

Hospitality attributes in hotel restaurants and their relationships with social sustainability

Os atributos da hospitalidade em restaurantes de hotéis e suas relações com a sustentabilidade social

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RESUMO

As relações humanas e as rotinas de trabalho vêm sofrendo rápidas transformações, assim como os comportamentos de consumo, lazer e viagens. Com a velocidade com que as mudanças ocorrem, é possível observar a necessidade de uma visão mais sustentável a fim de que haja um olhar cuidadoso para as questões ambientais, sociais e de governança (ESG). No setor de turismo e hotelaria, há uma crescente preocupação das redes hoteleiras nos aspectos ESG, com um foco especial na temática social, que engloba treinamentos para os funcionários, diversidade e inclusão, práticas de segurança, entre outras, sendo este o enfoque desta pesquisa. Nesse contexto, os atributos que compõem a hospitalidade, tanto na visão em relação ao hóspede quanto aos funcionários, se destacam em diversos locais, como em restaurantes de hotéis, e podem ser considerados um diferencial ao



favorecer as interações humanas, em uma relação de cordialidade e acolhimento. Diante disso, o objetivo desta pesquisa é identificar os atributos de hospitalidade e práticas de sustentabilidade em restaurantes de hotéis. Para alcançar esse objetivo, foram realizadas duas pesquisas qualitativas: a primeira, por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas, coletadas durante o mês de novembro de 2021, com hóspedes de hotéis localizados no Brasil; em seguida, fez-se a análise documental dos manuais de ESG de duas redes hoteleiras. Os resultados mostraram que os hotéis adotam práticas de sustentabilidade social por meio do cuidado com a privacidade e segurança do cliente, além do treinamento e cuidado com os funcionários, proporcionando um ambiente de trabalho seguro.

Palavras-chave: hospitalidade; ESG; sustentabilidade social; restaurantes de hotéis.

ABSTRACT

Human relationships and work routines have undergone fast transformations, as have consumer, leisure, and travel behaviors. With the speed at which changes occur, the need for a more sustainable vision has been observed so that there is a careful look at environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. In the tourism and hospitality sector, there is a growing concern among hotel chains in ESG aspects, with a special focus on social issues, which includes training for employees, diversity and inclusion, security practices, among others, and which is the focus of this search. In this context, the attributes that make up hospitality, both in relation to the guest and in relation to employees, stand out in different places, such as hotel restaurants, and can be considered a differentiator by favoring human interactions, in a relationship of cordiality and welcome. Therefore, the objective of this research is to identify hospitality attributes and sustainability practices in hotel restaurants. To achieve this objective, two qualitative surveys were carried out, the first was carried out through semi-structured interviews, collected during the month of November 2021, with hotel guests located in Brazil, followed by a documentary analysis of the ESG manuals of two hotel chains. The results showed that hotels adopt social sustainability practices through care for customer privacy and security, employee training, employee care, and providing a safe work environment. Hospitality attributes such as personalization, warm welcome, comfort and special relationships are part of the characteristics that guests determine to be important in a hotel restaurant. In this research, it was possible to verify that the concern with social sustainability and hospitality attributes can be considered a competitive factor.

Keywords: hospitality; ESG; social sustainability; hotel restaurants.



INTRODUCTION

There is a series of motivations, based on desires and expectations that make an individual leave its living location headed to another destination, which should be analyzed considering several aspects (Pantuffi & Perussi, 2021). The attributes that compose hospitality may be considered motivating differentials so that tourists and consumers attend establishments such as hotel restaurants. In face of this, it is important that such establishments identify which of such aspects that represent the hospitality as a source of competitive advantage are valued by their clients (Andrade & Polo, 2018).

A growing concern with the sustainability in all the sectors also appears in tourism as a challenge, both for the companies as well as for the tourists, however, the adoption of policies of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) may be a competitive differential for the entrepreneurs of the sector, increasing its market value. (Ionescu et al, 2019).

The importance of the ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) approach in the sector of tourism and hotel business is unquestionable in face of the contemporary scenery, in which the sustainability and the responsibility assume even more determinant roles. The integration of the ESG principles in the practices and policies of such industries not only reflect a commitment to the planet and to the local communities, but also presents a series of tangible and intangible benefits.

In the environmental aspect, the concern with the preservation of the natural resources and the reduction of the ecological impact of the tourism and hotel operations is crucial. The implementation of sustainable measures, such as energy efficiency, resources management and the improvement of the sustainable tourism not only contributes to the environmental preservation, but



also attends the growing demand of consumers for more responsible and ethical practices.

Regarding the social aspect, the application of the ESG principles aim at ensuring fair and equal relations with the collaborators, the local communities and the group of interest. The respect to human rights, the improvement of the diversity and inclusion, and the support to the community development are essential pillars to strengthen the reputation and the social sustainability of the organizations in the tourism and hotel sector.

The good business governance plays an essential role in the guarantee of the transparency, integrity and responsibility in the business management. Practices of solid governance ensure ethical decision making and the accountability in front of the stakeholders, fomenting the trust and the credibility of the organizations of the sector.

The integration of the ESG criteria in tourism and in hotel business answer not only to the growing demands for sustainability and social responsibility, but also creates long term value. The companies that adopt a complex and committed approach with the ESG principles are prepared to face the challenges of the present and of the future, at the same time that they contribute positively to the society and to the planet.

Therefore, for this research, it was aimed at integrating the need of the companies to know their clients with the understanding of which offered social sustainability practices (Jørgensen, & McKercher, 2019) from the criteria of social sustainability (Labuschagne, Brent & Van Erck, 2005), are recognized and revealed in the narratives of clients/guests when they are questioned regarding the attributes of the hospitality. This way, the issue that will guide the research of this study is: which are the attributes of hospitality and practices of social sustainability perceived by guests, in the restaurants, located in hotels?



The purpose is to identify the attributes of hospitality and practices of sustainability in hotel restaurants. To reach such goal, two researches were conducted under the strategies of qualitative investigation, In the first step, a performance of direct qualitative interviews was chosen with the guests, as mentioned by Trigueiro (2020). Semi-structured interviews were performed with hotel guests, in Brazil, throughout the month of November 2021. It was worth mentioning that all the interviewed guests were staying in hotels that are part of one of the two quoted chains. In the following step, the documental analysis was performed of manual of ESG from the two hotel chains – elaborated from 2012 – to identify the implemented sustainable practices in the establishments.

This article is composed by three sections, in the first the review of the literature is presented on hospitality in hotel restaurants, the sustainability and the attributes of hospitality; as follows, the methodological procedures are pointed out; at last, the results of the research are shown and discussed.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Hospitality in hotel restaurants

A restaurant located within a hotel should have as goal to satisfy the needs of their clients, through dishes served, quality service and physical space, in a way that the clients feel safe and comfortable in the moments of their meals. Such establishments need to be attractive to guests, in a way that they do not need to go to other places to fulfill this need (Andrade, Brito & Jorge, 2019).

The hospitality in its own sense means the nurturing of a person to a person, based on obligations of reciprocity, referring to hospitality among equals. In the figurative sense, it refers to the idea that the location is welcoming and it is based on solidarity (Gotman, 2019). Hospitality comes from interpersonal relations that occur in either public or private social environments, involving exchanges among those who offer and those who receive something, whether tangible or intangible assets (Stefanini, Alves & Marques, 2018).



Hospitality is an act of narrowing the human relations, a relation of fostering and many times a symbol of civility, in which there is the host, the one that fosters, and the guest, the one who is received. In addition, it is possible to notice several reasons for the hosts to offer it, which goes from some situations in which it is offered with the expectation to obtain some kind of profit, in addition to others in which it is offered only for the joy and the pleasure of fostering (Lashley, 2015).

Restaurants, bars and similar places are prone to meetings and sociability, whether dividing the same table or the same meals. In a similar way, it can be observed in such places many activities in which there is strong presence of hospitality (Faltin & Minasse, 2017) that can be seen as a competitive differential, being noticed many times as a “service of excellence” from companies that provide services, such as, for example, restaurants, and, among these, the ones located inside hotels (Quadros, 2011).

In face of this, a challenge appears for the service providers who wish to use the hospitality as a differential. It is necessary to work on the motivation of the collaborators to the contact with the client/guest, in addition to a favorable physical and organizational structure. This way, the encounter between the service provider and the client will occur in a hospitable way, being able to create personal and emotional bonds of the guest with the establishment in where one is (Quadros, 2011).

When the hospitality is present in the offer of a service in a commercial establishment with the restaurants, it is understood that the management of such place worries about the well-being of the clients and, with this, such characteristic is seen as something that contributes to the better understanding of the expectations of the people that attend it (Stefanini et al., 2018). The creation of unique memorable experiences leads the clients to experience positive emotions, which generates satisfaction and more favorable behavioral intentions. Such experiences are linked to factors such as contact with the



employees, details in the environment and spaces of living, which leads to the memorization of the time when one had been in such establishment (Alves, Marques, Stefanini & Nascimento, 2019).

The way to receive and give welcome to guests and clients is one of the strong approaches, in a way that to receive is the most evident ritual related to the hospitality. A warming attitude in the first contact between the host and the guest plays an important role and it is, many times, determinant to the formation of the first impression, which is generally kept in the memory. This way, it is important for all the establishments to seize such moment and such opportunity to captivate their clients (Ariffin, Nameghi & Soon, 2015).

The aspects that reveal the hospitality during the reception of the clients/guests are: the education when receiving; the congeniality; the receive in an amiable way and always smiling; in addition to leaving the client always at ease when one arrives to the establishment (Andrade, Cordeiro & Bouças da Silva, 2020).

For the managers of enterprises such as restaurants who wish to develop practices of hospitality and services with hospitality characteristics, it is important to create mechanisms to hire employees who also present such characteristics, mainly the front staff, of the lounge, those who act in face of the clients' eyes. In addition, it is indispensable the performance of training programs, meeting and frequent motivation of such employees, aiming at ensuring the quality of the human relations developed in the establishment (Faltin & Minasse, 2017; Alves et al., 2019). The attendants need to understand that the customization in the attendance of the client reflects the search for a more personal relationship with the guest and, due to that, to treat and to receive well is a differential of competition to the companies (Camargo, 2021).

To understand that, beyond not only the concern with tangible elements, such as food, drinks, elements of the environment and the service itself, the provided service by the host to the client also includes intangible elements present in the



concept of hospitality, which is “to give to receive and to give back”, that should be put into practice and not only stay throughout training or manuals of procedures or conducts (Alves et al., 2019).

As a relational study, the hospitality presents itself as challenge to the interdisciplinary. The plurality of the applications in researches, specially in Brazil, shows how such concept may be applied in several locations (Brusadin, 2022) and in a multidimensional way it may be inserted in a multiplicity of themes and contexts. Spolon (2016) and Lashley (2016). The authors of Lima, Maracajá, & Mondo (2024) highlighted the collaborative characteristic in the scientific production in Brazil by analyzing the quality of services in tourism of events through a bibliometric analysis. Such researches confirm the relevance of studies in tourism and hospitality in Brazil in contemporary themes such as the Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) whose critical mass is in construction in the literature.

Attributes of the hospitality

The attributes that compose the hospitality may be considered differentials to the establishments such as hotel restaurants. They are related to the personalization, warm reception, to the special relationship, comfort and value to the client. In face of this, it is important that such establishments identify which aspects that represent the hospitality are valued by their clients/guests (Andrade & Polo, 2018).

In hotel business, the service providers are each day more willing to interact and share resources, such as time, attention and information, with the consumers, aiming at providing a more personal experience and transforming a service relation into a personal one (Järvi, 2019). In such establishments, it is noticed the presence of the hospitality when there is quality in the personalized relation between the collaborator/ service provider and te guest/ consumer. Such personalized and differentiated experience allows people to connect



themselves or even connect with each others and with the surrounding space (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Ariffin, 2013).

The personalization is perceived by guests when they feel treated as important people, by their names or by any other personal information, and, above all, respectfully, regardless of any physical or social nature (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Andrade & Polo, 2018). The more guests feel such importance, the best their evaluation regarding the hospitality of the hotel will be. In addition, the visual contact with the guests/clients during a conversation is considered one of the most important elements of the personalization of the hospitality in general (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012).

The personalization in services inside hotels is the most influential attribute of the hospitality, contributing in great part with the satisfaction of guests regarding the service as a whole, since it emphasizes more the emotional of the provided service rather than the functional perception. In addition, such experiences that come from the guided services to the emotion are difficult to be copied by the competition and, therefore, the location which are capable of offering the personalization to their clients have a competitive advantage, specially when regards hotel business (Ariffin, 2013).

In such locations, it is also possible to notice: a respectful treatment coming from the employees; looks directed to the client during the conversation and with authentic smiling; employees naturally warming, answering the clients' requests, regardless of any control or incentive; careful employees with the clients, in addition of knowing their names; employees who do not try to impress the clients (Ariffin, 2013; Andrade & Polo, 2018).

Another attribute is the warm reception, which is among the dimensions that explain the hospitality in the hotel business services. It is understood as attitudes performed during the task of welcoming the guests and includes: warm reception; opening the door to the guest; providing food, drinks or gifts at the



arrival as a way of thanking by being chosen as a place to be. Such attitudes are strategies created by part of the hotel to surprise and to create enthusiasm. Other ways of the guests to notice the warm reception happens when the hotel employee accompanies the guests up to their rooms after the check-in and, with that, performs the handling of the luggage by the hotel staff, whether at the arrival or during the way up to the room (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Ariffin et al., 2015; Andrade & Polo, 2018).

The relationship developed between the host and the client, in addition to the attention to the consumer's desires is among the main characteristics of the hospitality being considered as a special relationship (Margutti & Marques, 2021). Among the attitudes of the guests regarding their guests or clients, these can be highlighted: a good relationship built without money being the most important motivation to the location; to treat them as friends instead of clients; to understand special requests; to treat them in a way that they feel important and as if they are in their homes; in addition to receiving warm greetings when they are leaving the location (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012).

Such characteristic of the hospitality directly refers to the ability of the hotel or any other location to understand the special desires of the guests, clients or visitors to beyond the normal delivery of the service. Such especial relationship means to strengthen an exceptional treatment meaning that, in such case, the hospitality is not only in building a transactional relationship with the client, but, yes, a personal relationship, in a way that the guests are treated as friends or hotel buddies (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012).

The hospitality is an interpersonal relation, which means, a relation in which there is a social bond, based on values of solidarity and sociability, and of only the feeling of shelter and food freely consented, relation such in which the core of hospitality is highlighted (Montadon, 2011; Camargo, 2015). When hospitality is spoken, it is dealt with human relation, in which there are connections of



acceptance, inclusion of guests or clients in social spaces, relations of affection and sympathy, in addition of the emotional aspects involved (Lashley, 2008).

The hospitality of a place may also be explained by the comfort that it offers to their clients. The physical and psychological comfort are expected by the guest who stay in hotels, for example, when they enjoy the comfort, they feel very much alike as in their homes. Therefore, it is important to notice that places which provide comfort as commodity may help release the stress of their guests or clients and leave them at ease (Ariffin, 2013).

The comfort in the physical context is related to tangible factors, referring to the state where the physical environment is found and to the infrastructure of the location, if well-preserved, clean, safe and providing comfort to the clients/guests (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Kaperaviczus, 2020). On the other hand the psychological comfort refers to the emotional state or the feeling of tranquility, trust and safety during the permanence of the client in the location (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Kaperaviczus, 2020). Therefore, the comfort will make them feel as if they are at home during the time that they remain in the establishment, which is indispensable to create a memorable stay in a hotel (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012).

The consumer is part of the process of creation of value, once that it is a continuous process that emphasizes the experiences and the ability of the client to notice value from the consumption, value which is created with time, with either the use or from the client's experiences, and it appears by the physical and mental use of resources. On the other hand, the manager/service provider acts as a producer of resources and processes (services and products) for the future use of the client, which is, one is seen as a facilitator of the creation of value to one's client since he/she is the one who provides the desired/searched for benefits by the consumer (Grönroos & Voima, 2013).

Sustainability



To measure the practices of the sustainability and the ethical impacts of the investment in a business, the term ESG has been used, which refers to the environmental, social and governance policies adopted by a company (Fish, Kim & Venkatraman, 2019).

The environmental criteria may include issues such as the use of energy, was, preservation of natural resources and treatment of the animals, among others. Regarding governance, the investors wish to understand whether the company use precise data, transparent accountant methods and possibility of voting in important decisions, in addition to having the intention of avoiding the conflict of interests, for example, in the choice of members of a board of a company and illegal practices. (Fish et al., 2019).

Still on the ESG, the social criteria analyze the commercial relations of the company, as the relation with suppliers, involvement with the local community, preoccupation with the health of the company's collaborators, security of the clients and collaborators and whether the interest from different stakeholders are being taken into consideration. These are the main issues which will be deepened in this study (Fish et al., 2019).

The concerns related to the social sustainability may be divided into four criteria, as follows: Internal Human Resources, External Population, Stakeholder's Participation and Macro-social Performance (Labuschagne, Brent & Van Erck, 2005). Posteriorly, each criteria is dismembered to a better understanding of its breadth.

The first criteria, Internal Human Resources comprehends the social responsibility of the company with its working labor and includes all aspects of the job. Such criteria consists in analyzing four sub-criteria, as follows: job stability (opportunities and compensation), job practices (disciplinary and safety practices, job contracts, equity and work resources), health and security



(practices and incidents) and ability to develop (research and development and career opportunity) (Labuschagne et al, 2005).

The criteria external population emphasizes the external impacts of the operational activities of the company, and has the sub-criteria: initiatives in a society, impacts on the availability of services, cohesion of the community, economic well-being etc. It is divided in: human capital (health and education), productive capital (living facilities, infrastructure of services, infrastructure of mobility, regulatory and public services) and communal capital (sensorial stimulation, cultural property, social pathologies, security, economic well-being and social cohesion) (Labuschagne et al, 2005).

Labuschagne et al. (2005) also reinforce the criteria of the stakeholders' participation which focuses on the relations between the company and all the stakeholders (internal and external), evaluating the pattern of information sharing and its degree of influence in the decision making process. Such criteria is subdivided into the sub-criteria: provision notification (public collective, selected public) and influences (potential influence of decision and strengthening of the stakeholders).

At last, the criteria of macro-social performance emphasizes a contribution of an organization to the environmental and financial performance of a region or nation, for example, the contribution to exportation. It can be analyzed by social-economical performance, involving the economic well-being and businesses opportunities, and social-environmental performance, including monitoring, legislation and execution (Labuschagne et al, 2005).

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

this research has as goal to identify the attributes of the hospitality and practices of social sustainability in hotel restaurants that when reached will answer the guiding question of this research, as follows: which are the attributes of the hospitality and practices of social sustainability perceived by the guests



in the restaurants, located in hotels? For such investigation, the study was performed in hotels located in Brazil which received both at leisure as well as at work guests.

It is characterized as exploratory-descriptive, of qualitative character. According to Gil (2009), the descriptive and exploratory research are, generally, performed by researchers worried with the practical acting and its purpose is to know and to interpret the fact or the observed situation, being this what this research aimed at identifying which are the attributes of hospitality and the practices of social sustainability present in the restaurants located in hotels.

As a research of qualitative character, semi-structured interviews were performed (script of the interview in Chart 1) with guests from the hotels. The qualitative research has as principle the study of a phenomenon at the same time that it occurs and the search for finding both its reason as well as to interpret the meaning attributed to it by the people involved (Chizzotti, 2003).

The hotels selected for this research are world groups that act in several segments, since economical hotels up to high standard hotels. By being in several countries, these two hotel groups are inserted in several cultures, economies and policies, carrying the sustainability as agenda treated within the enterprises, fact which can be perceived by the existence of the ESG manuals in both groups.

Chart 1- Interview script

Question	Theoretical reference
1. Do you think it's important to be treated by your name at the location?	Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Ariffin (2013); Andrade & Polo (2018); Järvi (2019)



<p>2. Do you think it's that, during a conversation or request, the local staff look directly to you and express smiles or it is indifferent to you such type of attitude?</p>	<p>Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Ariffin (2013); Järvi (2019)</p>
<p>3. How do you like to be received when you arrive at a restaurant?</p>	<p>Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Andrade & Polo (2018); Ariffin et al. (2015); Andrade et al. (2020)</p>
<p>4. What do you value in an attendance in a restaurant?</p>	<p>Lashley (2008); Montadon (2011); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Camargo (2015); Margutti & Marques (2021)</p>
<p>5. How do you like to be treated in a restaurant?</p>	<p>Lashley (2008); Montadon (2011); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Camargo (2015); Margutti e Marques (2021)</p>
<p>6. Which characteristics does a good waiter/attendant should have?</p>	<p>Lashley (2008); Montadon (2011); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Camargo (2015); Margutti & Marques (2021)</p>
<p>7. What are the most common mistakes in attendance in a restaurant? Is there any specific inconvenience that you observe in an attendance in restaurants in hotels?</p>	<p>Lashley (2008); Montadon (2011); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Camargo (2015); Margutti & Marques (2021)</p>

8.Regarding comfort, what is a comfortable place to you?	Lashley (2008); Ariffin (2013); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012); Kaperaviczus et al. (2020)
9.Regarding the physical aspects, what is essential for you to feel comfortable in a restaurant?	Lashley (2008); Ariffin (2013); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012)
10.Does the physical comfort (physical and psychological) influences in the moment of choice of the location to eat?	Lashley (2008); Ariffin (2013); Ariffin & Maghzi (2012)

Source: the authors, 2024

The research was performed in November 2021, through semi-structured interviews, with eight guests. The interviewed people were ages between 23 and 56 years and who traveled for leisure or for work (Chart 2). The interviews were recorded and then transcribed.

The interviewed were selected during breakfast, and aimed at finding interviewed who had more than one meal in the restaurant. There was no limitation regarding age, profession and frequency in which the guests stayed at the enterprise. The motivation of the trips were either work or leisure.

The interviewed of the research are guests who attend hotel restaurants during the period of stay. In addition of the breakfast, they tend to have another meal (such as lunch or dinner) in such type of establishment.

Chart 2 – Characterization of the interviewed



Interviewed	Age	Profession	Frequency in which stay in hotels	Motivation of the trips	Date of the interview
E1	23 years	Engineer	Weekly	Work	11/19 /2021
E2	23 years	Intern	Twice a year	Leisure	11/20/2021
E3	32 years	Systems analyst	Four times a year	Work	11/20/2021
E4	47 years	Security agent	Monthly	Leisure and work	11/22/2021
E5	54 years	Personal organizer	Weekly	Work	11/27/2021
E6	56 years	Commercial representative	Weekly	Work	11/29/2021
E7	33 years	Company manager	Monthly	Leisure	11/04/2021



E8	46 year s	Promoter of events	Weekly	Leisure	11/04/2021
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Source The authors, 2024

It is important to highlight that the practices of social sustainability were quoted spontaneously by the interviewed, having at sight that the in the interview script, there had been no questions directed to the subject. This way, it is possible to understand from the speeches of the interviewed where they see such practices, even if in an intrinsic form.

After the gathering of data from all the interviews, they were transcribed and analyzed according to their content, crossing the answers of the interviews and comparing with the literature used in the theoretical reference. For such, the analysis of two ESG manuals were performed from two hotel chains (we will adopt the names chain A and chain B) to also identify the sustainable practices adopted in the enterprises.

The hotel chain A has 55 years of market, it is present in 110 countries in over 5,300 addresses, in addition to employing globally over 230 thousand people. It has 34 brands that go from luxury products to more economic offers. The hotel chain B is present in over 100 countries, with 5,800 hotels and 16 different brands, which attend the most varied public. Present in the global scenario, the company has over 70 years of acting.

The method employed for the analysis of the depositions was the content analysis under a qualitative perspective, which according to Bardin (2006) are techniques of communication that through a method and purposes analyze the content of the message and allows to make inference on a certain topic, with inferred variables.



For the performance of the analysis, the following steps were used: pre-analysis, exploitation of the material, treatment of the results with inference and interpretation.

First, the key points were identified in the comments, posteriorly such key points were grouped according to their resemblance, finally the units of meaning with similarity formed the categories and, therefore, such categories were analyzed, contextualized and related to the literature.

The content of the interviews was analyzed according to the following analytical categories: personalization, warm reception, special relationship, comfort and practices of social sustainability.

In such phase of the research, the following steps were observed: in the pre-analysis the gathered materials in the interviews were transcribed and a floating reading of the material in text format was performed; in the exploitation of the material a careful reading of the material was performed to identify the coding in the pre-established categories. And, at last, the treatment of the results with inference and interpretation after the careful reading of the material enabled to identify the pre-established categories to analyze throughout the depositions, which were: personalization, warm reception, special relationship, comfort (Andrade & Polo, 2018) and practices of social sustainability (Labuschagne et al, 2005).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The flavors and scents that emerged from the hotel's kitchen transported the guest to a unique gastronomic experience. By sitting to enjoy their meals, not only they satisfy their hunger, but also dive into a world of commodity, tranquility and culinary excellence. In such scenario, we will explore the reasons why the guests have chosen to taste breakfast and at least one more meal, such as lunch or dinner, in the hotel's environment.



In a study performed by Vogel et al. (2021), the aspects that the guests have most taken into consideration in the services of food and drinks in a hotel are the physical aspects, quality of the food and service providers, being the quality of the food (variety, flavor, issues of food safety and presentation) the most mentioned. In addition, the sector of restoration is of great important in hotel business, since it offers the guest the commodity of performing the meals without having to leave to other locations (Barbosa, Silva & Farias, 2018). The interviewed guests generally attend hotel restaurants alone, when they are traveling for business, or accompanied by their family members, when traveling for leisure.

The interviewed also reported that they noticed the difference between the services of an ordinary restaurant when compared to a hotel restaurant, as for example: "Hotel restaurants are more personalized, the care is different with the client" (E1); "The staff of the hotel restaurants are way more attentive" (E2); "The attendance in hotel restaurants is differentiated, it has a greater nurturing" (E5) and "The hotel staff is warmer, seems as they were trained to please the client" (E8). Such hospitality may be seen as a competitive differential of the companies that provide such type of service (Quadros, 2011).

Regarding the attribute personalization, the interviewed were divided regarding a more individualized and personalized treatment, in a way that part of them believe that it is important to be treated by their names, meanwhile others find it indifferent, valuing respect and the way they are treated. On the other hand, all interviewed think that it is interesting when the employees refer directly to them, looking in the eye and expressing authentic smiles. "I think it is important to be treated by my name in the location. It is interesting when an employee looks directly at me and expresses a smile, it is a sign of attention to the client" (E1).

In places where there is the personalization in attendances, it is possible to notice a respectful treatment coming from the staff of the location, when looks



are directed to the client during the conversation and with authentic smiles, being, therefore, naturally warm, showing care with the clients and knowing their names, never trying to impress (Ariffin, 2013; Andrade & Polo, 2018).

When arriving at the restaurants, the respondents of the research showed that they like to be welcomed with attention, sympathy, availability, naturally, welcome reception and even with a covert: “I like to be received with greetings, such as ‘Good evening’, ‘Good afternoon’, ‘Good morning’, ‘Are you all right, Sr.?’” (E6); “I like to be received with attention and availability of the staff” (E1). Such aspects have shown the location’s hospitality. In the hotel business, such ritual of reception or welcome includes: warm greetings, opening the door to the guests, providing beverages, food or gifts at the arrival as a way of acknowledgment by choosing that location to be (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Ariffin et al., 2015; Andrade & Polo, 2018). The way to receive and welcome guests and clients is one of the marked approaches, in a way that to receive is the most obvious ritual related to hospitality (Ariffin et al., 2015).

In the documental analysis performed in the ESG manuals of the two hotel chains (named as chain A and chain B), it was possible to identify which criteria and sub-criteria of social sustainability are adopted, according to what is shown in Chart 3. From this, it was verified in the interviews of the guests where they perceive such practices of social sustainability.

Chart 3 – Approaches of social sustainability by hotel chain

Chain A	Chain B
To train the staff	To train the staff
To adopt policies of human rights protection	To adopt policies of human rights protection
To offer a safe working environment	To fight “modern slavery” / human traffic



To offer compensation and tool to career development	To offer a safe working environment
To work hand in hand with the local community – to be actively involved in the local communities surrounding the hotels	To offer compensation and tool to career development
To act as an inclusive company to its collaborators	To co-innovate with partners to open new work paths
To involve the guests in a sustainable experience	To work hand in hand with the local community – to actively involve the local communities surrounding the hotels
To encourage the diversity and inclusion: “refugees are talent”, “generational equality”, “feminine foundation”, “LGBTI+”	To encourage the diversity and inclusion: “refugees are talent”, “generational equality”, “feminine foundation”, “LGBTI+”
To inspire and empower all the stakeholders	To protect the identity and personal information of the guests
To encourage social growth	To ensure safety and protection of the privacy of the guests
To practice sympathy	
To fight sexual violence	
To include disabled people in its chart of collaborators	



To put people at the core of the strategy – to be a company guided to people	
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Source: The authors, 2024

Within the approaches of the ESG manuals, it was possible to identify that the guests highlight the staff training, as quoted by the interviewed E8 “The people of the hotel are warm, it seems as if they were trained to please the client”. This is an aspect of sustainability present in both manuals of the hotel chains. In social sustainability, there are concerns with Internal Human Resources, which means, the social responsibility of the company with its staff, including all the aspects of the job, being within the guidance of the work practices, which are transmitted in training and guidance and among them are the discipline, the conducts of the staff, the safety practices and the work contracts (Labuschagne et al, 2005).

During the permanence in hotel restaurants, the interviewed valued the attentions, congeniality, availability and education of the staff of the location, good attendance and knowledge of the waiters regarding the menu, in addition to the cleaning and organization of the location. The interviewed reported the importance of the attendants being happy and satisfied with their jobs and enjoyed what they are doing, which reflects they way that they play their role and treat the clients: “I value the good attendance and education. A good waiter should be happy, enjoy what one does, should separate the personal life from the professional one and with that attend the client well” (E4).

In the previous speech, it was possible to notice the social sustainability, when the company takes care of the employee, providing a safe work environment and, with that, it let the satisfaction of its work show and in being part of the company. Such point is approached in the ESG manuals analyzed from the



two hotel chains and it is present in the study of Labuschagne et al (2005), in which it is stated that internal human resources comprehend the social responsibility of the company to its work strength and includes all the aspects of the job.

Another positive point highlighted in enterprises located inside hotels was the privacy: “I like to be treated with privacy” (E6). The “protection of the guests information”, promoting the protection of the identity and personal information and the “security and privacy of the guests”, procedures to be followed to ensure the security of the guests and protect their privacy, being, also, approaches present in the ESG manuals of the hotel chains. The security of the clients is a social criteria used when the relations in a company are analyzed (Fish et al., 2019). When analyzed under the perspective of the hospitality, the security may also be understood as an obligation of the host to the guest (Gotman, 2019).

The relationship developed between the host and the guest, in addition to the attention to the desires of such consumer, is among the main characteristics of the hospitality (Margutti & Marques, 2021), after all, when one talks about hospitality, one is talking about human relations, in which there are connections of acceptance, inclusion of the guests or clients in social spaces, relations of affection and congeniality, in addition to emotional aspects. The quality of the emotions coming from the quality of the staff's performance in the locations and the hospitality are responsible for generating the clients' satisfaction in the long run and, therefore, their loyalty (Lashley, 2008).

Such relationship may be analyzed by the optic of the several stakeholders of the restaurant, such as the staff, the suppliers, the community and the clients, having at sight that the act of strengthening such relations may happen through some small attitudes during such interaction, as portrayed by the interviewed E3: “A comfortable place is a place where there is no pressure of the attendants with the clients”.



In addition, the hospitality of a place may be also explained by the comfort that it offers, being in such matter, important to report the fact that the hospitality is provided to a guest (client or guest, in such case) that is outside of one's home by a guest (service provider), involving a provider and a receptor, going through tangible (physical comfort) and intangible (psychological comfort) (Lashley, 2008).

In hospitable environments that offer comfort to their clients, the provider promotes infrastructure, cleaning and maintained environments, in addition to a sensation of tranquility and trust (Lashley, 2008). The comfort in the physical context is related to tangible factors, such as the state in which the physical environment is found, infrastructure, state of conservation, cleaning and security. On the other hand, the psychological comfort refers to the emotional state or feeling of tranquility, trust and security during the stay in the location (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012; Kaperaviczus, 2020).

The findings of these research are in agreement with the argument from such authors, in a way that the interviewed guests valued comfortable places, which present proper chair, tables in consistent height, locations without much noise, calm, ventilated, with good lighting and pleasant temperature, with well-groomed professionals and with clean uniforms.

The interviewed reported that the physical and psychological comfort influence the moment of choosing a place to have a meal, after all, comfort makes people feel as if they are at home during the period in the establishment and to feel this is indispensable to create a memorable stay in the location. This way, in hospitable environments which offer comfort to their clients, the provider promotes infrastructure, cleanliness and maintained environments, in addition to a feeling of tranquility and trust (Ariffin & Maghzi, 2012).

When there is an attention focused on the essence and the operationalization of tourism and of the hotel sector, it is noticeable the presence of important



and needed elements to such sectors. In a way that the traditional mass consumption and the imbalance of the environmental and social dynamic in visited places just stop existing. Enabling, therefore, the repositioning of the production and of the tourism consumption, increasing the commitment of the companies, tourists and of the society in general, with the environmental and social issues (Almeida & Sonaglio, 2024).

In face of this, restaurants should be prepared to receive the clients, who should feel welcome, and the locations should ensure safe working conditions to all staff, reminding the importance of leaving perceptible to the eyes of the clients all such care (Ali, 2020).

In addition, through the reports from the guests, it was possible to verify that the client is able to spontaneously identify characteristics of social sustainability in the establishments, as, for example, the training performed by the staff, the safe working environment to the staff, the privacy and effort to offer a safe environment to the guests (Labuschagne et al., 2005).

CONCLUSION

Exploring the literature of the hospitality and the commitment with social sustainability, the article directed its focus to identify which the attributes are of hospitality and practices of social sustainability present in restaurants located in hotels. The purpose was to reveal the characteristics that define the hospitality offered and the sustainable practices adopted in such establishments.

Through the interviews performed with the guests that attend restaurants in hotels, it was possible to notice the personalization, warm reception, comfort and special relationship that are part of the attributes which the guests considered as important in a hotel restaurant.



The care with the client, the greater nurturing and the staff training were valued by the interviewed guests. According to Labuschagne et al. (2005), the participation of the stakeholders focuses on the relations between the company and all the stakeholders (internal and external), being in such case possible to observe a relation between the staff and the clients.

The social sustainability treated in the analyzed ESG manuals from the two hotel chains was also a point of highlight in the answers of the interviewed. The privacy of the clients and the protection of their data are social criteria that allow to analyze the commercial relations of the company, being that among them is the security of the clients (Fish et al., 2019). The preoccupation with nurturing, protection and safety are also highlighted by the optic of the hospitality (Gotman, 2019).

The care of the company with the employee was another point of highlight in the speeches of the interviewed, having at sight that the client notices when the company provides a safe working environment and the employee let the satisfaction transparent and in being part of the company.

These social aspects quoted by the interviewed are approached in the ESG manuals of the hotel chains selected to this study and are present in several studies quoted throughout this article.

The purpose of the research was reached and it was noticed that the restaurants located inside hotels should in fact get to know the real and potential clients/guests and understand what these people value. Therefore, it is possible to offer products and services according to the expectations and needs, in addition to manage the social relations with all the stakeholders. The adoption of ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) policies together with the attributes of hospitality may be a competitive differential to the companies, increasing their market value (Ionescu et al, 2019).



At last, it is important to highlight as limitation of the research the amount of the interviewed. Guests from hotels of a certain region of Brazil were interviewed, which may represent a difference regarding the hotel guests from other regions. In addition, the interviews from this study did not treat directly the aspects of social sustainability approached in the manuals of the hotel chains, if so, it could have been provided a better understanding of the perceptions of the clients regarding such matter. In face of this, for future studies, a higher number of interviewed and the performance of this study in other regions is proposed. In addition, studies that offer an approach beyond social issues, for example, the governmental and environmental in the tourism sector will contribute to the development and the amplitude of the debate of ESG in Brazil, specially, in tourism.

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