



The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search

<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>

aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

No endorsement of AgEcon Search or its fundraising activities by the author(s) of the following work or their employer(s) is intended or implied.

Sustainability as a Contingency Variable for Tourist Activities: A Theoretical Discussion

Cristiane Salome Ribeiro Costa

Universidade Federal de Pernambuco
csrcoستا@yahoo.com.br

Salomão Alencar de Farias

Universidade Federal de Pernambuco
saf@ufpe.br

Renata Oliveira

Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco
renata@dadm.ufrpe.br

ABSTRACT: The issue of sustainability has been gaining space and importance in studies, and represents an external variable that affects organizational activities and obliges companies to adjust their conservation actions. In the tourism sector, such adjustments have become more important because activities that accelerate environmental and social degradation are more noticeable and occur in the short term. The main objective of this article is to provide a theoretical investigation into the influence of the sustainability on tourist activities. We suggest that the sustainability concerning is a remarkable contingent variable to these activities, in order to portray it as an important issue for formation strategies for the sector.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations profile their structures by virtue of the strategies adopted (Chandler, 1998). Their perspective is to reach the market demands, as a result to achieve competitive advantage, and thus superior performance and above-average returns (Ghemawat, 1998). Investigations have been conducted into the external environment in an attempt to match actions with market needs (Grönroos, 2004; Blackwell, Miniard & Angel, 2005; Solomon, 2006). The result is a better positioning of the organization which may allow to direct, in the most appropriate way, actions in the industry in which it operates and to outdo the competition (Porter, 1986).

However, some of these actions have caused severe damage to the environment and society (Pettigrew, 2007). The unprincipled search to gain competitive advantage or simply to increase profitability has led to the indiscriminate use of resources which mainly arise from the format of the production process, from seeking increased consumption, which does not represent need, and pursuing new markets without sustainable planning (Porter & Van der Linde, 2003; Chung et al, 2009).

As a consequence, the debate and research about the current economic model has intensified as it has also on the role that organizations play in reducing these problems (Misoczky & Andrade, 2005; Vieira & Caldas, 2006). Even with satisfactory economic results, as reported by Foladori (2005), organizations should concern themselves with how these funds are obtained and how much it costs to the environment and society.

To this end, Buarque (2008) points the tripod, the foundations of the sustainability, the economic, environmental and social areas, which together is identified as an equilibrium so that organizations may establish their financial gains while taking care of the environment and social well-being (Porter & Van der Linde, 2003). Sustainability is understood as being the "ability of a model or system to sustain itself in evolutionary dynamics without allowing any sector to sink into crises in such a way that it will reach them all" (Ruscheinsky, 2003). Therefore, this indicates the possibility of satisfying the needs of the present without adversely affecting the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs (Brundtland, 1987; Buarque, 2008). The trend towards integration of sustainability concepts into

legislation changes the environment that firms operate in and the nature of competition (Silveria & Souza, 2010).

Stirred into action by this theme, stakeholders play an important role which is applying pressure so as to require more appropriate actions in order to preserve the environment and maintain social values (Sachs, 2007). Thus, the external environment imposes a series of demands on the organization, to which it cannot remain indifferent, for the sake of the performance and productivity (Motta & Vasconcelos, 2002). Therefore, sustainability appears as a contingency-setting variable to define the structure and organizational strategies. This issue is corroborated by Orsato (2002) when he warns that companies draw up actions targeting sustainability, there is a need to construct strategies and shape the organization to the precepts of theory.

On relating this specifically to the tourism industry, this pressure becomes even greater. This is because this industry has been deemed to be one of the activities that most modify and exploit the place in which they are located because of actions that make the infrastructure viable for the development of the activity (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2002). It is important to highlight that these data derives mainly due to the growth that this industry has shown in recent years (see: LE, 2005). According to World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2010), tourism activities raised an average of 7%, in comparison to the year before, which represents a relevant contribution for the economy of the countries. The income growth, lower prices of raw materials and the global availability of information have been identified as a major factor for growth in the industry.

Thus, a major concern of agencies is about how such activities are being developed. There is, therefore, a greater need to match these to market demands because of the dependency relationship they have with the external environment. Research results on sustainability indicate that, when companies of this industry use the principles of the theme, this allows the quality of life to be improved for the people who are around the company in addition to which it preserves resources for future generations (Buarque, 2008). When the tenets of sustainability are used properly, the industry's activities allow various other actions to be disseminated, thus enhancing the well-being of society, by means of injecting resources that expand the basic infrastructure and that of access, improve financial earnings and increase the offer of

jobs to the local population (Oliveira, 2008).

It is in this context that many tourism organizations begin to demonstrate a important interest in the issue, basically as a response to two core pressures: consumer demand for tourism that is more socially and environmentally responsible and the threat of government regulation (Becken, 2007). Sustainability is presented as a variable that is able to influence the strategic actions of the organization in the tourism industry (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999; Mick, 2006). The main objective of this article is to engage on a theoretical discussion of the existing relationship between sustainability and the tourism industry in the light of contingency theory, and thus to demonstrate that the former appears as a contingency-setting variable for the latter. In the issues that follow, what will be tackled are the theoretical concepts on the issue that comprise relating the central objective of the article.

Contingency theory

In the pursuit of superior performance, organizations begin to observe the environment and to adapt their actions to respond to the changes external to the organization. For Donaldson (1999), this activity can be explained by contingency theory. The contingency approach focuses on variations in corporate behavior to face up different environmental conditions. Setting out from a sociology of regulation, contingency theory is defined by how the adaptation of the organization occurs so that it fits itself to the environment (Morgan, 1996). The central point of the analysis of organizations from the perspective of contingency theory is to identify which structural aspects need to be modeled in order to achieve a suitable fit in line with these environmental factors.

Lawrence and Lorsch (1973) found that at the start of using management theories (see: Motta & Vasconcelos, 2002), its administrators were led to consider only the inner workings of companies, without observing the external environment as an important factor for change or developing activities for the market. In fact, what was not given attention was how important the different external conditions could be at the moment of defining how and what activities would be carried out in companies (Hall, 2004). Most research on the theory of organizations at the time focused on a single best method of organizing in all situations, with respect to a company's processes and activities and the

demands of the external environment (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1973; Bertero, 1999).

With the rise in research, since there was an acceleration in the pace of technological change, in which the complexity of processes and products was amplified, contingency theory brought direction as to questioning what kind of organization the company should become so it could deal with different environmental conditions (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1973; Donaldson, 1999; Hall, 2004). These studies were one of the large inducements towards generating a point of view that organizations are not closed environments, which must interact with the environment and receive relevant information to decide on issues related to strategies that the company should follow (Misoczky, 2003).

Therefore, macro-environmental conditions came to be regarded as relevant factors at the moment of defining how to offer products and services, to whom they would be offered and in what way the organization could be adjusted to outmatch such demand (Misoczky, 2003). The study of the macro-environment brought the perspective that variables existing in the market required different models of organization that could guarantee the survival of an organization in the long-term (Child, 1972). Such factors can be identified as cultural, technological, legal, social, demographic, and environmental variables and there are others (Porter, 1986). Based on this analysis, contingency theory went on to examine the relationship between the structural variable (formalization, rules, standards and organizational structures; visible and explicit elements) and environmental ones, represented by the external dynamics of the market.

In hypercompetitive environments, with great rivalry and actions of external agents, the organization assumes the posture of a living entity which is able to adapt and evolve as well as to transform the reality that surrounds it. The impact of the environmental aspects is inherent throughout the analysis of the authors, given the need to conduct a survey of this environment and to fit the organizational structure to it. To configure and direct the process of conversion of resources in order to optimize the achievement of the objectives is the general problem of corporate activities (Ansoff, 1973).

The continuous adaptation of the organization to its environment and its internal adjustment to the

characteristics of this under the threat of suffering the process of entropy becomes the main matrix of the analysis of contingency theory (Donaldson, 1987; Motta & Vasconcelos, 2002). To do so, different variables should be considered such as culture, individual and organizational values, expectations of the suppliers of resources, dissemination of power and communication channels and components of the management model in developing the strategy and organizational structure (Child, 1972).

Reinforcing this Woodward (1997) found that a technological change in the environment implied an organizational change. According to her, specific characteristics of the organizational structure such as the design of tasks, management activities and communication channels (in different organizational contexts), are altered by the changes occurring in the external environment, and the consequence of this is the change in company's strategy so that it promptly act and respond to new market demand (Motta & Vasconcelos, 2002; Woodward, 1997).

Chandler (1998) also stressed the influence of the external environment on company's strategy when he mentioned the reasons why Du Pont, General Motors, Standard Oil and Sears "expanded their businesses, assumed new functions, entered new lines of activity, and why each of these initiatives demanded a new model of management" (Chandler, 1998, p.129). Through his empirical studies, originally published in 1962, Chandler (1998) proved that such companies developed strategies followed by the specific organizational structure (multidivisional), in the sense of better directing the company's resources to market demands. Presenting this, he argued that organizations need to establish a narrow adjustment between strategy, structure and the conditions of the external environment in order to achieve the targeted performance in their objectives.

Therefore, in addition to attesting to the importance of the macro-environment for organizational definitions, the reviewed literature showed that companies should be in constant exchange with external perspectives in order to make the appropriate changes on management and strategy structure and that this adaptation should occur constantly. Donaldson (1999) described this action as the model SARFIT (structural adaptation to regain fit). For him, if an initially adjusted organization has its contingency altered, it will become unfit to the environment, suffering a decline in performance;

that leads to the adoption of a new structure so that the fitness is re-acquired and performance restored. As presented before, the contingency theory of the organization states that business characteristics need to match the level of contingency variables in order to have a superior performance, and this organizational fit occurs when "an organization shifts itself by changing its characteristics from those that do not fit to those that do, given an environmental change" (Donaldson, 1999, p. 387).

Social and environmental sustainability

Currently, environmental issues, the costs of resources and their scarcity for future generations are one of the world's major concerns. In fact, some years ago, specific interest groups were created to discuss environmental issue and they strongly influenced academic field and the formulation of public policies (Harris, 2000). The effects of environmental degradation on society, especially in developed countries, were among the main factors that prompted these issues to be raised in the academic field. In the early 90s, the debate was deepened on creating several events that allowed not only sustainable issues to be discussed but also to propose actions that could alleviate and prevent the continuation of the negative effects of using resources indiscriminately (Rio 92, Kyoto Protocol, Rio +10, etc.) (Baroni, 1992; Harris, 2000).

Over time, the sustainability issue has gone in more depth discussions and has begun to emerge in several academic and public speeches (Aligleri, Aligleri, & Kruglianskas, 2009). Inside this perspective, sustainable development started to be built, which means the possibility of satisfying present needs without adversely affecting the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs (Brundtland, 1987; Buarque, 2008). The concept of sustainable development refers to a new approach of resource limits and to recognizing the fragility of the planet. At the same time, it focuses is on socio-economic problems and satisfying the populations basic needs.

The large difference between the former debates about environmental issue and sustainability theme is that the perspective came out at the end of the production chain (Nascimento, 2005). Aligleri, Aligleri, and Kruglianskas (2009) show that the residues coming from eliminating products increase degradation of the environment, and the way to solve these problems is not simply by recovering the waste

eliminated, but rather in dealing with the whole life cycle of the product up to its being discarded by the consumer. Therefore, the focus stopped to be just about waste treatment and has come to prominence at the ecological damage by the pollutants emission (Layrargues, 2000). The production management has change existing practices and creates new production and management systems (Linton, Klassen & Jayaraman, 2007).

Foladori (2005) adds that there is some difficulty in achieving sustainable development, because of three different dimensions: productions process, consumerism and poverty. The first one is related to inefficient and "dirty" technologies, which have been responsible for environmental degradation. Consumption levels are co-responsible for wastes generating and for inequality between the access to goods and services. Finally, poverty is considered as the central aspect of the causes of environmental degradation, because the lack of capital leads to degradation of natural resources and, consequently, some populations are obliged to live in more degraded places (facing diseases, impoverished soils, degraded resources, lack of drinking water, etc.).

Related to production process and consumerism, organizations play a fundamental role in preserving and changing consumption patterns. But, about poverty, there is disagreement among authors as to identifying who was responsible. According to Elkington (2001), companies are co-responsible for the levels of poverty, since they encourage uncontrolled consumption, while it remunerates their employees disproportionately. For Foladori (2005) and Machado Filho (2006), the blame is on the government due the absence of appropriate investments for society.

There is a need to consider that the high rate of consumption may generate social and environmental degradation of large proportions and has begun to concern individuals, companies and nations. This puts a question mark on the future of humanity, if current levels of consumption, exploitation of resources and energy should continue the same way as it is in nowadays (Buarque, 2008). The question is how to balance the need to protect the environment and society with the economic charges naturally generated by this protection.

In fact, the sustainable discussion has included the important stakeholder's roles to improve sustainable

activities inside the firms that are represented by government, customers and social activists (Matos & Hall, 2007). The stakeholders have the power to influence the companies operation in adaptive efforts way to change traditional production process which can decrease damage in social and environmental field (Nascimento, 2005). A company's policies may adapt to social pressures and then once an innovation is introduced.

However, as mentioned by Orsato's (2002) warns, the organization needs to fit the sustainable activities process in organizational strategy level aiming to define structure and potential outcomes. The environmental strategies are designed to help executives a strategic environmental positioning for their respective organizations, which are: productivity of the resources by optimizing the natural resources in the process; besides legal compliance, to develop more actions than simply meet the legal demand; ecologically oriented products by using recycled and recyclable materials; and, leadership in environmental costs in the using resources reduction to bring financial benefits (Orsato, 2002; Corbett & Klassen, 2006; Wu & Pagell, 2011).

Thus, the companies should pursue strategies sustainable which combination of factors of production (economic efficiency), environment (environmental conservation) and people's quality of life (social equity, respect for cultural identity, work relationships, and so forth) (Nascimento, 2008). However, to maximize the sustainable performance inside the firms involves complex interactions and presents several structural forms of resistance (Nascimento, 2008). Some segments are more influenced by the need the external environment adaption. This occurs because of the interaction that they keep up to match their activities and maintain performance, as well as to offer services. They also have an important role in achieving actions of sustainability because they are largely responsible for social and environmental development at the site in which they are placed. One of these segments is tourism, which will be dealt with in the topic below.

Tourism and sustainability

In academic field, tourism has being indicated as a sector with great potential for generating wealth for a specific location, particularly as a result of monitoring changes in the economy and consumer behavior (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2002). With the

alteration in the format of management and of the structure of the tourism industry, what has been seen to improve local development, it has being the target of attention from governments and other authorities responsible for planning public policies (Oliveira, 2007). Regarding tourism in Brazil, which is characterized as having low indices of development compared to developed nations, it is at the same time considered to have a great tourism potential given its natural beauty spots and the growing volume of business conducted between national and international companies. Thus, since one of the many government's strategies is to foster local economic development, in Brazil it has devoted a greater share of the resources set aside to develop local economies by investing more in local tourism (Oliveira, 2007).

The assertion that tourism may in fact be a vector of development has permeated many speeches. Under this line of thinking, concerns about sustainability took shape and began to permeate tourism activities. This has become more worrisome as tourist activity is looked at in the light of its threatening to destroy the environment, segregating and excluding the indigenous natives from the whole planning process and in the long run, argue-scale sequestration of their land from the general population. In the last ten years or so, what "has emerged more prominently is the concern about the negative effects of mass tourism, mainly on the most vulnerable, least developed communities" (Hazin, Oliveira, & Medeiros, 2001, p. 5). Before this, the authors continue, "the focus was concentrated on the advantages of financial gains and the increase in jobs for local people."

The multidimensionality of tourism has been discussed as a potential for developing sites in a more sustainable manner (Clarke, 1997). However, there is a need to reflect on the environmental, social and economic impacts involved. The problem is that, in most cases, the focus on the economic dimension of tourism causes profoundly adverse effects at the resort which contributes to the decline of tourism activity from the local population due to price increases in services (Rodríguez, López, & Estévez, 2007).

It is in this context that many tourism organizations have begun to take an interest in the subject. However, it was basically in response to two main pressures: the consumer demand for a more socially and environmentally responsible form of tourism, and the threat of government regulation (Cooper, 2001; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2002).

Thus, government and people began to push the industry into making sustainable actions viable. As tourist activities are largely responsible for local development, there is concern that the empowerment of regional resources may incur a degradation of the environment (Pomering, Noble, & Johnson, 2011). Policies and activities of tourism organizations and professional groups that drive the norms of conduct also influence sustainable activities in tourist areas (Driscoll, Lawson, & Niven, 1994; Clarke, 1997).

The negative socio-cultural effects resulted of the tourist flow seems to be more severe on the local population in less developed regions (Salvia Tomás, 1999 apud Hazin, 2001). What managers seem not know, when analysing tourism from the perspective of local development, is what kind exactly of tourism should be developed in order to provide this development and how this activity should be managed in an integrated way with the economic environment; it is a strong tool for development (Merige, 2005). According with the author, the less developed regions should adopt a form of tourism that would be more appropriate to the conditions of the community and natural resources. However, what really happens are deployed activities from large tourist complexes, applying a model that does not fit the standards of the region. The result is a distortion of the community cultural values, increasing social and environmental problems and bad impact on economic gain in the medium and long term.

It is along this route that is important to clarify the concept of tourism. Hunziker and Krapf, in 1942 (apud Beni, 1998, p.38) defined tourism, holistically, as "The sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the trip and the length of stay of non-residents, to the extent that this does not lead to permanent residence and is not related to any remunerative activity "

Given this diagnosis, strategies and actions that aim at sustainability of the site become a tool for overcoming these difficulties, as well as the possibility of seeing to it that such difficulties are avoidable (Rodríguez, López, & Estévez, 2007). It is widely known that the tourism industry uses forces from the external environment to make its actions appropriate and thereby to define structures and monitor performance. This proves to be strongest when it comes to sustainability. Swarbrooke and Horner (2002) tackle this well. Today it can be pointed out that the tourism industry reflects the positioning

of the stakeholders regarding sustainable actions, especially as to the supply of the most appropriate products and services (Lee, Hsub, Han & Kim, 2010).

The influence of sustainability on tourism in the light of contingency theory

The contingency-setting variable of sustainability brings about a greater pressure for the adjustment of companies in the tourism industry. Tourism activities are indicated as being both benevolent and malevolent for the preservation of the environment and local social values. Beneficial because tourist activities are largely responsible for the growth of a particular region, with respect to financial movement, people migration and infrastructure investments by the public sector (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2002). Nevertheless, those activities are also responsible for environmental degradation, especially in the case of mass tourism, without proper organization that can damage local culture as a way to offer better service to foreign tourists, for instance (Clarke, 1997). Thus, private and governmental regulators agencies must have a true concern about how such activities are being developed.

The multidimensionality of tourism activity has been discussed in different ways and there is a delineation of stronger regulatory norms to control the activities of the sector. The problem is that the greater focus on the economic dimension in tourism brings profound environmental damage and contributes to the decline of local tourism activity (Sharpely, 2000). It becomes more noticeable in this field because of the proximity to nature and local community. It is necessary to reflect on the environmental, social and economic impacts inherent in the tourism activity. Given this diagnosis, strategies and actions that aim at the sustainability of the site become tools for overcoming these difficulties, as well as for the possibility of seeing to it that they are avoidable (Rodríguez, López, & Estévez, 2007).

This way, sustainability has become a contingency-setting variable for the organizational activities of this sector. Sustainability can be a contingency variable because of pressure from stakeholders, represented mainly by the government and regulators, consumers and activists groups (Clarke, 1997; Lee, Hsub, Han & Kim, 2010). Such pressure leads to new companies needs in order to innovate their services through the decrease of natural exploitation and the social resources.

The position of the government and regulators currently begins to draw up stricter norms. The rules and regulations which are imposed lead companies to develop touristic activities concerning the environment, community and local culture. According to Le (2005) and Martins (2005), governments and regulators carry a strong power to influence companies in the tourism sector in order to build its activities always protecting or repairing environmental damage, such as the construction of resorts or hotels. In addition, that rules influence companies to provide job training for the residents, integrating them to the local economic environment. However, according Aligleri, and Aligleri Kruglianskas (2009), the work to fit to the rules and regulations can bring increased firm costs. To avoid the higher costs, companies begin to implement innovation in the production process (Silveira & Sousa, 2010). It is possible coming from changes in the product production with sustainable practices (Awaysheh & Klassen, 2010; Wu & Pagell, 2011). It implies that a broad and complex range way to work. In general, environmental and social management includes green product design, green supplier development, proper waste disposal, safe working conditions for employees, recycling products and using recycled products, environmentally friendly cultivation techniques for saving water and energy, choosing green suppliers, and ever more (Awaysheh & Klassen, 2010).

Thus, innovation seek becomes constant. According Porter and Van der Linde (2003), the innovation allows companies to optimize the production process by the possibility to improve raw materials utilization. Many companies in touristic sector have emerged offering services with principles of sustainability and offering activities that are linked to maintaining the environment and interaction with the local.

Moreover, sustainability actions are guiding tourist choice of companies and sites to go (Wood & House, 1991, Lakhani, 2007). The consumers' first choice is sustainable brand companies (Cater & Lowman, 1994) and they are willing to pay premium prices and less price-sensitive for sustainable services. Through digital technology tools, the information about sustainability is coming fast, making consumers are more aware of the negative actions that may occur and end up exerting pressure on companies to be more sustainable (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2010). This pressure may occur when consumers avoid buying with the touristic company

not sustainable and even propagating negative by digital media action for other consumer groups. Consumers are seeking for hotels and bread & breakfast that apply efforts to electric power save, water consumption reduce, respect local culture, empower and offer jobs for community from touristic destination and be tolerant of increases in price (Mick, 2008; Yee, Yeung & Cheng, 2008). In this way, the proactive environmental management perspective posits that appropriate strategies can enhance company competitiveness. The companies can lose costumers if they don't fit the organization to match the demands of sustainability in the long run will.

The same occurs from activist groups, who share the negative social and environmental impacts by organizations. In this sense, companies tend to manage sustainability variables internally to avoid a negative market image. Reputation can provide effect on the touristic services organization that positively influences customer evaluation (Yee, Yeung & Cheng, 2008).

It is important to note that sustainable goals just can be achieved with the consumer service management since arrival at touristic destination until return to home. Therefore, sustainable strategic planning must be designed to allocate production resource in all the levels consumer service process. Butler (2004) points out that planning should be done in continuum way at touristic destination. The author argues that the model helps managers to keep the development of the touristic place based on emphasis on the community and environmental respect, through tourist attractions' load capacity observation (Butler, 2004).

Conclusions

The principles of sustainability, explained by Brundtland (1987), Elkington (2001) and Buarque (2008), seek the achievement of sustainable development beyond balance social, economic and environmental dimensions. Such as presenting studies, environmental degradation is been informed by the all technology media which point negatives effects beyond indiscriminate use of resources. And it seems to be greater for companies with a high-contact services, like touristic field. From the assumptions, tourist activities begin to be questioned because work exploring the natural and social resources (Ruscheinsky, 2003). The new challenges of global competitiveness which are

situated at this point and most types of strategic planning are being built in this way (Porter, 1986).

The theoretical discussion promoted in this paper highlights that, in the long term, sustainability as a contingency variable leads companies conserving resources in production process and preserve local culture that they are included. The stakeholders pressure to firms to improve sustainable practices (Awaysheh & Klassen, 2010). In the long run, companies that work with tourist activities will adjust their actions to ensure that they do not lose in performance and in competitive advantage, and this includes fostering innovation in the industry. Seeing this trend, many companies are now engaged on this and modify their structures to welcome a client who is more involved with sustainability (Oliveira, 2007). Otherwise, if companies do not match up sustainability will lose competitive advantage gain (Porter & Van der Linde, 2003).

The strategies can vary quite significantly between different standards and frameworks. However go well beyond quality and other performance (Wu & Pagell, 2011). When sustainability logic are been used appropriately in touristic field, allow to improve the well-being of society, financial earnings and increase the jobs offer to local population beyond injecting resources to enrich basic infrastructure (Oliveira, 2008). It includes environment, diversity, safety, human rights and improving working conditions. In this way, local people, who lives in the same company context, to get high quality of life (Buarque, 2008). Moreover, customer's perception about sustainability in tourist activities became improved and generates more future sales and increases the reputation of the firm.

A point to be discussed is related to the limitation that sustainability as a contingency variable may exert on companies. In the case of Brazilian government, for instance, there is a limitation of the norms and regulations for the waste treatment. Little implication for the production process occurs. This may lead a false strategy for reducing the emission of pollutants just to avoid a higher cost from fines. At the same time, the lack of observation by the consumer on how the company develops its activities can make work with a positive image ends up being beneficial to the company, even if it does nothing for nature and society.

Regardless these limitations, the discussions about sustainable is growing. Moreover, sustainable

theme is gaining more importance about the influence on companies. Thus, there is no denying the important role that sustainability is about building and implementing sustainable strategies for businesses.

Regarding the theory explanation submitted in this investigation, there are some limitations relative the observed variables. The first one is about the study theoretical approximation. Empirical research being needed to determine if in fact tourist organizations are developing management activities related to sustainability and how implementing these actions is happening (Pomeroy, Noble, & Johnson, 2011; Wu & Pagell, 2011). Despite the citation of various authors who justify the issue, empirical research could expand knowledge and provide information on the reality of the companies in the tourism industry on this relationship and to state if sustainability is really a contingency-setting variable (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2002).

The second one, sustainability just be reached with linkage with other variables that bring out the potential of its on companies' influence. It is necessary to investigate this variable together with other dimensions which may also comprise the external environment in an attempt to figure out the degree of impact that sustainability causes in these companies. For example, it is possible that the consumers affect different kinds of touristic activities in manners and intensity different. At a higher level, representing the other extreme of the continuum, strategies are formed by people and it is indeed they who seek objectives (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1973).

In addition, since there are so many contingencies, and of such an order, the dynamism of the contingency factors, the flexibility and the adaptability of organizational structures, they are certainly more opportune issues, since the survival of the companies in the environment which is currently being constantly reoriented depends on them (Coelho & Coelho, 2003). As investigated by Lawrence and Lorsch (1973), while we can point out that sustainability is used as a contingency-setting variable, it is not possible to state that all organizations will position themselves or use the guidelines of sustainability in the same way.

References

- Aligleri, L., Aligleri, L., & Kruglianskas, I. (2009). *Gestão Socioambiental: responsabilidade e sustentabilidade do negócio*. SP: Atlas.
- Ansoff, H. I. (1973). *Business strategy*. Great Britain: Perguin Books.
- Awaysheh, A., & Klassen, R. (2010). The impact of supply chain structure on the use of suppliersocially responsible practices. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 30 Iss: 12 pp. 1246 – 1268.
- Baroni, M. (1992). Ambiguidades e deficiências do conceito de desenvolvimento sustentável. *RAE*. São Paulo, n. 32, v. 2, abr-jun.
- Becken, S (2007). Tourists' Perception of International Air Travel's Impact on the Global Climate and Potential Climate Change Policies. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15:4, 351-368.
- Bertero, C. O. (1999). Nota técnica: teoria da contingência estrutural. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, & W. Norde (Eds.), *Handbook de estudos organizacionais*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Blackwell, R. D., Miniard, P. W., & Engel, J. F. (2005). *Comportamento do consumidor*. São Paulo: Pioneira Thomson Learning.
- Brundtland, Gro Harlem. (1987). *Our Common Future: From One Earth to One World*. Nova York, OxfordUniversity Press.
- Buarque, S.C. (2008). *Construindo o desenvolvimento local sustentável: metodologia de planejamento*. SP: Garamond.
- Butler, R. (2004). Issues in applying carrying capacity concepts: examples from United Kingdom. In H. Coccossis & A. Mexa (eds.), *Planning and management for tourism growth is becoming essential in the context of sustainable development*. (1st. ed.)
- Cater, E., & Lowman, G. (1994). *Ecotourism: a sustainable option?* John Wiley and Sons: Chichester.
- Chandler, A. D. (1998). Introdução à strategy e structure. In A. Chandler (Ed.), *Ensaio para uma teoria histórica da grande empresa*. Rio de

- Janeiro: Fundação Getúlio Vargas.
- Child, J. (1972). Organizational structure, environment and performance. *Sociology* (v. 6).
- Chung, E., Beverland, Michael, B., Farrelly, F., & Quester, P. (2009). The dark side of consumer fanaticism. *ANZMAC*.
- Clarke, J (1997). A Framework of Approaches to Sustainable Tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 5:3, 224-233
- Cooper, C. (2001). *Turismo, princípios e prática*. (2nd. ed). Porto Alegre: Bookman.
- Corbett, C., & Klassen, R. (2006). Extending the horizons: environmental excellence as key to improving operations. *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management*, 8 (1), 5–22.
- Donaldson, L. (1987). Strategy and structural adjustment to regain fit and performance: in defence of contingency theory. *Journal of Management Studies*, 24(1), 1-24.
- Donaldson, L. (1999). Teoria da contingência estrutural. In Clegg, S., C. Hardy, & W. Nord (eds.) *Handbook de estudos organizacionais*. Volume 1. São Paulo Atlas, Cooper, C. (1999). Teoria da contingência estrutural. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy & W. Nord (eds), M. Caldas, R. Fachine & T. Fischer (Brazilian eds.), *Handbook de Estudos Organizacionais*, 1. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Driscoll, A., Lawson, R., & Niven, B. (1994). Measuring tourists' destination perceptions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 21 (3), 499-511.
- Ghemawat, P. (1998). Vantagem sustentável. In C. Montgomery & M. Porter (eds.), *Estratégia: a busca da vantagem competitiva*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus, 1998.
- Grönroos, C. (2004). *Marketing: gerenciamento e serviços*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus.
- Elkington, J. (2001). *Canibais com garfo e faca*. SP: Makroon Books.
- Foladori, G. (2005). *Sustentabilidade alternativa*. Uruguai: Colección Cabichui.
- Hall, R. (2004). *Organizações: estrutura, processos e resultados*. São Paulo: Pearson Prentice-Hall.
- Harris, J. M. (2000). Basic principles of sustainable development. *Global Development and environment Institute*, 00-04, june.
- Hazin, A. L., Oliveira, C. G., & Medeiros, R. P. (2001). Cultura e turismo: interação ou dominação? *Trabalhos para Discussão*, 121, oct.
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2010). *Marketing 3.0: as forças que estão definindo o novo marketing centrado no ser humano*. Rio de Janeiro: Elsevier.
- Kozak, M., & Rimmington, M. (1999). Measuring tourist destination competitiveness: conceptual considerations and empirical findings. *Hospitality Management* 18, 273 – 283.
- Lakhani, M. (2007). The need for clean production and product re-design. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 15.
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1973). *As empresas e o ambiente*. Petrópolis: Vozes.
- Le, Y. (2005). *Perception of the Vietnamese Tourism Businesses toward the Adoption of Sustainable Tourism Practices*. A dissertation of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor Philosophy in the University of Idaho.
- Lee, J., Hsu, L., Han, H., & Kim, Yunhi (2010). Understanding how consumers view green hotels: how a hotel's green image can influence behavioural intentions. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18:7, 901-914.
- Linton, J., Klassen, R., & Jayaraman, V. (2007). Sustainable supply chains: An introduction. *Journal of Operations Management*, 25 (2007) 1075–1082.
- Machado Filho, C. P. (2006). *Responsabilidade social e governança: o debate e as implicações*. São Paulo: Pioneira Thomson Learning.
- Martins, E. C. (2002). *O turismo como uma alternativa de desenvolvimento sustentável: o caso de Jericoacoara no Ceará*. Tese apresentada à Escola Superior de Agricultura "Luiz de Queiroz", Universidade de São Paulo, para obtenção do título de doutor em Ciências. Piracicaba, São Paulo.
- Matos, S., & Hall, J. (2007). Integrating sustainable

- development in the supply chain: The case of life cycle assessment in oil and gas and agricultural biotechnology. *Journal of Operations Management*, 25, 1083–1102
- Mick, D. G. (2006). Meaning and mattering through transformative consumer research. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 33.
- Mick, D. (2008). Introduction: the moment and place for a special *Journal of Consumer Research*. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35.
- Misoczky, M. C. (2003). Da abordagem dos sistemas abertos à complexidade: algumas reflexões sobre seus limites para compreender processos de interação social. *Cadernos EBAPE. BR*, 1(1).
- Misoczky, M. C., & Andrade, J. A. (2005). Uma crítica à crítica domesticada nos estudos organizacionais. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea (RAC)*, 25(1), 193-211.
- Morgan, G. (1996). *Imagens da organização*. São Paulo: Atlas.
- Motta, F. C. P., & Vasconcelos, I. F. G. (2002). *Teoria geral da administração*. São Paulo: Thomson.
- Nascimento, L. F. (2005). Gestão socioambiental estratégica: a percepção de executivos de pequenas e médias empresas americanas. *Encontro da Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração*.
- Pettigrew, S. (2007). Reducing the experience of loneliness among older consumers. *Journal of Research for Consumers*, issue: 12.
- Pomering, A., Noble, G., & Johnson, L. (2011). Conceptualising a contemporary marketing mix for sustainable tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 19:8, 953-969.
- Porter, M. E. (1986). *Estratégia competitiva*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus.
- Porter, M. E., & Van der Linde, C. (2003). Verde e competitivo. In: *Competição: estratégias competitivas essenciais*. Rio de Janeiro: Campus.
- Oliveira, J. A. (2008). *Empresa na sociedade: sustentabilidade e responsabilidade social*. RJ: Elsevier.
- Orsato, R. (2002). Posicionamento ambiental estratégico: identificando quando vale a pena investir no verde. *REAd*, 30(6), vol. 6, dez.
- Rodríguez, J. R. O., López, E. P., & Estévez, V. Y. (2008). The sustainability of island destinations: tourism area life cycle and teleological perspectives. The case of Tenerife. *Tourism Management*, 29, 53-65.
- Ruscheinsky, A. (2003). No conflito das interpretações: o enredo da sustentabilidade. *Revista eletrônica do Mestrado em Educação Ambiental*, v 10, jan a jun, 2003.
- Sachs, I. (2007). *Rumo à ecossocioeconomia. Teoria e prática do desenvolvimento*. São Paulo: Cortez.
- Sharpley, R. (2000). Tourism and Sustainable Development: Exploring the Theoretical Divide. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8:1, 1-19.
- Silveira, G., & Sousa, R. (2010). Paradigms of choice in manufacturing strategy: Exploring performance relationships of fit, best practices, and capability-based approaches. *International Journal of Operations & Production Management*, Vol. 30 Iss: 12 pp. 1219 – 1245.
- Solomon, M. R. (2006). *Consumer behavior: buying, having and being*. (7th ed). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Swarbrooke, J., & Horner, S. (2002). *O comportamento do consumidor no turismo*. São Paulo: Aleph.
- Vieira, M. M., & Caldas, M. (2006). Teoria crítica e pós-modernismo: principais alternativas à hegemonia funcionalista. *Revista de Administração de Empresas (RAE)*, 46(1), 59-70.
- Voase, R. (1995). *Tourism: the human perspective*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Wood, K., & House, S. (1991). *The good tourist: a worldwide guide for the green traveler*. London: Mandarin.
- Woodward, J. (1997). *Organização industrial: teoria e prática*. São Paulo: Atlas.

- Wu, Z., & Pagell, M. (2011). Balancing priorities: Decision-making in sustainable supply chain management. *Journal of Operations Management*, 29, 577–590.
- Yee, R., Yeung, A., & Cheng, E. (2008). The impact of employee satisfaction on quality and profitability in high-contact service industries. *Journal of Operations Management*, 26, 651–668.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Cristiane Salome Ribeiro Costa: Assistant Professor in marketing, Management Department, Federal University of Pernambuco (UFRPE, Brazil). Ms.C. (2007) and Ph.D. Candidate (2010) in Organizational Management – Federal University of Pernambuco (UFRPE, Brazil).

Salomão Alencar de Farias: Associate Professor at the Federal University of Pernambuco, Post-doctorate at Georgia State University, PhD in Business Administration from FEA / USP. Researcher of CNPq. Areas of research interest include services marketing, consumer behavior, tourism and sustainability.

Renata Oliveira: Assistant Professor in Strategic and International Business, Management Department, Federal Rural University of Pernambuco (UFRPE, Brazil). Ms.C. (2007) and Ph.D. Candidate (2010) in Organizational Management – Federal University of Pernambuco (UFRPE, Brazil). Researcher of projects funded by the Brazilian National Council of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq). Reviewer of papers subm