

# MANAGEMENT OF TOURISM SUSTAINABILITY IN PORTUGUESE COMPANIES

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## Abstract

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The growing concern with sustainability and available resources leads tourism companies to give importance to the management of this area. For a perfect vision, the pillars of sustainability need to be in harmony, but research is scarce. This study is the result of an exploratory investigation, which starts from a broad literature review about corporate sustainability, management, and tourism. The objective of the investigation is to contribute to filling gaps in knowledge about the sustainability of tourism businesses and their implementation, exposing hypotheses that will answer the initial question about the existence of a relationship between sustainability and business dynamics. Based on the literature review, reflections arise about the theme that raises fundamental questions and their analysis led to the application of the quantitative method through an online survey having obtained a collection of 412 responses from entrepreneurs linked to sustainability in tourism, entrepreneurs, and company managers in Portugal allowing to obtain comparable data, universal, and subject to quantitative analysis, associated with an intentional sampling method. Empirical results demonstrate the urgency of change, awareness of sustainability in companies, and the intention to generate success, investing in a better world. The article contributes to the understanding of how to manage companies with a holistic view, having the pillars of sustainability in harmony, leading to financial success. The recommendations are based on the results obtained so that management is proactive, leading to a change in corporate governance, and the concern with the search for new approaches paves the way for new research.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Business Administration, Corporate Sustainability, Tourism Economics, Growth, Government

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Climate change and environmental degradation pose a threat to species. The world as we know it may never be the way it was, and Planet B does not exist.

Creating a sustainable world without leaving anyone behind, always bearing in mind that we need to protect the world, we want to leave it to future generations, describes a new era, a new collective, but also new markets and opportunities for tourism companies across the world (Carasa, 2014). With the evolution of times, concepts such as sustainability, social responsibility, degradation of Nature, and reduction of the ecological footprint, introduced a growing concern and urgency in the creation of initiatives, tools, and solutions to walk in a more sustainable direction (Luzzani, Lamastra, Valentino, & Capri, 2020). Societies have an important role where it is essential to guarantee training that enables and promotes the greatest possible impact in the world.

It is necessary to start with humanity and this is where tourism companies become the center of attention, as they generate transformations from the implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs), developed by the United Nations, playing a fundamental role in achieving the related sustainability goals to economic growth, responsible consumption, using these goals as a tool for the development of the companies themselves (Sanchez-Planelles, Segarra-Oña, & Peiro-Signes, 2020). The literature review brings reading contributions on tourism corporate sustainability and consistently asserts that companies need to change their corporate culture to enable an integrated approach to environmental, social, and economic issues, a holistic approach that creates value (Woodcraft, 2015; Jeurissen, 2000).

This research aims to help fill the knowledge gaps mentioned, exposing hypotheses, and examining whether there is a correlation between sustainability and tourism business dynamics for the success of a company. Based on contributions on corporate sustainability (Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2020; Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017; Jeurissen, 2000), as well as literature on social responsibility (Firmansyah & Estutik, 2020; Chiesa & Przychodzen, 2020; Carasa, 2014), it is possible to identify relevant dimensions of the business ecosystem and a set of hypotheses was developed about the initiatives implemented within the sustainability and business dynamics aimed at the company's success. These hypotheses were tested on data collected for this study.

The literature has highlighted the lack of empirical evidence on the relationship between sustainability and tourism business dynamics for achieving corporate success (Farny & Binder, 2021; Kumar & Stauermann, 2020; Schönborn et al., 2018). These gaps mean that, until now, most tourism companies have not been able to integrate all the pillars of sustainability in an equitable and proactive way for lack of examples of how this holistic approach can bring long-term competitive advantages and better performance within the corporate ecosystem (Cotterell, Hales, Arcodia, & Ferreira, 2019).

The data collected for the study this preliminary research allowed to collect data from

Portuguese tourism companies and entrepreneurs through the quantitative method using an online survey.

Data contributed to expanding knowledge about sustainability and highlighting specific aspects such as the importance of the contribution of the United Nations SDGs for 2030, the need to raise awareness in the business ecosystem, and provide more and better action tools towards an ideal model where strong sustainability should focus on critical, holistic, systemic and critical thinking (Cotterell et al., 2019), as social and environmental sustainability are strongly related to the economic success of companies. These sustainable principles must be present in companies as well as in schools and universities, being noted in the curriculum of courses, as well as in the ethics of universities as ecologically correct, socially fair, and economically viable (Springett, 2005).

The study assesses relevant perceptions both on the part of employees and entrepreneurs, demonstrating that there is an openness to make changes and implement sustainable development initiatives.

The structure of this paper is as follows. Section 2 reviews the relevant literature. Section 3 analyses the methodology that has been used to conduct empirical research based on the results, presented from theoretical and managerial perspectives in Section 4. The conclusions are presented in Section 5 with the intention of originating new ways of thinking and acting. Finally, limitations and new paths for future research are indicated.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainability is a complex concept, as it interconnects a set of variables. This inspiration has taken on a new dynamic and meaning since the Brundtland Report in 1987 (World Commission on Environment and Development [WCED], 1987). It is possible to define it as the ability of human beings to interact with the world, preserving the environment so as not to compromise the natural resources of future generations. But, the secret is a holistic approach to the triple bottom line of sustainability, integrating it into the companies' mindset and creating shared value (Jeurissen, 2000).

Ecological collapse is the subject of our lives; the constant climatic changes represent an existential threat to all life on Earth (Platzer & Sarigul-Klijn, 2021).

To overcome these challenges the world needs new strategies, re-signifying social responsibility and creating a modern economy, efficient in the use of resources and competitive as suggested by the Dragon Dreaming methodology, an ancient wisdom, created in Australia that can give us clues about combining competition with cooperation.

Sustainable entrepreneurship describes the link between sustainable development and entrepreneurship (Farny & Binder, 2021). This concept leads entrepreneurs to create workable solutions and they want to make a difference, as agents of change, keeping in mind that their businesses are not managed just in search of financial gains but much more than that — a vision that does not affect the natural and social environments in which they operate.

Sustainability in tourism has become an international issue because economic and environmental uncertainty requires reinforced attention by public policies. The economic factor concerns gross domestic product (GDP), national income, and foreign investment. Environmental factors are expressed through the emission of carbon dioxide, greenhouse gases, emission of nitrous oxide, and the carrying capacity of the region (Chen, 2022).

The sustainability and carrying capacity of tourist destinations are very important topics and have been investigated in recent years due to the constant growth of tourism (Zekan, Weismayer, Gunter, Schuh, & Sedlacek, 2022). The concept of carrying capacity in the tourism sector can be interpreted as the maximum number of visitors to be tolerated without harming the environment in which it operates and without reducing tourist satisfaction. It is possible to anticipate these impacts of tourism, designing strategies for the sustainable development of a given region, within its ecological, social, and economic limits, ensuring adequate support for the resident population, and avoiding a systemic collapse (Luzzani et al., 2020).

A sustainable business must work in a network, emphasizing the role of the community and the multiple objectives leading to the contribution to the United Nations SDGs and 2030 agenda (Farny & Binder, 2021) which define global priorities and desires for sustainable development, seeking to mobilize global efforts, demanding global action between governments, companies, and civil society to end poverty, create opportunities and dignified life for all, respecting the limits of the planet. Within these objectives the development of societies will allow companies to demonstrate how their businesses can assist in promoting sustainable development with a minimum of negative impacts, maximizing positive impacts on society and the planet (Chiesa & Przychodzen, 2020).

Therefore, corporate sustainability must be rethought. The Anthropocene era was influenced by a man leading to a significant impact on the planet's climate, and we witness these accelerated changes every day. The growing concern to minimize this footprint, leads companies to create environmentally friendly initiatives, such as product creation and innovation and pollution reduction, although they are still not enough to combat the challenges we face (Sardá & Pogutz, 2019a). This is the way for environmental, geophysical, social, and economic respect to become a reality (Sardá & Pogutz, 2019c).

Corporate sustainability is defined as management that aims to add value to the company in the creation of products and services as well as the entire process. Sustainable products, services, and processes are sought that reduce negative ecological and social impacts while increasing their positive impacts (Hepper, de Souza, de Cassia Petrini, & e Silva, 2017).

Changing the perspective of sustainability in order to minimize its negative impacts to contribute positively to society is the future of corporate sustainability leading to true business sustainability or business sustainability 3.0 (Sardá & Pogutz, 2019b).

Betting on a positive contribution to society, social companies appear, providing an ecosystem of social innovation. Social businesses thrive by

incorporating financial markets with a better understanding of the long-term social impact and better metrics for measuring that impact (Kumar & Stauvermann, 2020).

The perspective of a sustainable economy refers to the guarantee of basic needs, life quality, and preservation of nature, and social relationships for all (Hepper et al., 2017).

Corporate sustainability is supported by three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). The economic dimension translates into the implementation of sustainable business practices to promote long-term profit, always in accordance with good corporate management, where the stakeholders and the management team are aligned in planning resource spending, where it is possible to trace strategies and invest in innovative corporate sustainability methods.

The environmental concern includes the various actions that companies can take to reduce their carbon footprint and decrease their environmental impact, including reducing paper and packaging, reducing water use, recycling materials, and using sustainable energy sources.

From a social perspective, the company's focus is on taking good care of people inside and outside the business to eliminate child labor, pay on time, offer maternity and paternity leave, and contribute to the good of the community as it is; the case of volunteering (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017).

In this context, corporate sustainability should not indicate the superficial or corrective repair of business activities and economics. It must be governed by sustainability principles as a component of creating corporate value to generate ecological and social development, contributing to business success (Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2020).

Corporate sustainability includes the entire supply chain of a business and requires accountability from a primary level, suppliers, culminating in salespeople and the consequent sale of the product or service (Hepper et al., 2017). Producing or implementing something sustainably becomes a competitive advantage that can reconfigure some global supply lines that have developed based on low-cost production (Zamcopé, Ensslin, & Ensslin, 2012).

When companies mix sustainable development and social responsibility with stakeholder theory, corporate sustainability is achieved (Sanchez-Planelles et al., 2020).

### 3. METHODOLOGY

Among the various methodological options in the field of research in social sciences and humanities, this investigation could be carried out on a qualitative analysis with a multimethodological approach, using observation, document analysis data collection techniques, and semi-structured interviews. However, the qualitative methodology collects information that does not only seek to measure a theme but to describe it, through impressions, opinions, and points of view. Although qualitative research is less structured, it seeks to delve into a given topic to obtain information about people's motivations, ideas, and attitudes providing a more detailed understanding of the research

hypotheses, although, it makes it difficult to analyze the results (Moreira et al., 2021). While the quantitative methodology allows collecting concrete facts in the form of numbers. It can be crossed with quantitative data that are structured and statistical, forming the basis for drawing general conclusions from the research (Huylar & McGill, 2019).

For this investigation, a qualitative methodology was chosen, using a survey as suggested by Carvalho (2016). This is preliminary research, so the implementation of the survey was preceded by the design process and focused on collecting 412 online responses valid for analysis, representing a margin of error of 3.89%, for a confidence level of 95% ( $Z = 1.96$ ,  $p = q = 0.5$ ). The investigation took place between December 28, 2020, to January 31 2021, the sample was intended for entrepreneurs linked to sustainability in tourism, businessmen, and managing companies in Portugal allowing them to obtain data that are comparable, universal, and subject to quantitative analysis, associated with an intentional sampling method. The survey was developed on the Google Forms tool and its distribution was made in groups on social networks about entrepreneurship and sustainability in tourism, it was also sent to entrepreneurs and managers through LinkedIn and disseminated by other people, but always with the premise of being for professionals of the tourism area which leads to a limitation as the non-existence of disagreement is since the sample was not random because, as mentioned above, it was directed towards professionals in the area. Another limit is related to the number of responses obtained, which makes this investigation preliminary research because the universe is small.

The survey consisted of five sections and general questions. Its division was carried out as follows.

Section 1, corporate social responsibility, with the following statements:

- It is beneficial to have a social responsibility in a company.
- The effects of social responsibility impact the company.
- The company's social responsibility contributes to the well-being of society.
- Creating and implementing a sustainability program in the company a benefit.
- Sustainability within the business community an asset.

Section 2 concerns:

- Communities benefit from the company with questions about Feedback being positive when implementing the sustainable program in companies.
- The implementation of sustainable measures has an impact on the company's culture.
- The implementation of sustainable measures brings benefits to the team.
- The implementation of sustainable measures brings community recognition.
- The implementation of sustainable measures provides subsidies for decision-making.

As for section 3:

- Opportunities for advancement contain permissions such as sustainable measures generate opportunities for advancement and can be a competitive factor.

- Positive and sustainable management attitudes can motivate the team.

- Compared with other companies the sustainable factor can make the difference.

- The sustainable factor can create a positive image of the company.

- Social responsibility and gender equality can be new and strong ways for the company to gain respect in the market.

While section 4 focuses on the level of satisfaction with statements about:

- A company that follows sustainable measures generates satisfaction.

- A company that follows sustainable measures can generate opportunities for social ascension.

- In a company that respects sustainability, it is possible to have freedom to express concerns.

- In a company that respects sustainability it is possible to make a difference.

- In a company that respects sustainability, it is possible to participate in social and political activities.

Section 5 on initiatives and social programs related to issues such as:

- Initiatives and social programs are important implementations in a sustainable company.

- Social initiatives and programs like volunteering are important implementations in a sustainable company.

- Social responsibility can be a marketing strategy to create a positive impact.

- The company must keep in mind: stakeholder engagement, networking, community activities and sustainable economy.

- For the company's sustainability to prosper, communication efforts must be made.

- A company of the future must take into account all spheres of sustainability in order to leave its mark on the planet.

The organization of the research was based on the definition of the null hypothesis:

$H_0$ : *Is there a relationship between sustainability and business dynamics?*

The problem to which the investigation will answer (Quivy & Van Campenhoudt, 1995) refers, that when the problem is defined and expressed through the initial question, it generates reasons that intend to clarify the case study, the research hypotheses are formulated and subject to validation (Pocinho, 2012).

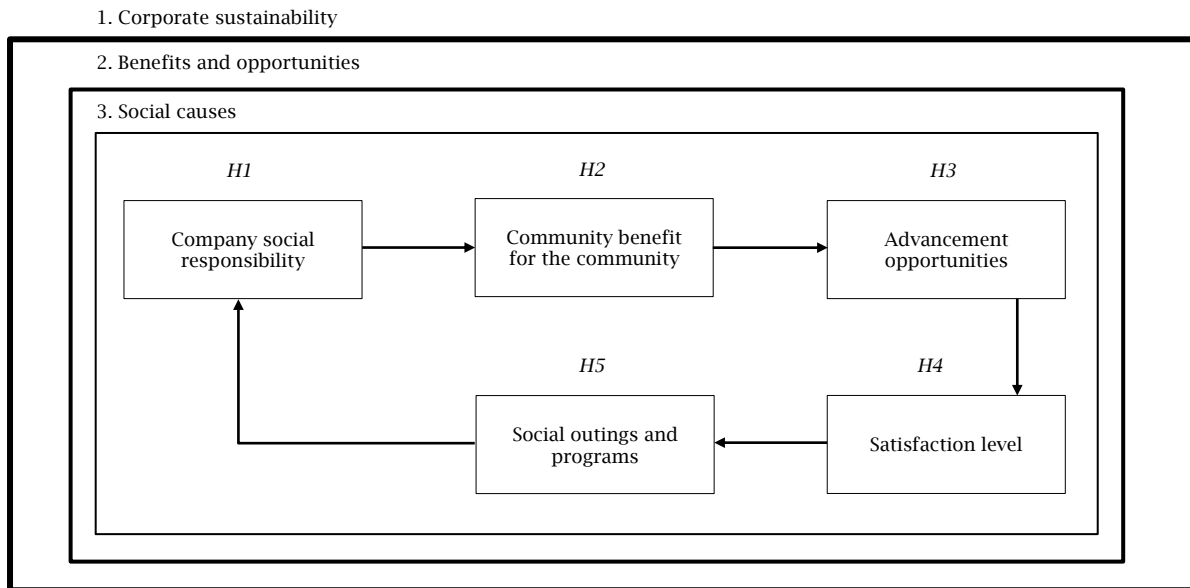
In an ideal scenario, the principles of sustainability are in balance with the business vision. When analyzing the conceptual model (Figure 1), we can see the relation between the concepts, it is necessary to highlight the triple bottom line idea, because that links the three pillars of sustainability: social, environmental, and economic leads to a concern with transparency, accounting, ethics, and values, reducing the ecological footprint, community participation in decision-making and networking that makes work networking is beneficial and productive (Grandisoli & Jacobi, 2020). All of these concepts are related to and complement others in the corporate tourism world, such as growth, profit, market positioning, scalability, vision, competitiveness, investment, and team and community entrepreneurship (Sanchez-Planellas et al., 2020).

Corporate sustainability can be seen as a new management paradigm in constant evolution, being

an alternative to the traditional model of growth and profit maximization. Corporate sustainability recognizes that growth and profits are important, but, it requires the company to pursue social

objectives, related to sustainable development such as environmental protection, social justice, equality, and economic development (Pereira, 2009).

Figure 1. Conceptual model



Source: Author's elaboration.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

The survey was published online on December 28, 2020, and took place during the last days of that month, ending on January 31, 2021, using the Google Form application. Once the period for its implementation, they obtained 412 Portuguese responses. At the analytical level, it is important to characterize the sample, before presenting and discussing the main results of the survey.

The survey was designed to investigate and help create support tools for start-ups and companies that want to implement sustainable measures. Corporate sustainability is a set of actions and policies aimed at respecting the environment and the sustainable development of society. The tourism company's objective should be to grow and act with awareness, adopting practices that reduce negative impacts, from internal operations to the final product.

First, the base hypothesis or null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) was analysed. Other assumptions were made for the answer to the starting question to be given:

- H1: Company social responsibility;
- H2: Community benefit for the community;
- H3: Advancement opportunities;
- H4: Satisfaction level;
- H5: Volunteering and social programs.

In addition to the hypotheses, several factors were considered, namely, corporate sustainability, benefits and opportunities, and social causes (Table 1).

Table 1. Hypotheses and factors in analysis

Hypothesis in study
$H_0$ : Is there a relationship between sustainability and business dynamics?
Survey hypotheses
H1: Company social responsibility
H2: Community benefit for the community
H3: Advancement opportunities
H4: Satisfaction level
H5: Volunteering and social programs
Analysis factors
1. Corporate sustainability
2. Benefits and opportunities
3. Social causes

Source: Author's elaboration.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show that the dominant gender of the target audience for this survey is female, with 52%, surpassing the male audience, which represents 48% of the universe under study, with a higher incidence between 45 and 64 years of age, which, on the one hand, may reveal a greater sensitivity of women as caregivers and alert, while on the other hand, it conveys the idea that the highest percentage of concern is centered on independent workers and tourism employees with 53% followed by entrepreneurs with 45%. The values point to the growing concern in the business environment and the impact they have on the environment where they operate, on the social fabric that surrounds them, and, on the planet, and its ecological footprint. It is important to note that young adults between 18 and 44 years old, demonstrate a growing expressiveness in relation to this concern, demonstrating that it is possible to start a path of awareness for sustainability from an early age and that this can generate, later, more, and best ideas to positively impact the planet in one's workplace.

**Table 2. Gender**

Gender	Percentage
Females	52%
Males	48%
Other	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

**Table 3. Age**

Age	Percentage
18-29	10%
30-44	38%
45-64	51%
> 65	1%

Source: Author's elaboration.

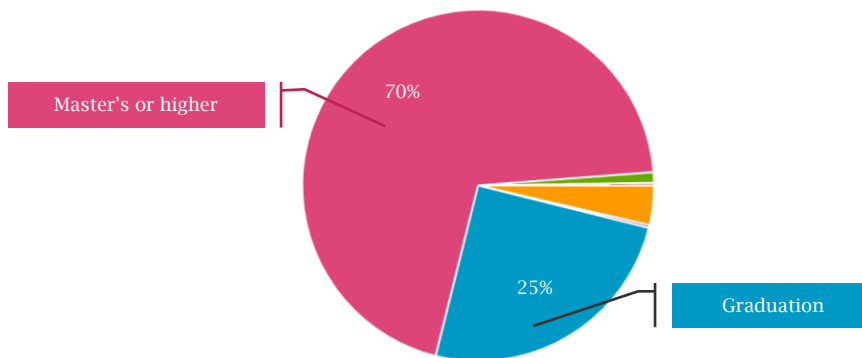
**Table 4. Profession**

Profession	Percentage
Student	0%
Student worker	1%
Entrepreneur or independent worker	53%
Employee	45%
Unemployed	1%
Retired	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

The level of education can influence the knowledge and degree of awareness of the concept, reinforcing the idea that if the next generations are addressed early this mind-set can generate innovative and creative ideas earlier and that can advance the process of struggle for sustainability and creation of new concepts, products, and campaigns (Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Education level**

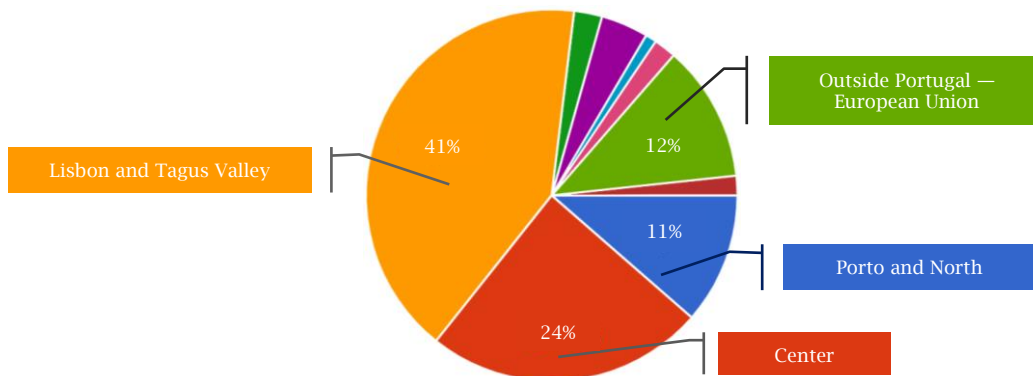


Source: Author's elaboration.

It is notable that in Portugal, 70% of the answers given were from people with a high degree of studies, positioning them as masters or more, accompanied by 25% of graduated individuals. These results largely surpass the little knowledge

and low level of education that is necessary to think about this concept, since the effects can be visible or felt, which allows the creation of awareness and implementation methods.

**Figure 3. Region**



Source: Author's elaboration.

Note that, the greater number of people, living near metropolitan areas, leads to reflecting more on this issue (Figure 3). The campaigns carried out and measures implemented in the large metropolises lead to more sustainable practices being adopted as is the case with the regulation of gas emissions from the automotive sector within the historic center of Lisbon.

Although the information is distributed evenly, it is in the most populous cities that there is

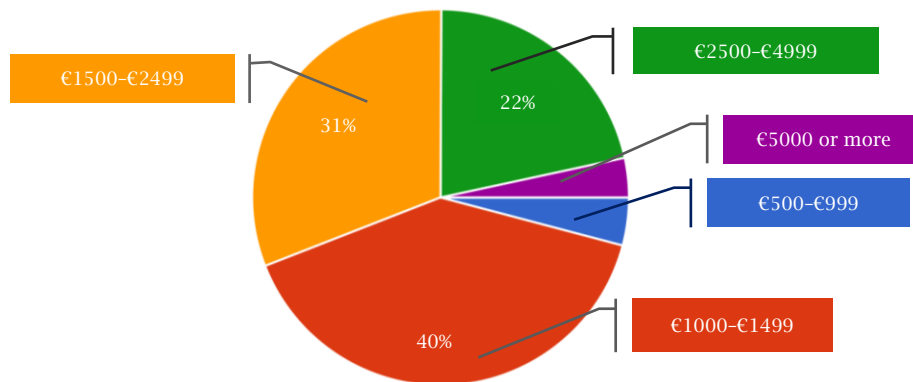
a higher sustainable percentage where each citizen adopts environmentally friendly measures in their daily lives, transforming this practice into a way of life. On the other hand, it is interesting to understand the dynamics of the interior of the country where sustainability can be translated into a circular economy or more consumption of organic products produced in the backyards of each household and, where the exchange of these products between neighbors is frequent. This being

an ocular analysis, in a pandemic time, there was not only a setback or, on the other hand, an improvement in the human footprint on the planet, but the inter-help relationships led to greater consumption than the land gives us.

The crisis led to an increase in awareness in several fields and one of the strongest, was sustainability, not just environmental sustainability, recognizing social sustainability as crucial beyond the well-known economic one. This being a survey conducted in times of a pandemic the figures show that the percentages are considerable, and humanity is alert. At the beginning of the pandemic, in the year 2020, gamification started to have an expression, we were all alarmed by the signs that the planet was giving us, and several groups organized themselves so that the action of each individual would generate a solution, such as the planting of trees, the delivery of meals that are bought over the internet to offer the neediest people, campaigns, and solidarity boxes, measures

adopted by companies such as teleworking and that, after a year of pandemic, have adopted it as an effective measure as it is in the case of Liberty Seguros in Portugal, small steps and decisions that began to modify the ecosystem. After scrutinizing the respondent's places of residence, through the analysis of income (Figure 4), we can say that in general, people with above-average income 31%, are aware that sustainability is an asset and bet on it while 40% with an income between €1,000 and €1,499 are familiar with the concept, but most do not apply it directly. Degree of studies and lower income, they do not have much information about the problem, but they are open to knowledge and can generate an interesting market niche by betting on training co-financed by the country's agencies to give them the necessary tools and, bet on the boost for each entrepreneur or employee, as, incidentally, in Portugal, this type of training started as soon as the COVID-19 started.

Figure 4. Monthly household income



Source: Author's elaboration.

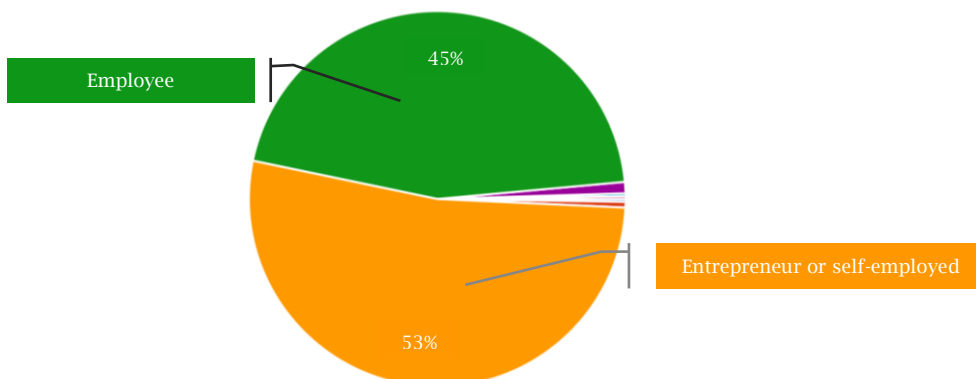
Interestingly is that although the percentage of people who do not know much about sustainability, but would like to learn and yet it is very expressive in relation to not knowing and not wanting to know (Table 5). Note that, the worry exists and that the mind is open to receiving information about it, regardless of what will be done with it.

There is a gap between education and training that has been explored and clearly still needs to reach more people. The continuous analysis of data allows us to affirm that entrepreneurs have a higher

percentage in this investigation, demonstrating that these entrepreneurs are more interested in sustainability, carrying this state of alert to their companies (Figure 5).

On the other hand, employees show interest in the application of sustainable measures in their daily lives, leading that awareness at the right time can generate a wave of planetary solidarity helping in a large scale the fight for a better, healthier world, and free from abuse of its resources.

Figure 5. Profession



Source: Author's elaboration.

**Table 5.** Responses on company social responsibility (H1)

Research area	Point scale					No. of respondents
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Benefit of company social responsibility	37%	43%	20%	0%	0%	0%
Effects the social responsibility impact on the company	36%	40%	24%	0%	0%	0%
Contribution to the well-being of society	41%	36%	23%	0%	0%	0%
Benefits of sustainability programs	40%	38%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Sustainability of communities	40%	36%	25%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

The first hypothesis (H1) is about social responsibility in the company and reveals interesting data with most of the percentage of total agreement or agreement whether we talk about sustainability as a benefit in social responsibility, its effects, the clear contribution to the well-being of society, benefits of sustainability programs and their application and sustainability at the community level (Table 5). The tables presented are complementary and easily related. When analyzing Table 5, it is possible to complement it with the analysis of Table 8, which demonstrates the expressiveness of corporate and community sustainability, where between 27% to 51% agree or totally agree and that responds to the fourth hypothesis (H4) on responses to the level of satisfaction.

In the field of social responsibility, we must reflect on existing guidelines in the field of sustainable tourism, and the Institute for the Conservation of Nature and Forests argues that it is important to evoke the interventions of the European Union through instruments such as the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, which had begun in 2001, with the objective of accrediting protected areas.

A European certification that grants parks that meet the necessary conditions for the development of tourism and the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage, through the application of sustainability criteria in activities related to tourism

and with the involvement of all agents operating in the sector.

From a legislative point of view, this translates into several standards, since the demand for sustainable tourism products and services is increasing, making it a force for transformation (Chen, 2022). To respond to this scenario, the European Union created the Ecolabel seal, as well as the Portuguese Certification Association developed the ISO 21401 standard for sustainable hotels, the Institute of Responsible Tourism through Biosphere Certification, and the Foundation for Environmental Education created Green Key, with the help of the Blue Flag Association of Europe, led to the implementation in Portugal of several instruments that give consumers the guarantee of respect for the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria that integrate the words environmental, social and corporate governance, grouping the most relevant non-financial factors of a company (Firmansyah & Estutik, 2020). This is an analytical and strategic approach used by analysts and institutional investors to evaluate performance in the field of sustainability since currently, the cornerstone of sustainable investment is the responsibility of any company since society and stakeholders demand more and more information on how companies manage issues related to sustainability, investing mean including additional aspects to financial ones in decision-making, more specifically environmental, social and corporate governance factors (Zamcopé et al., 2012).

**Table 6.** Responses on communities benefits from the company (H2)

Research area	Point scale					No. of respondents
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Feedback to implementing the sustainable programs	38%	40%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Impact on the company's culture	36%	39%	26%	0%	0%	0%
Benefits to the team	38%	37%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Community acknowledgement	35%	34%	30%	0%	0%	0%
Inputs on decision making	34%	36%	30%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

Responses on the community's benefits from the company are the second hypothesis (H2) which gives good feedback on the implementation of sustainable programs in companies and has the agreement of 40% of respondents. Implementations of sustainability in tourism companies mean that the percentage of positive impact is significant with a range of 39%.

The acquisition of new habits brings benefits to the team and the community and helps in decision-making thanks to the differentiating inputs. Considering the relationship between sustainability and the corporate world, it is possible to affirm that the implementation of new practices is the order of the day and will lead to success inside and outside the tourism company.



**Table 7.** Responses on opportunities for advancement (H3)

Research area	Point scale					No. of respondents
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Opportunities and competitiveness for advancement	45%	32%	24%	0%	0%	0%
Management attitudes on influencing motivation positively	37%	39%	24%	0%	0%	0%
Comparison with other companies	44%	34%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Creating the positive image about the companies	38%	38%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Respect for social responsibility and gender equality	41%	31%	27%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

Regarding the third hypothesis (H3) on responses on opportunities for advancement, the view is again optimistic if there is a high level of agreement among respondents.

Sustainability can be considered a competitive factor and generate new opportunities, in this sense 45% of respondents fully agree with the statement and 37% continue to agree with the fact that management attitudes positively influence the motivation of the business community. When

compared to other companies in the industry, 44% fully agree that sustainability is an asset that can impact and create a positive image for the company. On the other hand, issues related to social sustainability and gender equality gained expression and full agreement by 41% of the respondents, which leads them to affirm that it is the order of the day to make a difference and create opportunities so that sustainability can work holistically.

**Table 8.** Responses on the level of satisfaction (H4)

Research area	Point scale					No. of respondents
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Level of satisfaction	36%	39%	24%	0%	0%	0%
Opportunities availed for social advancement	37%	35%	28%	0%	0%	0%
Freedom to voice concerns	35%	37%	28%	0%	0%	0%
Concept of sustainability	51%	27%	23%	0%	0%	0%
Social and political activities participation	36%	35%	29%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

The level of satisfaction within a tourism company should be valued to the maximum, as a happy and motivated team makes it a simple company. The fourth hypothesis (H4) is on this topic and is something to work on daily. The level of satisfaction of the respondents is 36% in full agreement, but 39% only agree and 24% are not sure, which generates a call for attention because the uncertain, motivated, and satisfied can add enormous value to the company. The same goes for the growth of opportunities that must be worked on so that at 37% we can add 28% and continue to stimulate 35%.

The growth in opportunities goes against the possibility of having a voice within the company, where 37% say they agree that it is an important issue in the implementation of sustainable

measures. Making a difference, growing, and expanding our corporate goals can be achieved at the same time as the participation of the business community within the political and social world. Implementation of programs such as volunteering or promoting debates stimulates employees, opens horizons, and generates new ideas and this concern has the full agreement of 36% of respondents. The heart of the matter is the concept of sustainability and how well it is known. In response to this question, 51% fully agree with the concept and are satisfied with its corporate approach. It remains necessary that the remaining percentages are worked out to be transformed into a full agreement even though the lowest level is that of uncertainty with 23%, a percentage that, if worked well, generates excellent returns on the matter.

**Table 9.** Responses on social outings and programs (H5)

Research area	Point scale					No. of respondents
	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
Social initiatives and programs	43%	35%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Social responsibility and marketing strategy to impact positively	47%	31%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Stakeholders' engagement, community activities and sustainable economy	53%	26%	22%	0%	0%	0%
Communication efforts	40%	37%	23%	0%	0%	0%
All spheres of sustainability count to leave a mark on the planet	66%	16%	18%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Author's elaboration.

The last hypothesis (H5), represented in Table 9, explore the issues related to initiatives and programs in the social sphere in which total agreement generates 43%, being something

expressive and of great relevance for a continuous commitment in this field.

Corporate sustainability also translates into social responsibility and marketing strategy, which, if well developed, leads to a positive impact its

percentage does not allow lying with 47% of respondents totally agree, 31% to agree, and 22% not to be sure, leading to these levels having to be worked on so that success is guaranteed with a high percentage.

The key to success in the business world and, particularly in corporate sustainability, are stakeholders' engagement, community activities, and sustainable economy that generate 53% total agreement, a high percentage that makes the perception that it is necessary to bet in this field to be very high.

For the system to work in an integrated way, the internal and external communities can work miracles and the concern with this issue generates a percentage of 40%, with no disagreement. As mentioned in relation to table 8, the perfect balance of corporate sustainability is achieved through the holistic approach in which all spheres of sustainability interact in the exact measurements, and through this perfect combination, it is possible for the company to make its mark on the planet and this concern is reflected in the total agreement of 66%, which is one of the most expressive percentages of this investigation. Based on the analyzed data, it is possible to give a positive answer to  $H_0$  affirming that there is a relationship between sustainability and corporate tourism dynamics in Portugal.

There are points and measures to be developed so that they are implemented correctly, leading to social, economic, and environmental productivity, resulting in strong tourism sustainability.

Simão (2017) classifies different perspectives in relation to the achievement of sustainability, defining them as weak or strong so that the ideal model can be established.

The concept of weak tourism sustainability is based on neoclassical models of maintenance or growth of well-being. In other words, there is no long-term decrease in utility, income, or real consumption, per inhabitant. On the other hand, strong sustainability is characterized by not replacing natural capital with other forms of capital, without requiring the degradation of each of the components of the total capital stock (Zhang, Zhang, & Zhou, 2007).

Analyzing the Portuguese reality as guidelines for achieving sustainability, the 2030 Agenda was drafted, the United Nations General Assembly defined 17 SDGs: 1) Eradicate poverty; 2) Eradicate hunger; 3) Quality health; 4) Quality education; 5) Gender equality; 6) Drinking water and sanitation; 7) Renewable and accessible energy; 8) Decent work and economic growth; 9) Industry, innovation, and infrastructure; 10) Reduce inequalities; 11) Sustainable cities and communities; 12) Sustainable production and consumption; 13) Climate action; 14) Protect marine life; 15) Protect terrestrial life; 16) Peace, justice and effective institutions, and 17) Partnerships to implement the objectives.

All member companies are committed to implementing initiatives that address the objectives of sustainable development, defining the society's development agenda. It is the opportunity for companies to demonstrate how they contribute to the execution of this agenda, minimizing negative impacts and maximizing positive impacts for the community and the planet and, most

importantly, not exceeding the carrying capacity of the territories.

The first step towards the successful implementation of these goals in the corporate world is to get to know the company very well from the inside out and the diagnosis can be made by a meticulous SWOT (strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats) analysis on corporate sustainability (Farny & Binder, 2021). By gathering all the existing information about the various sectors of the company, verifying the extent to which they can connect to this theme and from there, realize which SDG's fit together and which ones it is possible to work with in depth.

To ensure success, the best option is to focus on three goals, develop well and achieve those goals. Often, companies wrongly understand that it is necessary to develop all SDGs or most of them and this is the harbinger of a big mistake, as the tendency is for the focus to dissolve in the concern to act on several fronts and the logic is to implement something fully developed and well implemented than much and without reaching the necessary level.

When reflecting on development in the corporate environment, talking about strong and weak sustainability takes us to an excellent point of reflection that relates to corporate sustainability (Emmanuel, Carvalhal da Silva, & Avila, 2012).

## 5. CONCLUSION

The world faces unprecedented environmental catastrophes, as warned by several organizations such as the United Nations and the Worldwide Fund for Nature. The concept of sustainability originated in Stockholm, Sweden, at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972) and has evolved with the premise of issues related to environmental degradation and pollution. Nowadays and in the face of events, the corporate tourism sector is encouraged to contribute to the SDGs of the United Nations Organization for 2030.

That is why it is necessary to activate the alert so that the future changes from exceptionally gloomy to exceptionally sensitive and with tools for action. In an ideal model, strong sustainability should focus on critical, holistic, systemic, and critical thinking (Cotterell et al., 2019). And, it must be present both in companies, schools, and universities, making itself noticed in the curricular plans of the courses as well as in the ethics of universities as ecologically correct, socially just, and economically viable (Springett, 2005).

In a perspective closer to the ideals described and to what will be global sustainability, whether corporate, educational, or implemented in the daily life of everyone, all pillars of sustainability must be interconnected. A holistic approach is needed to interconnect and balance profit, the planet, and people. The concept of sustainability is still strongly linked to Western thinking, referring to the ideas of growth, progress, and economics and it is necessary to be challenged.

It is necessary to educate citizens in a more complete, multidisciplinary, holistic way, based on the variety of sustainability concepts so that they can reflect on different world views and have transformational learning and work experiences,

leading to a better prepared and more entrepreneurial community with the critical thinking skills needed to transform business practices (Cotterell et al., 2019).

Tourism companies that encourage their employees, implementing the pillars of sustainability and implementing strategies such as preparing reports on the company's good practices that can generate interest in doing more and better, training and training their teams, better understanding employees, letting they can have a say within the company with techniques like brainstorming. Provide the help they need to evolve, help the surrounding community through voluntary campaigns, through a bag of hours for each employee as well as a system of incentives and objectives so that each one is more stimulated and this translates into motivation, since it feels part of the process, it is guaranteed that the company will continue to make progress and increase its profits in addition to measures related to energy consumption and natural resources.

The investigation examined the relationship between sustainability and business dynamics within the corporate tourism system with a focus on Portugal. The objectives of the study were achieved by employing an analysis of the implemented methodology that determined the link between sustainability and the corporate system. The extracted results confirm the existence of a positive relationship between sustainability and the corporate system in tourism.

The development of corporate sustainability in the tourism sector in Portugal, and around the world, must be worked on as the mind-set and approach to be followed, to achieve efficiency goals. It is necessary to carry out more investigations from a more critical and practical point of view to reveal vulnerabilities, implications, and possible traces of the implementation of this sustainable reality.

It is necessary to promote social inclusion, qualify and train people, raise awareness of the energy transition and circular economy of companies in the sector, involve stakeholders and ensure that there is a joint commitment to transform the offer and sustainability of the destination, promote sustainable mobility and accessibility for all, helping to reduce inequalities in the sector, a change in attitude should also be encouraged throughout the value chain of the tourism sector, as well as promoting Portugal as a sustainable destination, relating the law of supply and demand with sustainability as an initiative to combat seasonality, carrying out continuous monitoring of the entire process so that the results are fruitful, seeking to innovate and always value the cultural and natural heritage, always with the mission of promoting tourism and responsible tourists. This is preliminary research on the topic and the sample is not very large size and this is a limit of the study but investigations on the implementation of this concept within start-ups and how the resilience to achieve these goals is a constant, could be another good starting point, as well as management and public and private policy issues in relation to sustainability strategies and implementation is another path with great interest.

In times of crisis like COVID-19, Lapointe (2020), it is necessary to rethink strategies and adapt strategies and visions. Once the planet has shown that without human movement, its regeneration is fast, it will be beneficial to take ideas from the crisis that we are going through and (re)create the corporate world, highlighting the sustainability combined with networking and the digital that demonstrate moving mountains (Rocha, 2020).

In summary, there are several interesting issues that can lead to more future research, helping the corporate world to continue to make its sustainable contribution and to reduce its ecological footprint.

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