owner is the most important thing, right? He does not even know the names of our employees." ISC11 understands the organizational competence as the hotel participation and contribution to the community, through its

presence in events. This view is consistent with [Carvalho et al. \(2015\)](#), which postulates that competencies, when focused on sustainability, should add value to the organization, the individual, society, and the environment.

4.1.4 Individual competencies. Similarly to the organizational competencies, the individual competencies of the employees expected by the hotel managers were diversified. The study identified a strong HR responsibility for staff selection so that employees must have organizational competencies such as commitment, unity, collaboration, and accountability.

The IRJ1 listed competencies such as punctuality, commitment, and mutual support. The RJ3 Hotel listed cleanliness and honesty as essential characteristics in its staff. There is a dichotomy between hotels, because while some believe that the employee has to be “ready” (Hotel RJ3), others argue that competencies are inherent, and others are absorbed over time, such as the IRJ5 that stated: “It has to be someone who has a great passion for what he does, a big smile, a lot of motivation and the other stuff we teach.”

The IRJ2 explains the importance of the employee’s enjoyment for what he does as an individual competence not only for the hotel itself but for the hotel industry in general: “We know that it does not work if you do not love what you do, if you are not cut out for it, if you do not like to serve. . . if you just want a job, this is not your place.” Also, the availability (ISC4 and ISC2), the commitment (ISC7, ISC10, ISC12), and excellent service (ISC9, ISC11, ISC13, ISC14, ISC15) were quite mentioned among those interviewed.

In this context, [Carvalho et al. \(2014, 2015\)](#) have shown that enabling intermediate managers to apply sustainable actions and supporting the insertion of competencies in the organizational environment is essential, being possible to internalize values and attitudes progressively, minimizing negative impacts on work. In other words, individual competencies can be developed at the time of selection, contrary to some of the interviewee’s beliefs.

4.1.5 Competencies for sustainability. As for the hotel’s competencies focused on sustainability, Hotel RJ1 stated that it works toward this issue even by economic necessity, guiding guests toward more sustainable choices. The RJ2, in turn, highlighted the importance of employee participation in the implementation of sustainability skills.

Of the 15 participating hotels in SC, only seven commented on sustainability competencies in their companies. Among those who did, some pointed to incentive and legislation problems. ISC6 stressed that the employee has the individual competencies required but does not receive sufficient support to develop or apply them: “They have the will, the initiative, I think the support is lacking.” There, [Ali et al. \(2018\)](#) identified that sustainability is not currently prioritized as a critical employability skill; however, employers appreciate the value of sustainability to their business and recognize how technology can support sustainable development.

Respondent ISC4 highlights the importance of the hotel chain he is part of and whose environmental projects are still not adopted in Brazil due to existing legislation: “This prevents many things as donating food ... We have thrown rice pots away because of the health surveillance rules, you cannot keep it and cannot donate either.” Nevertheless, the ISC1 understands that the competencies focused on sustainability are related to environmental preservation, being part of the organization’s culture. The ISC8 understands that excellent internal communication and integrated vision are sustainability competencies, while ISC11 and ISC12 understand as the place and nature maintenance, and employee awareness. Regarding the maintenance of natural space, [Wang et al. \(2019\)](#) identified that the use of visual elements referencing nature in hotels is a crucial element to attract the visual attention of customers and would be an excellent marketing strategy.

[Elkington \(1997\)](#) understands that managers have a fundamental role in driving the interests of organizations in the practices and actions of employees. It is possible to perceive in the speech of ISC12 the hotel’s lack of incentive to develop sustainable actions: “It’s how I told you, the person who takes care of the garbage does it because she wants it, if she did not

have persistence, she'd give up long ago." In contrast, interviewee ISC14 reports on how the hotel inspires employees to take sustainable action: "(...) I was at an employee's house about two months ago. I arrived at his house, and he had made the same rainfall system that I made for the hotel. And he made it himself, and that made me very happy."

4.1.6 Implementation of the competence system. The implementation of the competence system in the hotels was addressed in the last section of interviews' questions. The purpose of it was to understand whether the participating hotels were implementing or not this kind of management system. The results showed that this type of management system is still not very common in hotels in Brazil, considering that less than five hotels in the two locations have their own competencies' arrangement.

RJ2 and RJ5 hotels, which have already relied on the competence management system, are in different stages of implementation. While the RJ2 Hotel has developed strategies for about a year, the RJ5 Hotel has been working with competencies for more than five years. So, when questioned about the perceived changes in sustainability after the implementation of the system, IRJ2 said: "The difference, you are perceiving every day, how things are improving, fitting." IRJ5 interviewee said that the competence system serves to identify the employee profile: "Today it is no longer finding the perfect resume for the job. Today we are looking for the most suitable personality for the place." It seems that in the few hotels where it was implemented, there was a slight change of view and a higher responsibility sense in comparison with the others.

The Hotel SC4, a member of a global hotel chain, said that the model is mostly applied to the management positions and that the system was adopted by market necessity: "There are no employees prepared. So, the company prepares its managers and their trainees, their bosses." Hotels like SC11 and SC12, which do not have proper systems themselves, have shown disbelief in the strategy and have claimed it to be a practice for larger hotels. ISC13 has alleged lack of time to implement the model, in addition to not believing that this may be of the business interest: "(...) why change what is working? Suddenly, this audience does not care about whether we recycle the garbage or not, or save the oil for donating, you know?"

Although the sustainable issues are present in the organizations' discussions, especially considering the current legislation, a gap is observed between the discourse and the practice of the hotels. The TBL model, by [Elkington \(1997\)](#), which is composed of the economic, social, and environmental dimensions, is far from the understanding of most managers. In some cases, an initial stage of understanding of the concepts is identified, but still incipient. Without this previous knowledge, however, it is believed to be harder to manage an organization to its full potential (see [Figure 1](#)).

4.2 Quantitative analysis

4.2.1 Descriptive data. In this study, a joint analysis of competencies was developed and an attribute, which in this case is represented by the dimensions of environmental, social, and economic sustainability ([Table I](#)). When analyzing the descriptive data of the sample collected in the city of Florianopolis, the means of the control variables, which refer to the dimensions of environmental, social and economic sustainability, correspond to a weak or regular perception of these actions by the respondents, with emphasis on the environmental dimension.

In Rio de Janeiro, it is observed that the means were slightly higher when compared to those obtained in Florianopolis. However, among the dimensions, the economic dimension had slightly larger means, as in the study by [Teixeira and Stefano \(2016\)](#) e de [Wu et al. \(2019\)](#) identified that the socio-economic aspect has a more significant effect than two other aspects on the development of sustainable tourism. The environmental dimension was the smallest one. This difference can be related to the fact that the hotels investigated in Rio de Janeiro

Qualitative Results Summary

Items	Rio de Janeiro	Florianópolis	Overview
Organizational Sustainability	They understand as actions focused on the environment (saving water, light and recycling). They perceive sustainability as an expense.	Most of them understand as environmental issues. Understand that you need financial investment	Vision limited to the environment. Sustainability is perceived as an expense. Understand that employees must come ready.
Organizational Competencies	Quality in the execution of the work and the materials / products used to provide the services.	Customization of guest service, elegance, respect for diversity, location.	There is a lack of understanding on the topic. Most understand organizational skills as good service.
Individual Competencies	Punctuality, commitment, honesty, good looking.	Commitment, provide good service, availability.	Without consensus. Human resources have a responsibility to select committed employees.
Competencies for Sustainability	They indicate the need for financial investment to develop sustainability skills. Believe that employees should participate in implementation.	They affirm the lack of encouragement and problems with the legislation. Employees must have an integrated vision and internal communication must be good. However, they assume that they do not have support for sustainable actions.	Lack of incentive to develop sustainability skills. Employee engagement is important, but there is no incentive from employers to do so.
Competency System	The hotels are in different stages of implementation (some more advanced and others have no competency system). However, they believe that the competency system can help identify employee profile.	According to respondents there are no people prepared for the competency system. Some hotels claim to "prepare them." At the same time there is a disbelief in the competency system and claim that this is only for large hotels. Lack of time and interest were pointed out	Implementation of a competency system in hotels is still incipient for any reasons. There is no interest and knowledge to adopt the competency system

Figure 1.
Qualitative results
summary

Source: Research Data

Dimension	Florianópolis		Rio de Janeiro	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Environmental	4.22	1.627	4.11	1.883
Social	3.78	1.932	4.14	1.651
Economic	4.02	1.790	4.39	1.543

Source: Research data

belong mostly to hotel chains, which have more evident economic goals than social and environmental ones (Teixeira and Stefano, 2016).

Table II describes the mean values, standard deviations of the scores, and reliability measures calculated with Cronbach's alpha of both cities. When analyzing the information of the sample of Florianopolis, it is possible to perceive that the means of the items that measure

Competencies
for sustaining
in hotel
industry

Competences	Questions	TBL dimensions	Florianopolis			Rio de Janeiro		
			Mean	SD	CA	Mean	SD	CA
Focus on systemic thinking	Q2culture-En	Environmental	4.00	1.756	0.885	3.89	1.528	0.839
	Q2culture-So	Social	3.82	1.780	0.885	3.91	1.507	0.837
	Q2culture-Ec	Economic	3.95	1.890	0.898	4.41	1.335	0.848
	Q3vision-En	Environmental	3.62	2.009	0.883	3.93	1.485	0.840
	Q3vision-So	Social	3.72	2.084	0.879	4.09	1.254	0.836
	Q3vision-Ec	Economic	3.57	2.220	0.884	4.20	1.472	0.847
	Q4actions-En	Environmental	4.37	1.785	0.902	4.30	1.706	0.841
	Q4actions-So	Social	3.38	2.059	0.893	3.05	1.751	0.858
Preventive	Q4actions-Ec	Economic	2.05	1.987	0.917	2.95	1.880	0.511
	Q5prev-En	Environmental	4.32	1.600	0.894	4.23	1.597	0.874
	Q5prev-So	Social	4.67	1.537	0.885	4.43	1.605	0.865
	Q5prev-Ec	Economic	4.30	1.853	0.883	4.23	1.710	0.870
	Q6plan-En	Environmental	4.03	1.957	0.893	4.16	1.509	0.869
	Q6plan-So	Social	3.93	1.930	0.879	4.16	1.554	0.868
	Q6plan-Ec	Economic	3.88	2.164	0.884	4.16	1.711	0.871
	Q7policies-En	Environmental	3.73	1.990	0.889	3.93	1.561	0.868
Normative	Q7policies-So	Social	3.98	1.935	0.883	3.39	1.742	0.877
	Q7policies-Ec	Economic	3.25	2.176	0.888	3.11	2.137	0.886
	Q8capac-En	Environmental	4.02	1.809	0.895	3.23	1.815	0.897
	Q8capac-So	Social	3.43	2.118	0.877	3.36	2.047	0.890
	Q8capac-Ec	Economic	3.45	2.078	0.884	3.36	2.001	0.901
	Q9stand-En	Environmental	4.25	1.684	0.900	3.68	1.681	0.901
	Q9stand-So	Social	3.15	2.169	0.878	3.23	1.803	0.892
	Q9stand-Ec	Economic	2.72	2.248	0.901	3.18	2.038	0.913
Estrategic	Q10ethic-En	Environmental	4.32	1.642	0.896	3.48	1.732	0.915
	Q10ethic-So	Social	3.42	2.069	0.885	3.27	1.860	0.901
	Q10ethic-Ec	Economic	3.28	2.124	0.898	3.09	2.100	0.908
	Q11strat-En	Environmental	3.78	1.823	0.908	3.52	1.677	0.908
	Q11strat-So	Social	3.00	2.107	0.888	2.86	1.887	0.891
	Q11strat-Ec	Economic	2.52	2.135	0.896	2.80	2.226	0.891
	Q12partner-En	Environmental	2.53	2.198	0.894	2.66	1.842	0.895
	Q12partner-So	Social	2.62	2.218	0.890	3.20	2.226	0.898
Interpersonal	Q12partner-Ec	Economic	2.63	2.292	0.899	2.84	2.090	0.901
	Q13learn-En	Environmental	3.28	2.108	0.885	3.16	1.952	0.894
	Q13learn-So	Social	3.05	1.969	0.884	3.20	2.130	0.902
	Q13learn-Ec	Economic	2.45	2.143	0.889	2.45	1.898	0.903
	Q14collab-En	Environmental	3.83	1.950	0.915	3.80	1.760	0.939
	Q14collab-So	Social	3.50	2.054	0.904	2.84	1.855	0.925
	Q14collab-Ec	Economic	2.82	2.205	0.916	2.91	2.067	0.923
	Q15leader-En	Environmental	3.15	2.138	0.901	2.84	1.952	0.924
	Q15leader-So	Social	2.88	2.285	0.897	2.75	2.047	0.924
	Q15leader-Ec	Economic	2.70	2.165	0.914	2.66	2.101	0.929
	Q16comm-En	Environmental	3.37	2.131	0.904	3.05	1.791	0.928
	Q16comm-So	Social	2.93	2.284	0.896	2.95	1.892	0.921
	Q16comm-Ec	Economic	2.90	2.113	0.900	3.34	2.011	0.927

Source: Research data

Table II.
Descriptive results

the five competencies were between 2.05 and 4.67, which demonstrates variability in the opinions between little and partially significant. The highest means, above 4, refer, for the most part, to environmental sustainability issues.

In general, preventive competencies had higher means in Florianopolis. This is significant, since such competencies are responsible, along with sustainability assessments, for future trajectories, and transition strategies (Grunwald, 2007). On the other hand, the strategic

competencies were lower, a fact that reveals the low level of development of competencies that confer differentiation to the company before other competitors in the city. Items that also had negative results were: social impact, as the accidents' prevention with employees in the workplace, and the impacts of economic-financial losses of the company.

The standard deviation ranged from 1.53 to 2.29, considering that it is a six-point scale, such distances from the mean are relatively high, demonstrating that there is considerable variability in responses. An explanation for this result may be linked to the use of an "unknown" response option. The option was indicated by previous research, since many employees are not yet familiar with the actions of HR and sustainability practiced by their companies. Thus, this response was computed as "zero" in the data and its significant occurrence could considerably lower the means and increase the deviations.

Rio de Janeiro means were between 2.45 and 4.41, quite similar to Florianópolis, as well as the standard deviations, which varied between 1.25 and 2.22. Among the highest are actions focused on the hotels' and social actions' economic sustainability, with the involvement of the community. Among the least rated, the issue of partnerships with other companies to carry out environmental actions stands out, which reveals the need for bolder objectives of companies in the sector.

In addition to the mean and standard deviation (SD) data, [Table II](#) also presents the variables studied, the nomenclature of the questions, and the dimensions of sustainability to which each one belongs. In the last column of each city, the Cronbach's alpha (CA) was demonstrated as above 0.8, confirming the reliability of the instrument.

The means and standard deviations by competence are shown in [Table III](#). The most significant distances from the means are strategic and interpersonal distances. These are decisive for solving problems arising from the implementation of sustainable actions, which require several characteristics, such as the capacity to undertake and evaluate different perspectives ([Wiek et al., 2011](#)).

Regarding the higher means, these concentrated on the preventive competence of both cities. That reveals that respondents perceive companies' concerns about the need to adapt to new requirements for sustainability. It is worth remembering that studies point out hotels as significant producers of negative externalities to society and the environment ([Han et al., 2009](#)).

In short, sustainability competencies are not yet present in an expressive way among the employees of the companies investigated, which demonstrates the urgency to discuss the subject in both academic and business practices, as suggested by [Galleli and Hourneaux Junior \(2019\)](#).

5. Conclusions

More than ever, the comprehension of organizational trends in sustainability allows companies to grow from the inside to the outside. To understand how sustainable

Table III.
Means, standard deviations and Cronbach alpha by competences

Competences	Florianópolis			Rio de Janeiro		
	Mean	SD	CA	Mean	SD	CA
Focus on systemic thinking	3.607	1.469	0.903	3.948	0.904	0.862
Preventive	4.011	1.420	0.898	4.069	1.065	0.884
Normative	3.559	1.500	0.902	3.397	1.381	0.912
Estrategic	2.874	1.589	0.904	3.036	1.466	0.908
Interpersonal	3.120	1.659	0.915	3.085	1.522	0.934

Source: Research data

competencies are developed into the employees from the tourism industry enables researchers and managers to increase quality rates in hospitality.

This research sought to identify the level of implementation of sustainability practices, as well as the employees' individual competencies for sustainability in some hotels of Florianopolis and Rio de Janeiro, in Brazil. Among the main results obtained is the perception of the managers and heads of department, which indicates a distance from the triple bottom line dimensions. For the hotels, sustainability is linked only to the environment, which shows that concepts of TBL have not been absorbed in the investigated organizational context yet. This fact shows that the full potential of these organizations is compromised, being limited and biased not only by the staff in general, but mainly by its leadership roles.

Also, according to [Fleury and Fleury \(2004\)](#), [Stefano and Alberton \(2015\)](#), the development of organizational competencies is strongly related to the development of individual competencies and the set of conditions given by the context in which the organization is inserted. Considering that more than half of the interviewed hotels do not have an organized competence management system, it reflects the limited knowledge about the concepts of competencies by the employees in the companies studied. Several authors discuss organizational support and its relationship to employee performance; that is, if the employee feels cared for, supported, and has an organizational attachment; he will consequently perform better ([Eisenberger et al., 1986](#)). [Chen et al. \(2019\)](#) identified that enhanced support, which involves workplace treatment, leadership care, and corporate care, has a positive effect on employee performance and generates a sense of belonging. So, applying that to the tourism context and sustainability actions, it can be said that employee support is critical to the implementation and development of actions involving the TBL dimensions. In the results, some employees, often on their initiative, apply environmental actions without any incentive. According to [Wikhamn and Selart \(2019\)](#), they call this attitude as psychological empowerment, which is the psychological state in which individuals feel a sense of control in their work. This kind of action is essential for improving proactive behavior at work. Although some managers interviewed say that the employee should possess all the competencies required, organizational support is critical to the performance of the organization itself on different fronts, including the three pillars that involve sustainability. Besides, organizational support is also relevant to the motivation of many proactive attitudes.

In the quantitative phase, it was observed that among the competencies for sustainability (competence with a focus on systemic thinking, preventive competence, normative competence, strategic competence and interpersonal competence), the preventive ones had higher means in both locations. On the other hand, the strategic competencies were much lower, revealing the low level of development of the competencies that confer competitiveness and differentiation to the company before other competitors. Also, the social impact as in the employees' accident prevention in the workplace and the impacts of economic-financial losses of the company had negative results, demonstrating a lack of knowledge about an essential factor for the sustainable development of the studied organizations.

Another point to be highlighted is the fact that the hotels belong to the service sector, which consists in offering value to consumers through experiences that meet their needs and expectations. Thus, the services have characteristics that make it difficult for consumers to perceive value, since they depend heavily on the employees, their capacity and skills to carry out the activities in the hotel. Therefore, there is an urgent need to disseminate competence management and sustainability in hotel management standards in Brazil.

Some limitations were found in the development of this study, among them, the access to the hotel community. Few managers accepted to participate in the research, resulting in only 20 hotels from more than 50 companies that were contacted by the research team. This quantity directly affected the quantitative analysis, since the number of questionnaires

answered was limited. We attribute that fact to the strength familiar culture in the Brazilian hotel industry throughout the years, which makes the owners and managers uncomfortable with outsiders analyzing their businesses.

Based on that, as suggestions for future studies we thoroughly recommend to replicate the research in other touristic regions in Brazil as well as in other countries, to identify similarities or to highlight differences in the hotel industry management, mainly regarding the competencies for sustainability. It would be also interesting to have comparisons among developing and developed countries, along with cultural, educational or other relevant aspects that may interfere with the results.

Besides, we would recommend other researchers to investigate a larger sample of hotel managers, as this could enable to run statistical tests and perhaps indicate significant relations among the variables investigated. Another contributing procedure would be to analyze the antecedent variables of the managers' behavior concerning the competencies for sustainability in the hotel sector. That could shed some light on the most relevant characteristics or individual competencies in line with the competencies for sustainability in the hotel industry.

Finally, this study brings contributions to the academic community by offering new insights to researchers and presenting more information for the theoretical framework in competencies for sustainability. As managerial implications, the research results emphasized the need for the hotel industry to invest in sustainable strategies to meet its target audience, and also to raise the level of its staff and reduce costs in the long term, offering benefits to society, to the environment, and, consequently, to their businesses.

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Appendix 1 – Interview script

Competencies for sustaining in hotel industry

Section A - Respondent and Organization Characteristics

A1. Gender: () Male () Female

A2. Age: _____

A3. Time in the company? _____

A4. Sector of activity in the company? _____

A5. What is your highest level of education? () High school () Incomplete higher () Graduated () Postgraduate incomplete. () Full Graduate. Which area?

A6. Marital status: () Not married () Married or stable union () Divorced or widowed

A7. Organization Characterization:

Hotel Name: _____ Place of headquarters (city / state): _____

Hotel Category: _____ Opening time: _____ Number of Hotel Staff: _____

Does it belong to a Hotel Chain?

A8. What do you understand by sustainability?

Section B - Skills and Sustainability Issues

B1. What does Hotel management consider to be organizational sustainability?

B2. Does the Hotel have policies, actions, or projects focused on sustainability? Describe them.

B3. How long have they been deployed (years)? How (company initiative or consulting company)?

B4. Was there any motivation to get started? (For example, from ABIH (Brazilian Association of Hotel Industry), local government, Trade Association, Communities, Customers, Suppliers, Financial Return)?

B5. What was the main change in the Hotel since the actions started?

B6. Why does the Hotel consider organizational sustainability?

B7. How does the hotel deal with sustainability issues? Does it assist with planning and implementing practices?

B8. What is the relationship between employees regarding sustainability practices? Can they give their opinion on sustainability programs? Do they influence in any way the results obtained in this area?

B9. How are Hotel employees motivated to participate in sustainability actions?

B10. Who are the key stakeholders or influencers for employees to participate in sustainability programs?

B11. What are the returns that the organization achieved with sustainability actions?

B12. Are there any human resources or administrative practices related to sustainability issues? (selection, training, benefits, etc.)

B13. What does the Hotel understand by organizational competence? And individual competence?

B14. What are the organizational skills of the Hotel? Is there any that distinguishes it from the competition?

B15. Is there any organizational competence that is understood as a Competitive Advantage of the company?

B16. What individual skills are required for all the Hotel staff?

B17. What are the skills of the Hotel focused on sustainability? Does the organization identify individual sustainability skills? Would these individual skills assist in developing organizational sustainability within the Hotel? If so, which ones? Are they encouraged in any way? How are they evaluated? How are they developed?

Section C - Competence Management System – (If C1 is Yes continue to the end)

C1. Has the Hotel implemented any competence management model? (If No, stop interview. If Yes, continue interview). If so, what and how does it work?

C2. Since when does this system work? Own implementation or consulting?

C3. Why did the organization adopt this system?

C4. What were the main expected benefits? Were they affected?

C5. Comment on the changes generated with the system.

C6. Was there any difference regarding the sustainability treatment after the implementation of the competence management system?

Appendix 2 – Questionnaire

SECTION A - Respondent and Organization Characteristics

- A1. Sex: Male Female A2. Age: _____
- A3. Time in the company (years)? _____ A4. Sector of activity in the company? _____
- A5. What is your highest schooling level?
 High School College degree incomplete College degree complete
 Incomplete Graduate course Complete Graduate course. Which area? _____
- A6. Marital Status:
 Single Married or stable Union Divorced or widowed
- A7. Characterization of the Organization
Hotel name: _____ Location (city/State): _____ Time in the market: _____
Number of employees: _____ Category of hotel: _____ It's a chain hotel: _____
- A8. What do you understand by sustainability? _____

SECTION B – Competencies and Sustainability Issues

For the following statements, tick the box corresponding to your opinion: THE HOTEL...	1 - Totally disagree to 6 - Totally Agree					Unknown	
... has actions aimed at environmental sustainability (Q1control-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has actions aimed at social sustainability (Q1control-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has actions aimed at economic sustainability(Q1control-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has an organizational culture focused on environmental aspects (Q2culture-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has an organizational culture focused on social aspects (Q2culture-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has an organizational culture focused on economic aspects (Q2culture-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has a vision and mission that encompasses environmental aspects (Q3vision-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has a vision and mission that encompasses social aspects (Q3vision-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has a vision and mission that encompasses economic aspects (Q3vision-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... implements specific actions directed to the environment (environmental education, garbage, water, energy, paper, rational use of inputs, etc.) (Q4actions-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... implements social actions involving the community and its surroundings (health, social projects, education, foundations, etc.) (Q4actions-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... implements economic-financial actions (loans, financing, analyzes, financial education, etc) (Q4actions-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... prevents environmental impacts (waste, energy/water consumption, etc.) (Q5prev-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... prevents accidents at work of employees (Social impacts) (Q5prev-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... prevents impacts of economic and financial losses of the company (Q5prev-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has plans to avoid future environmental damage (waste, energy/water/paper consumption, etc.) (Q6plan-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has plans to prevent health damage to employees (future) (Q6plan-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has plans to avoid future economic and financial losses of the company (Q6prev-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has policies to avoid future environmental problems (waste; energy/water/paper consumption, etc.) (Q7policies-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has policies for health and quality of life at work (social) Q7policies-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has policies for economic and financial management (systems, investment platform, etc.) (Q7policies-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has the capacity to specify, apply, reconcile values, principles, objectives and environmental goals (environmental education, waste, water, energy, etc.) (Q8capac-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	

... has the capacity to specify, apply, reconcile values, principles, objectives and social goals (social responsibility, volunteering, support for foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q8capac-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has the capacity to specify, apply, reconcile values, principles, objectives and economic/financial goals (Q8capac-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has rules/standards of conduct, responsibility in the environmental area (environmental education, waste, water, paper, energy, etc.) (Q9stand-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has rules/standards of conduct, responsibility, in the social area (social responsibility, volunteering, support to foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q9stand-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has rules/standards of conduct, responsibility, in the economic/financial area (Q9stand-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... acts ethically in relation to environmental issues (environmental education, garbage, water, paper, energy, etc.) (Q10ethic-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... acts ethically in relation to social issues (social responsibility, volunteering, support for foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q10ethic-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... acts ethically in relation to economic and financial issues (Q10ethic-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has strategies or programs in the environmental area (environmental education, garbage, water, paper, energy, etc.) (Q11strat-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has strategies or programs in the social area (social responsibility, volunteering, support to foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q11strat-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has strategies or programs in the economic-financial area (Q11strat-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has alliances/partnerships with other organizations in the environmental area (Schools, Municipalities, entities, etc.) (Q12partner-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has alliances / partnerships with other organizations in the social area (municipalities, churches, foundations, NGOs, schools, etc.) (Q12partner-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has alliances/partnerships with other organizations in the economic-financial area (Banks, Credit Unions, other Cooperatives, etc.) (Q12partner-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has learning strategies (courses, training) in the environmental area (environmental education, garbage, water, energy, paper, etc.) (Q13learn-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has learning strategies (courses, training) in the social area (social responsibility, volunteering, support to foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q13learn-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has learning strategies (courses, training) in the economic-financial area (loans, financing, etc.) (Q13learn-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... favors collaboration and teamwork in the environmental area (environmental education, waste, water, energy, paper, etc.) (Q14collab-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... promotes collaboration and teamwork in the social area (social responsibility, volunteering, support for foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q14collab-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... favors collaboration and teamwork in the economic-financial area (Q14collab-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has leaders or managers in environmental actions (environmental education, garbage, water, energy, paper, etc.) (Q15leader-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has leaders or managers in social actions (social responsibility, volunteering, support to foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q15leader-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... has leadership in economic and financial actions (loans, financing, etc.) (Q15leader-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... communicates the environmental actions developed to its employees, and society (environmental education, garbage, paper, water, energy, etc.) (Q16comm-En)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... communicates the social actions developed to its employees and society (social responsibility, volunteering, support to foundations or social actions, etc.) (Q16comm-So)	1	2	3	4	5	6	
... communicates economic and financial performance to its employees and society (Q16comm-Ec)	1	2	3	4	5	6	

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