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From Neglect to Progress: Assessing Social Sustainability and Decent Work in the Tourism Sector

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Abstract: Measuring social sustainability performance involves assessing firms' implementation of social goals, including working conditions, health and safety, employee relationships, diversity, human rights, community engagement, and philanthropy. The concept of social sustainability is closely linked to the notion of decent work, which emphasizes productive work opportunities with fair income, secure workplaces, personal development prospects, freedom of expression and association, and equal treatment for both genders. However, the tourism sector, known for its significant share of informal labor-intensive work, faces challenges that hinder the achievement of decent work, such as extended working hours, low wages, limited social protection, and gender discrimination. This study assesses the social sustainability of the Portuguese tourism industry. The study collected data from the "Quadros do Pessoal" statistical tables for the years 2010 to 2020 to analyze the performance of Portuguese firms in the tourism sector and compare them with one another and with the overall national performance. The study focused on indicators such as employment, wages, and work accidents. The findings reveal fluctuations in employment and remuneration within the tourism sector and high growth rates in the tourism sector compared to the national average. A persistent gender pay gap is identified, which emphasizes the need to address this issue within the tourism industry. Despite some limitations, such as the lack of comparable data on work quality globally, incomplete coverage of sustainability issues, and challenges in defining and measuring social sustainability indicators, the findings have implications for policy interventions to enhance social sustainability in the tourism industry. By prioritizing decent work, safe working conditions, and equitable pay practices, stakeholders can promote social sustainability, stakeholder relationships, and sustainable competitive advantage. Policymakers are urged to support these principles to ensure the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry and foster a more inclusive and equitable society. This study provides insights for Tourism Management, sustainable Human Resource Management, Development Studies, and organizational research, guiding industry stakeholders in promoting corporate social sustainability, firm survival, and economic growth.

Keywords: social sustainability; decent work; tourism industry; gender wage gap



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1. Introduction

Tourism is a significant contributor to the economy of Portugal, with a growing number of visitors each year. However, the sustainability of tourism has become a major concern, particularly in terms of social sustainability. This study aims to explore the concept of social sustainability in tourism in Portugal, with a focus on the operational environment.

Social sustainability, which encompasses fairness in distribution, provision of social services, gender equity, and political accountability, has received relatively less attention compared with other dimensions of sustainability [1–9]. This study aims to assess the social sustainability of the tourism sector in Portugal from 2010 to 2020.

By examining various factors, including employment, income, education, and skills, this study aims to provide valuable insights that can guide policy interventions and strategies to enhance social sustainability in Portugal.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly affected the tourism industry and necessitated adaptation and reinvention by firms [10–12]. Understanding the evolution of social sustainability and decent work at tourism firms during this challenging period is crucial. Socially sustainable companies are better equipped to make sound economic decisions and withstand market uncertainties.

This study focuses primarily on the dimensions of employment and income within the tourism industry due to data limitations. Specifically, the research question is: “What are the employment and remuneration trends in the tourism sector in Portugal, and what are the implications for social sustainability?” Data from the “Quadros do Pessoal” statistical tables are utilized, with a specific emphasis on the “accommodation, restaurants, and similar activities” sector. The study follows a structured approach, encompassing various steps, such as data collection, sector selection, performance analysis, work accidents analysis, and part-time employment and average earnings analysis.

Noteworthy findings include the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment in 2020, a persistent gender pay gap within the tourism sector, and higher growth rates in employment and remuneration compared to the national performance. The study holds significant implications for policy interventions and strategies to enhance social sustainability in the tourism industry, as well as broader efforts to promote social sustainability across Portugal.

By prioritizing decent work, ensuring safe and fair working conditions, and promoting equitable pay practices, stakeholders can contribute to enhanced social sustainability, stakeholder relationships, and sustainable competitive advantage. Policymakers are urged to create an enabling environment that supports these principles and fosters the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry, thereby promoting a more socially inclusive and equitable Portugal.

Following the introduction, Section 2 establishes the conceptual framework by discussing the notions of decent work and social sustainability in the context of the tourism industry. Section 3 outlines the data sources and methods employed in the analysis, while Sections 4 and 5 present and discuss the results and limitations. Finally, Section 6 concludes the study and highlights its implications for tourism management.

2. Literature Review

The concept of decent work, as identified by the International Labour Organization (ILO) [13], encompasses four pillars: employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue. It emphasizes the following aspects:

1. Provision of productive work opportunities that ensure fair income.
2. Establishment of secure workplaces and social protection for families.
3. Enhancement of personal development prospects and social integration.
4. Freedom to express concerns, organize, and participate in decisions affecting individuals’ lives.
5. Guarantee of equality of opportunity and treatment for both men and women.

Decent work in the tourism sector has been a topic of study, and empirical research reveals a mixed perception of the quality of work, working conditions, and practices from a “decent work” perspective [12,14,15].

Several issues arise within the tourism workplace, as highlighted in the literature:

1. Informal work [16–19];
2. Extended working hours and low wages [10,20,21];
3. Limited social protection [22–24];
4. Gender discrimination [25–28];
5. Inadequate working schedules, insecure employment contracts, overwork, insufficient pay, lack of progression opportunities, missed mealtimes, wage disputes, low recognition of trade unions, income insecurity, split shifts, unpaid overtime, physical violence, sexual harassment, and stress [25,29–31].

Moreover, studies have identified further issues, such as lack of respect and recognition, limited workplace autonomy, monotonous tasks, poor communication, inadequate fixtures and fittings, issues related to people's identity at work, sexualized labour, sex tourism, racism, and seasonality [32–36].

Decent work extends beyond job creation and emphasizes the quality of employment [13]. Therefore, this study argues that workplace dignity is positively correlated with corporate social sustainability. In other words, social sustainability relies on firms providing decent working conditions.

Socially sustainable tourism firms can contribute to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

1. SDG 1: No Poverty—Tourism firms can contribute to poverty reduction by creating employment opportunities, particularly for marginalized groups, and generating income and economic benefits for local communities.
2. SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being—Tourism firms can support the development of healthcare infrastructure and services at destinations, improving access to quality healthcare for both residents and visitors.
3. SDG 4: Quality Education—Tourism firms can contribute to enhancing educational opportunities and promoting lifelong learning by supporting educational initiatives, training programs, and cultural exchange.
4. SDG 5: Gender Equality—Tourism firms can promote gender equality by empowering women and girls through employment, entrepreneurship, and leadership opportunities, as well as by challenging gender stereotypes and promoting equal rights and access to resources.
5. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth—Tourism firms have the potential to create decent and inclusive employment opportunities, improve working conditions, and foster sustainable economic growth, thus contributing to poverty reduction and social well-being.
6. SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities—Tourism firms can help reduce inequalities by promoting social inclusion, providing equal opportunities for all, and ensuring that the benefits of tourism are distributed fairly among different social groups and regions.
7. SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities—Tourism firms can contribute to creating sustainable and resilient cities and communities by preserving cultural heritage, improving infrastructure, supporting local businesses, and enhancing the quality of life of residents.
8. SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions—Tourism firms can promote peaceful and inclusive societies by fostering cultural understanding, intercultural dialogue, and respect for diversity, thus contributing to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence.

These aspects emphasize the importance of ensuring that tourism activities are sustainable, inclusive, and beneficial for local communities, while also respecting human rights, promoting cultural heritage, and contributing to social well-being.

The SDGs offer a set of specific targets and indicators such as employment rates, poverty rates, education levels, gender equality indices, and access to healthcare that have been used to evaluate the social impact of tourism on local communities.

In Table 1, we categorize corporate social sustainability indicators found in the literature into eight dimensions: physical working conditions, wages, career development, health, community, clients, competitors, and the economy. These indicators vary in terms of the control that business decision-makers have over them, the effort required for their incorporation into decision-making processes, and the financial burden associated with their implementation [37]. However, it is important to note that quantitative indicators represent only a portion of the proposed indicators, as obtaining data for some indicators can be challenging [38–42].

Table 1. Social sustainability indicators in the literature.

Stakeholder's Perspective	Dimension	Proxies for Social Sustainability	References
Employees Internal Human Resources Practices	Physical working conditions	Nighttime driving hours; claims for workers death/injury; impact of noise; safety equipment; cultural diversity; prevention of forced labor practices; provision of sanitation and drinking water facilities	[12,15,18,20]
	Wages	Wages, fair employment practices	[19,24]
	Career development	Continuous learning, development, and improvement, training programs; employment stability; internal human resources practices	[18,19]
	Health	Health and safety practices and occupational health	[12,15,18,19]
Clients	Stakeholder Participation	Average term for receipts	[43]
Competitors		Mutual trust among rivals	[14]
Community	Local External Population	Donations to communities' education and health services; support of community projects; child labor prevention; promotion of stakeholder participation, indigenous rights, right to vote, and political freedom	[12,17,19–21]
	National Macro-Social Performance	Macro social performance practices; global presence of organizations, contribution to GDP; Prevention of corruption in business practices	[16,21]

Drawing on stakeholder and legitimacy theories, firms recognize that maintaining good relationships with stakeholders can enhance their social sustainability by developing and preserving intangible assets [44]. Furthermore, workplace benefits, such as improved health and safety conditions, can motivate employees, foster loyalty, reduce recruitment and training costs, and increase productivity [45,46]. Socially sustainable practices can also contribute to a firm's sustainable competitive advantage by enhancing reputation and consumer trust in brand value [47,48].

The study by Labuschagne et al. [49] is the first to develop a social sustainability performance index for manufacturing firms in South Africa. It proposes four main pillars of social sustainability: internal human resources practices, external population, stakeholder participation, and macro-social performance.

Table 1 presents social sustainability indicators derived from the literature, categorized from the stakeholders' perspective into various dimensions [50].

Furthermore, the behaviour of suppliers can influence the social sustainability performance of the purchasing organization [51]. Notably, companies like Nike and Apple have faced damage to their reputation due to child labour practices employed by their suppliers [52].

Business activities involve and impact various stakeholders, thereby influencing their decision-making processes [53].

The social dimension of tourism has been studied in the context of community perceptions and engagement. For example, da Silva et al. [54] conducted a study on socially sustainable tourism in cities, focusing on local community perceptions and development guidelines. The findings provided insights into the perceptions of the local community regarding the social sustainability of tourism and proposed guidelines for promoting socially sustainable tourism in urban areas. Moreover, Dans and González [55] conducted

a study on sustainable tourism and social value at World Heritage Sites, using Altamira in Spain as a case study. The study explored the social value of World Heritage Sites and proposed a conservation plan to enhance the social sustainability of tourism in Altamira, Spain. Moreover, Jover and Díaz-Parra [56] examined the intersections of overtourism, lifestyle migration, and social sustainability in the context of cities. The study explored the social implications of overtourism and lifestyle migration, discussing the challenges and opportunities for achieving social sustainability in urban tourist destinations. In addition, Torkington et al. [57] analyzed national tourism policy documents to explore the discourse of growth and sustainability within these documents. The study highlighted the different discourses surrounding growth and sustainability in national tourism policies and identified potential tensions and challenges in achieving sustainable tourism development.

Another stream of literature focuses on the challenges posed by COVID-19. Indeed, Almeida and Silva [58] examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism sustainability in Portugal. The study provided evidence of the pandemic's effects on various aspects of tourism sustainability, including environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Higgins-Desbiolles [59] explored the socialization of tourism for social and ecological justice after COVID-19. The study discussed the potential for reimagining tourism in a way that prioritizes social and ecological sustainability in the post-pandemic era.

A third line of research is Tourism Planning and Policies. In this framework, Benner [60] focused on the transition from overtourism to sustainability in the Adriatic region. The study proposed a research agenda for qualitative tourism development, highlighting the need for sustainable approaches to address overtourism challenges and promote sustainable tourism in the region. In addition, Pato and Duque [61] conducted an analysis of national strategic plans in Portuguese tourism since 2000. The study identified strategic issues and priorities in these plans and shed light on the evolution of tourism planning in Portugal and its implications for sustainability.

Some authors highlight the role of entrepreneurship in sustainable tourism. Bakas et al. [62] focused on small-scale art festivals with creative tourism in Portugal and explored their social utility. The study highlighted the social benefits and impacts of small-scale art festivals and emphasized their contribution to community development and cultural sustainability. Duarte et al. [63] investigated lifestyle entrepreneurship as a vehicle for leisure and sustainable tourism. The study explored the relationship between lifestyle entrepreneurship, leisure activities, and sustainable tourism and emphasized the potential for lifestyle entrepreneurship to contribute to sustainable tourism development.

Another view of socially sustainable tourism concentrates on sustainable practices and implementation. A notable example is the study by Higgins-Desbiolles et al. [64], in which the authors discussed degrowth tourism and the need to rethink tourism for social and ecological justice. The study examined the concept of degrowth and its implications for transforming tourism into a more socially and ecologically just system. Khatter et al. [65] analyzed the environmentally sustainable policies and practices of hotels, focusing on sustainability and corporate social responsibility in the hospitality and tourism industries. The study examined the adoption of sustainable practices by hotels and identified opportunities to enhance sustainability and corporate social responsibility in the sector. Pereira et al. [66] conducted a case study of a luxury hotel in Arrábida Natural Park, Portugal, and examined sustainability practices in hospitality. The study highlighted specific sustainability practices implemented by the hotel and provided insights into how sustainability can be integrated into the operations of the hospitality industry. Social impacts and quality of life have been researched by Ramkissoon [67], who developed a conceptual model of the perceived social impacts of tourism and quality of life. The study explored the relationship between the impacts of tourism and residents' quality of life, emphasizing the importance of understanding and managing the social aspects of tourism development. Aall and Koens [68] discussed the discourse on sustainable urban tourism and the need for broader discussions beyond overtourism. The study highlighted the complexities of sustainable urban tourism and the importance of addressing multiple dimensions of sustainability beyond the issue of

overtourism. McCabe [69] discussed social tourism and its relevance in promoting tourism for all. The study highlighted the importance of social tourism in ensuring access to travel and tourism experiences for marginalized and disadvantaged groups, contributing to social sustainability.

3. Materials and Methods

Assessing the social sustainability of tourism in Portugal involves analyzing various factors, such as employment, income, education, healthcare, poverty, social cohesion, inclusion, and environmental impact, with reference to metrics like the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The focus of this study was on the Employment and Income dimension. To assess the social sustainability of the tourism sector in Portugal, data was collected from the “Quadros do Pessoal” statistical tables. These tables provide detailed information on employment, wages, and work accidents in the tourism sector for the years 2010 to 2020. The data was obtained from official sources, which ensured their reliability and accuracy. The period 2010–2020 was chosen because it provided a decade-long timeframe, and 2020 was the most recent year available in the “Quadros do Pessoal” dataset. This allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the trends and changes in the tourism sector over a significant time span. The collected data was analyzed to evaluate the employment and income dimensions of social sustainability in the tourism sector. The performance analysis involved comparing indicators such as employment levels, wages, work accidents, and other relevant factors over the study period. The analysis aimed to identify trends, patterns, and potential challenges related to social sustainability in the tourism industry. Based on the findings of the performance analysis, policy implications were derived to address the identified issues: declining employment levels, lower remuneration, safety conditions, and equitable pay practices in the tourism industry. The policy implications aimed to contribute to enhancing social sustainability in the tourism sector and regions of Portugal. The methodology utilized in this study drew upon established frameworks and references. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provided a set of specific targets and indicators that were used to assess the social impact of the tourism sector.

4. Results

Based on tables published by “Quadros do Pessoal” for 2010 and 2020, we selected the ones by economic activity to collect data for the “accommodations, restaurants, and similar activities” sector to proxy for corporate performance in the tourism sector.

The impact of sectoral and firm characteristics on decent work and social sustainability is multifaceted. The number of firms, birth rate of firms, firms’ survival rate, firm size, turnover, GVA, inflation, and investment can all influence the quality of work and the social well-being within a sector. While factors such as a competitive market, higher survival rates, and larger firms can contribute to better working conditions and social sustainability, it is essential to consider the quality of employment, distribution of benefits, and long-term sustainability. Additionally, factors like turnover, inflation, and targeted investments play a significant role in shaping outcomes for workers and society.

The number of firms in a sector can have both positive and negative effects on decent work and social sustainability. A higher number of firms can indicate a competitive market, which may lead to better working conditions, higher wages, and increased job opportunities. On the other hand, many small firms could result in a lack of economies of scale, limited resources for investment in worker welfare, and potential exploitation of labor.

The birth rate of firms refers to the rate at which new firms are established. A higher birth rate can indicate a dynamic and innovative sector, potentially leading to job creation and economic growth. However, the impact on decent work and social sustainability depends on the quality of these new firms. If the new firms provide decent work conditions, fair wages, and promote social responsibility, it can have a positive impact. Conversely, if the birth rate is driven by informal or exploitative practices, it can harm decent work and social sustainability.

The survival rate of firms reflects the ability of firms to sustain their operations over time. A higher survival rate indicates a stable and resilient sector, which can contribute to decent work and social sustainability. Stable firms are more likely to invest in their workforce, provide training opportunities, and offer long-term employment. Conversely, a low survival rate may lead to job insecurity, reduced investment in worker welfare, and negative social consequences.

The size of firms can influence decent work and social sustainability outcomes [70]. Larger firms often have more resources to invest in employee benefits, training programs, and work-life balance initiatives. They may also have better bargaining power to negotiate fair wages and working conditions. However, there can be instances where large firms prioritize profit maximization over employee welfare, leading to issues such as exploitation, limited job mobility, and reduced social sustainability.

High turnover rates can negatively impact decent work and social sustainability. Frequent turnover can indicate job instability, limited employee rights, and a lack of job security. It can also result in a loss of valuable skills and knowledge within the workforce. Conversely, lower turnover rates suggest more stable employment, better job quality, and improved social sustainability.

Gross value added (GVA) represents the value generated by a sector or firm through its economic activities. A higher GVA implies a larger contribution to the economy, which can potentially lead to increased investments in decent work practices and social sustainability. However, the distribution of GVA within the sector or firm is crucial. If the benefits primarily accrue to shareholders or top executives while neglecting worker welfare, it can lead to inequality and undermine social sustainability.

Inflation can impact the cost of living and the purchasing power of workers. High inflation rates without corresponding increases in wages can erode decent work and social sustainability. Workers may struggle to meet their basic needs, leading to increased inequality and social unrest. Conversely, controlled inflation with wage adjustments can help maintain decent work conditions and social sustainability.

Investment in the sector and firms can have a significant positive impact on decent work and social sustainability. Increased investment allows for the improvement of infrastructure, technology, and worker training, leading to higher productivity, better working conditions, and higher wages. However, the type and focus of investment matter. Investments that prioritize short-term gains over long-term sustainability may not result in lasting improvements in decent work and social sustainability.

Table 2 shows that, overall, the tourism sector generally exhibited similar trends to the overall economy in terms of firm size, turnover, and inflation. However, the tourism sector had a higher survival rate on average compared to all sectors. Additionally, the tourism sector's specific performance can be further analyzed and compared year by year to gain more insights into its growth and stability.

In 2010, there was a total of 1,168,265 firms, with 85,964 firms in the tourism sector. In 2021, the total number of firms increased to 1,359,035, while the tourism sector had 111,094 firms. The number of new firms in the overall economy varied each year, ranging from 138,362 in 2010 to 187,036 in 2021. In the tourism sector, the number of new firms ranged from 9393 in 2010 to 11,043 in 2021. The survival rate of firms in the overall economy remained relatively stable, ranging from 69.7% in 2010 to 75.7% in 2021. The tourism sector consistently exhibited a higher survival rate, ranging from 73.2% in 2010 to 80% in 2021. The average size of firms in the overall economy remained fairly constant, at around 3.2–3.3 units. The tourism sector also maintained a similar average size, ranging from 3.3 to 3.4 units. Total turnover in the overall economy fluctuated over the years, with the highest value of 337,761.1 in 2010 and the lowest value of 300,134.5 in 2020. The turnover in the tourism sector followed a similar trend, with the highest value of 115,665.7 in 2010 and the lowest value of 85,550.9 in 2020. GVA in the overall economy showed variation, reaching its peak at 120,240.6 in 2021 and its lowest point at 91,378.4 in 2015. The tourism sector's

GVA fluctuated as well, with the highest value of 6329.2 in 2018 and the lowest value of 3138 in 2012.

Table 2. Sectoral characteristics.

Year	Sector	No. Firms	New Firms	Survival Rate *	Size	Turnover	GVA	Inflation	Investment
2010	All	1,168,265	138,362	69.7	3.3	337,761.1	97,439.3	1.4	18,340.5
2010	Tourism	85,964	9393	73.2	3.4	115,665.7	3969.5	1.2	1005.8
2011	All	1,136,256	144,232	70	3.3	338,356.7	91,659.6	3.7	15,769.9
2011	Tourism	85,802	10,670	76.3	3.4	113,858.1	3880.4	1.4	752.6
2012	All	1,086,915	134,757	70.3	3.2	331,766.1	85,021.5	2.8	10,716
2012	Tourism	83,861	10,784	74.8	3.3	101,018.8	3138	4.5	657.9
2013	All	1,119,447	200,925	71	3.1	316,142.2	82,536.7	0.3	11,585.1
2013	Tourism	82,211	12,270	74.7	3.2	102,475.6	3165.6	1.7	668.4
2014	All	1,147,154	178,331	76.2	3.1	309,585.1	85,777	-0.3	12,852.2
2014	Tourism	84,122	13,016	78.5	3.2	109,243.6	3430.7	1	636.4
2015	All	1,181,406	181,840	72.9	3.1	304,301.7	91,378.4	0.5	14,702.1
2015	Tourism	91,826	18,359	78.5	3.2	110,184.1	3912.5	1.3	907.6
2016	All	1,214,206	180,070	73.3	3.1	301,271.6	95,497.8	0.6	16,406.3
2016	Tourism	97,562	17,007	80.9	3.3	119,047.9	4749.6	2.2	1236
2017	All	1,260,436	188,846	73.8	3.2	315,521.1	104,268.7	1.4	18,648.6
2017	Tourism	104,826	18,738	80.5	3.3	130,800.6	5798.9	3.7	1599.5
2018	All	1,295,299	196,550	71.7	3.2	327,547.8	109,703.6	1	20,874.2
2018	Tourism	113,191	20,514	80.8	3.3	131,288.4	6329.2	2.1	1616.5
2019	All	1,335,006	196,193	76.1	3.2	329,393.3	114,706.1	0.3	22,807.9
2019	Tourism	118,031	17,662	82.8	3.4	137,658.4	6907.8	1	1953.1
2020	All	1,316,256	154,287	74.6	3.2	300,134.5	104,220.2	0	21,001.9
2020	Tourism	112,347	10,739	77.4	3.3	85,550.9	3183.8	1.7	1495
2021	All	1,359,035	187,036	75.7	3.2	337,012	120,240.6	1.3	22,286.2
2021	Tourism	111,094	11,043	80	3.2	108,043.5	4485.2	-0.8	1323.3

Notes: No. stands for number. Nominal variables are in € Mil. * Survival rate at 1 year. Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

Inflation rates in the overall economy varied, with the highest rate of 4.5% in 2012 and the lowest rate of −0.8% in 2021. The tourism sector experienced similar fluctuations in inflation, ranging from the highest rate of 4.5% in 2012 to the lowest rate of −0.8% in 2021. Total investment in the overall economy increased over the years, with the highest value of 22,807.9 in 2019 and the lowest value of 10,001.9 in 2020. In the tourism sector, investment levels also showed an upward trend, with the highest value of 6907.8 in 2019 and the lowest value of 3138 in 2012.

Employment plays a crucial role in promoting decent work and social sustainability by providing individuals with economic opportunities, income stability, and access to social benefits [12]. It contributes to poverty reduction, social inclusion, and overall well-being [13]. However, the quality of employment, including factors such as job security, fair wages, and working conditions, significantly influences the extent to which employment contributes to decent work and social sustainability [13].

Table 3 shows the number of employees across sectors. The number of employees in the tourism sector shows a fluctuating pattern over the years, with variations in employment levels. From 2010 to 2012, the number of employees in this sector experienced a decline from 180,038 to 166,346. This could be indicative of economic challenges or specific factors impacting the sector during that period. After the initial decrease, the number of employees gradually increased, reaching a peak of 251,350 in 2019. This suggests a recovery and potential growth in employment within the sector. However, in 2020, the number of employees dropped to 214,079, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the hospitality and service industries.

Table 3. Employment and growth rates.

Year	Total	Tourism Sector	Growth Rate Total (%)	Growth Rate Tourism Sector (%)
2010	2,599,509	180,038	-	-
2011	2,553,741	177,928	−1.76%	−1.73%
2012	2,387,386	166,346	−6.51%	−6.65%
2013	2,384,121	166,559	−0.14%	0.13%
2014	2,458,163	174,663	3.10%	4.88%
2015	2,537,653	189,219	3.24%	8.34%
2016	2,641,919	204,110	4.10%	7.87%
2017	2,767,521	223,805	4.76%	9.64%
2018	2,877,918	241,853	3.99%	7.91%
2019	2,930,482	251,350	1.83%	3.93%
2020	2,902,825	214,079	−0.94%	−14.79%

Source: own calculations based on Quadros do Pessôal.

The growth rates provide a quantitative measure of the relative performance of the tourism sector compared to the total number of employees across all sectors. They highlight the year-to-year changes and trends in employment levels for both sectors. From the analysis, we can observe the following: The growth rates for both the total number of employees and tourism sector workers fluctuate over the years; the tourism sector generally exhibits higher growth rates compared to the total, indicating a relatively stronger performance in terms of employment growth. However, in 2020, both the total number of employees and tourism sector workers experienced a decline, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4 shows the employed population by gender. The number of women employed in the sector has been consistently higher than the number of men, indicating a higher representation of women in the industry. However, the overall population of employed individuals in the services sector shows a higher percentage of women (approximately 49%) compared to men; This suggests that although there is a higher representation of women in the services sector as a whole, there is still a gender pay gap within specific industries, such as accommodation.

Table 4. Employed population by gender.

Year	All Sectors		Services Sector	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
2010	2569.3	2329.1	1311.2	1703.6
2011	2319.1	2110.6	1283.4	1698.8
2012	2176.4	2047.2	1241.2	1669.7
2013	2121.4	2024.3	1269.5	1655.9
2014	2175.4	2092	1320.1	1715.9
2015	2210.8	2138.8	1340.9	1757.4
2016	2249.3	2180.6	1361.7	1796.4
2017	2336.9	2254	1411.3	1863.5
2018	2392.7	2326	1441.7	1921.3
2019	2417.7	2358.5	1471.3	1958.6
2020	2353.6	2330.1	1438.9	1923.1
2021	2428.6	2383.7	1530.7	1969.5

Source: Quadros do Pessôal.

The table highlights a persistent gender pay gap in the accommodation tourism sector in Portugal. Despite improvements over the years, women continue to earn less on average compared to their male counterparts. The higher representation of women in the sector, as indicated by the employed population data, suggests that efforts should be made to address and reduce the gender pay gap, specifically within the accommodation industry.

Further analysis and targeted policies may be necessary to promote gender equalization in terms of remuneration and earnings in this sector.

Work duration refers to the length of time individuals spend in employment. Long working hours without adequate breaks can lead to work-related stress, fatigue, and health issues, negatively impacting both decent work and social sustainability [21]. Balancing work and personal life, ensuring reasonable working hours, and promoting work-life integration are essential for maintaining decent work and social well-being [21].

Analyzing the average hours worked (Table 5) by qualification level, we can observe that the tourism sector consistently exhibits higher average working hours compared to the overall average for all sectors. This suggests that employees in the tourism sector generally have longer working hours compared to the average for all sectors. Indeed, the average working hours for all sectors range from 39.3 to 39.5 h per week throughout the years. The average working hours for the tourism sector remain consistently higher, at 39.9 h per week. Across all sectors and qualification levels, the average working hours range from 38.0 to 38.6 h per week. In the tourism sector, the average working hours for all qualification levels are consistently higher, ranging from 39.8 to 40.0 h per week. This indicates that employees in the tourism sector tend to work longer hours compared to other sectors, regardless of their qualification level.

Table 5. Average working hours for workers with full-time jobs.

Year	Sector	Top Executives	Chief Executives	Managers	High Skilled Professional	Skilled Professional	Semi-Skilled Professional	Unskilled	Trainee
2010	All	38	38.6	39.4	38.8	39.6	39.6	39.8	39.9
2010	Tourism	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	40	39.9
2011	All	38	38.6	39.4	38.8	39.6	39.6	39.8	39.9
2011	Tourism	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	40	39.9
2012	All	38	38.6	39.4	38.8	39.6	39.6	39.7	39.9
2012	Tourism	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.8
2013	All	38.1	38.6	39.4	38.8	39.6	39.6	39.7	39.8
2013	Tourism	39.8	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.8
2014	All	38.2	38.6	39.4	38.8	39.6	39.6	39.7	39.8
2014	Tourism	39.8	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.8
2015	All	38.3	38.7	39.4	38.9	39.7	39.7	39.7	39.8
2015	Tourism	39.8	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.7
2016	All	38.3	38.7	39.4	38.9	39.7	39.7	39.8	39.8
2016	Tourism	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	40	39.7
2017	All	38.4	38.8	39.4	39	39.7	39.6	39.8	39.8
2017	Tourism	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.7
2018	All	38.4	38.5	39.4	39	39.7	39.6	39.8	39.8
2018	Tourism	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.7
2019	All	38.5	38.5	39.5	39.1	39.7	39.5	39.8	39.8
2019	Tourism	39.8	39.9	40	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.7
2020	All	38.5	38.5	39.4	39.1	39.7	39.5	39.8	39.8
2020	Tourism	39.8	39.9	40	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.8
2021	All	38.6	38.6	39.4	39.1	39.7	39.5	39.8	39.8
2021	Tourism	39.8	39.9	40	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.9	39.7

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

Part-time jobs can provide flexibility and employment opportunities for certain individuals. However, they can also contribute to job insecurity, reduced access to social benefits, and lower wages [21]. The impact on decent work and social sustainability depends on the quality of part-time jobs, including such factors as fair remuneration, benefits, and opportunities for career advancement [21].

Table 6 highlights the number of workers with part-time jobs. The tourism sector shows remarkable growth in the number of part-time employees, outpacing the growth rate of all sectors. This indicates the sector's increasing reliance on part-time employment and its relative significance in the labor market. The total number of part-time employees shows fluctuations over the years, but there is an increasing trend. For all sectors, the number of part-time employees increased from 169,282 in 2010 to 212,932 in 2021, representing an overall growth rate of approximately 25.77% over the period.

Table 6. Number of workers with part-time jobs.

Year	Sector	≤15	>15 and <20 h	>20 and <25 h	>25 and <30 h	>30 h
2010	All	47,734	69,044	24,672	25,212	2530
2010	Tourism	3337	5697	1973	2550	279
2011	All	46,580	69,906	24,854	25,035	2850
2011	Tourism	3484	6823	1991	2199	318
2012	All	47,963	69,257	24,002	23,333	3095
2012	Tourism	3521	7173	1955	2248	336
2013	All	49,271	71,209	24,171	23,140	3363
2013	Tourism	3938	7914	2071	2206	378
2014	All	51,229	76,209	25,212	23,702	3557
2014	Tourism	3836	9086	2279	2300	467
2015	All	53,489	79,637	26,675	24,365	4044
2015	Tourism	4439	10,376	2702	2620	518
2016	All	54,646	83,250	27,394	26,725	4233
2016	Tourism	4472	11,424	3045	3105	623
2017	All	59,748	84,050	30,231	27,972	4400
2017	Tourism	6071	11,694	3609	3696	727
2018	All	57,905	88,042	30,702	27,870	4373
2018	Tourism	5718	14,057	4089	4397	778
2019	All	59,455	90,446	33,865	31,034	5343
2019	Tourism	6466	14,512	4157	4815	725
2020	All	56,635	85,734	30,353	29,784	5297
2020	Tourism	5768	11,927	3092	3882	678
2021	All	58,390	85,470	30,978	32,418	5610
2021	Tourism	6819	11,822	3718	4528	788

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

In the tourism sector, the number of part-time employees increased from 13,836 in 2010 to 27,675 in 2021, which indicates a significant growth rate of approximately 100.12% over the period. The tourism sector has a consistently higher number of part-time compared to all sectors (total), indicating its relative dominance in part-time employment within the analyzed sectors. The growth rate of the tourism sector is generally higher than the growth rate of all sectors (total), which emphasizes its stronger performance in terms of part-time employment.

Wage levels directly affect workers' livelihoods and economic security. Inadequate wages can lead to poverty, inequality, and social exclusion and thereby undermine social sustainability [19]. Promoting fair and living wages is essential for ensuring decent work and reducing income disparities [19]. The average wages in the tourism sector can vary depending on factors such as job type, qualifications, and experience. In general, wages in the tourism sector tend to be lower compared to some other sectors. This can be attributed to factors such as the prevalence of low-skilled and entry-level positions, seasonal fluctuations, and a highly competitive market. However, it is essential to ensure that wages are fair and provide a decent standard of living for workers in order to promote social sustainability.

Table 7 displays the average monthly base remunerations and growth rates. These growth rates highlight the year-to-year changes and trends in remuneration levels for both sectors, with the tourism sector generally showing stronger growth in remuneration. From the analysis, we can observe that both the total average monthly remuneration and the average monthly remuneration for the tourism sector show fluctuating growth rates over the years. The tourism sector generally exhibits higher growth rates compared to the total, indicating a relatively stronger performance in terms of remuneration growth. The growth rates for both sectors show positive trends, indicating an overall increase in remuneration levels.

Table 7. Average monthly base salary (€).

Year	Total	Tourism Sector	Growth Rate Total (%)	Growth Rate Tourism Sector (%)
2010	900.04	650.83	-	-
2011	906.11	658.46	0.67%	1.17%
2012	915.01	665.14	0.98%	1.01%
2013	912.18	663.49	−0.31%	−0.25%
2014	909.49	669.99	−0.29%	0.98%
2015	913.93	673.94	0.49%	0.59%
2016	924.94	690.54	1.21%	2.46%
2017	943.00	713.45	1.97%	3.32%
2018	970.42	739.37	2.90%	3.63%
2019	1005.09	764.08	3.57%	3.34%
2020	1041.99	780.14	3.68%	2.10%

Source: own calculations based on Quadros do Pessoal.

Table 8 shows the average base salary by gender.

Table 8. Average monthly base salary (€) by gender.

Year	All Sectors		Tourism Sector	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
2010	976.7	800.8	742.8	602.5
2011	984.2	807.5	747.8	610.3
2012	999	813.7	755	618.4
2013	993.2	815.6	746.5	621
2014	985	820.3	738.3	622.2
2015	990.1	825	742.8	625.6
2016	997.4	840.3	755.6	643.1
2017	1012.3	861.2	776.7	666.6
2018	1039.1	888.6	800	693.6
2019	1073.8	922.6	823.7	718.7
2020	1109.2	960.3	840.2	735.3
2021	1152.2	999.3	883.1	775.5

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

The average base salary for both men and women in the accommodation, restaurant, and similar sectors has increased over the years: In 2010, the average base salary for men was higher than for women (742.8 euros vs. 602.5 euros). This trend continued in subsequent years, but the gap narrowed. In 2021, the average base salary for men in the sector was 883.1 euros, while for women, it was 775.5 euros; Although there has been progress, a gender pay gap persists, with women consistently earning less than men in the accommodation sector.

Table 9 allows us to analyze the average monthly earnings. Similar to the base salary, the average monthly earnings for both men and women in the sector have increased over time: In 2010, the average earnings for men were higher than for women (818.7 euros vs. 654.5 euros). This gap gradually decreased but remained significant. In 2021, men earned 987.7 euros on average, while women earned 856.5 euros in the sector; The gender pay gap in terms of average monthly earnings persists, indicating a disparity in overall compensation.

Table 9. Average Monthly Earnings (€).

Year	All Sectors		Tourism Sector	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
2010	1185	936.5	818.7	654.5
2011	1195.4	945.9	826.4	666.5
2012	1212.3	955.8	834.1	674.6
2013	1208.8	957.6	821.8	675.5
2014	1203.3	963.1	814.8	677.6
2015	1207.8	966.9	816.8	680.7
2016	1215.1	982.5	835.9	703
2017	1236.9	1011	863.3	732.7
2018	1274	1046.6	893.4	765
2019	1312.4	1087	923.2	796.6
2020	1349.4	1130.9	930.4	805.7
2021	1395.7	1172.1	987.7	856.5

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

Table 10 displays the growth rates of average earnings by region. It highlights the variations in average earnings and growth rates across economic sectors and regions, emphasizing the relatively stronger performance of the tourism sector compared to all sectors (total). Specifically, both all sectors (total) and the tourism sector experienced growth in average earnings over the years, except for some negative growth in certain years. The growth rates for all sectors and the tourism sector vary by region and year.

Table 10. Growth rates of average earnings, by region.

Year	Sector	Total	North	Centro	Lisbon	Alentejo	Algarve
2011	All	0.76%	0.99%	0.44%	0.89%	1.36%	0.39%
2011	Tourism	1.78%	1.79%	1.49%	1.29%	2.51%	1.33%
2012	All	1.02%	0.96%	1.07%	1.33%	0.32%	0.09%
2012	Tourism	0.91%	0.49%	0.08%	0.16%	0.25%	0.20%
2013	All	−0.16%	0.53%	−0.05%	−0.66%	0.91%	−1.39%
2013	Tourism	−0.48%	−0.30%	0.30%	0.20%	0.20%	−2.46%
2014	All	−0.06%	0.38%	0.70%	−0.38%	−0.42%	−0.69%
2014	Tourism	−0.36%	−0.29%	0.15%	0.19%	0.22%	0.42%
2015	All	0.32%	0.97%	0.46%	0.13%	0.44%	−0.19%
2015	Tourism	0.29%	0.45%	0.15%	1.36%	1.40%	0.24%
2016	All	0.99%	1.17%	1.48%	0.60%	0.33%	1.80%
2016	Tourism	3.91%	3.02%	3.77%	5.35%	5.00%	4.91%
2017	All	2.30%	2.89%	3.03%	1.53%	0.96%	2.76%
2017	Tourism	3.72%	4.67%	4.41%	4.13%	4.64%	4.61%
2018	All	4.01%	4.70%	3.92%	5.29%	2.72%	6.45%
2018	Tourism	3.31%	4.55%	4.00%	12.28%	3.25%	0.11%
2019	All	3.40%	3.85%	3.75%	2.59%	1.80%	2.94%
2019	Tourism	3.44%	3.59%	3.69%	2.31%	4.02%	2.07%
2020	All	3.77%	3.93%	3.33%	3.03%	3.93%	3.50%
2020	Tourism	2.62%	2.01%	1.15%	3.61%	2.79%	1.40%
2021	All	3.47%	3.77%	3.92%	2.95%	4.27%	3.41%
2021	Tourism	4.55%	4.30%	4.62%	11.82%	5.71%	2.52%

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

For all sectors, the regions of Lisboa and Algarve consistently show higher growth rates of average earnings compared to other regions. In contrast, the tourism sector shows more fluctuation in growth rates across regions and years. In most years, the tourism sector outperforms all sectors in terms of growth rates, indicating that it had a relatively stronger performance compared to other sectors. The year 2018 stands out as a significant year for

the tourism sector, with a relatively higher growth rate compared to all sectors, particularly in the region of Lisbon.

Table 11 shows the evolution of real average wages. We can observe that in some years, the tourism sector had lower real average wages compared to the total sectors (e.g., 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2015). However, there were also years where the tourism sector had higher real average wages compared to the total sectors (e.g., 2014, 2018, 2019, and 2021). Overall, the tourism sector shows some fluctuations in real average wages over the years compared to the total sectors.

Table 11. Real average wages.

Year	Total	Tourism Sector
2010	769	530
2011	293	463
2012	342	162
2013	3646	384
2014	1093	663
2015	2193	512
2016	1846	312
2017	810	194
2018	1170	359
2019	4033	784
2020	1251	470
2021	995	851

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

Unionized workers and collective work agreements play a vital role in protecting workers' rights, ensuring fair wages, safe working conditions, and promoting social dialogue [6]. They contribute to decent work by advocating worker's well-being and influencing labor policies and practices [6]. Unionization can enhance social sustainability by fostering social cohesion, empowerment, and collective action [6].

Table 12 shows the number of unionized workers or whose contract is under a collective bargaining agreement. It provides insights into the extent of coverage under different labor protection schemes. These schemes, such as collective bargaining agreements (CCT), employee representation (AE, ACT), and labor inspections (RCM, TCO), aim to safeguard workers' rights, promote fair working conditions, and ensure social sustainability. By analyzing the number of workers covered by these schemes, it becomes possible to assess the level of protection provided to employees within the tourism sector. The presence of labor protection schemes indicates a commitment to upholding workers' rights, including fair wages, reasonable working hours, occupational health and safety measures, and access to social benefits. When a significant number of workers in the tourism sector are covered by these schemes, it suggests a higher likelihood of decent work conditions, fair treatment, and social sustainability.

Labor protection schemes often contribute to the establishment of social safety nets for workers. These safety nets include provisions for healthcare, pension schemes, unemployment benefits, and other forms of social security. By providing such benefits, workers have a safety net that supports their well-being, protects against unexpected financial burdens, and promotes social sustainability.

Analyzing the coverage of labor protection schemes can also reveal any potential disparities or inequalities within the sector. Certain groups of workers' underrepresentation or exclusion from these schemes may indicate a need for targeted measures to address social inequalities and ensure equal opportunities for all workers.

Table 12. Number of workers employed by others covered by AE, ACT, CCT, RCM, and TCO.

Year	Sector	Total	ACT	CCT	PRT/PCT	AE
2010	All	2,392,229	92,357	2,035,142	172,176	92,554
2010	Tourism	176,519	143	174,285	945	1146
2011	All	2,334,202	92,459	1,979,526	173,093	89,124
2011	Tourism	174,280	123	172,152	935	1070
2012	All	2,142,249	97,097	1,775,773	186,893	82,486
2012	Tourism	160,075	93	157,442	1647	893
2013	All	2,125,264	97,694	1,752,648	194,848	80,074
2013	Tourism	159,366	93	156,850	1697	726
2014	All	2,185,093	97,038	1,802,130	205,896	80,029
2014	Tourism	166,621	81	163,800	1926	814
2015	All	2,245,136	99,532	1,855,203	212,238	78,163
2015	Tourism	180,622	91	177,075	2283	1173
2016	All	2,312,291	101,183	1,911,498	219,677	79,933
2016	Tourism	193,839	96	190,044	2615	1084
2017	All	2,395,125	106,693	1,975,887	226,793	85,752
2017	Tourism	211,294	12	208,267	2377	638
2018	All	2,481,058	109,690	2,073,822	211,503	86,043
2018	Tourism	228,968	11	225,766	1905	1286
2019	All	2,494,018	104,297	2,078,465	219,272	91,984
2019	Tourism	237,963	22	233,973	1784	2184
2020	All	2,444,795	118,636	2,014,412	221,568	90,179
2020	Tourism	202,517	18	198,957	1631	1911
2021	All	2,454,688	118,983	2,031,422	214,401	89,882
2021	Tourism	207,875	4	204,385	1697	1789

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

The total number of workers covered by AE, ACT, CCT, PRT/PCT, and TCO shows a fluctuating trend over the years. From 2010 to 2021, the total number of workers under those circumstances increased from 2,392,229 to 2,454,688, indicating a slight increase of approximately 2.6%. The number of unionized workers in the tourism sector also experienced fluctuations throughout the years. From 2010 to 2021, the number of unionized workers in the tourism sector increased from 176,519 to 207,875, reflecting a growth rate of approximately 17.8%. The growth rate of unionized workers in the tourism sector (17.8%) is significantly higher compared to the overall growth rate of all sectors (2.6%). This indicates that the tourism industry has experienced relatively stronger growth in terms of unionized employment compared to other sectors. This growth can be attributed to the improvement of labor conditions due to law enforcement.

Work accidents and sick leaves due to accidents have detrimental effects on both workers and organizations. They can lead to physical and psychological harm, loss of income, and increased healthcare costs [23]. Ensuring occupational health and safety measures, promoting a safe working environment, and providing adequate support for injured workers are crucial for achieving decent work and social sustainability [23].

Tables 13 and 14 show the number of work accidents and days of sick leave due to the accident. The tables highlight the importance of ensuring a safe working environment within the tourism sector. By tracking accidents at work and the resulting lost workdays, organizations and policymakers can identify areas that require improvement in terms of occupational health and safety practices. Prioritizing workplace safety helps protect workers' physical and psychological well-being, reduces accidents, and promotes social sustainability. Workplace accidents can have detrimental effects on workers, including physical injuries, psychological distress, loss of income, and increased healthcare costs. By monitoring and addressing the causes of accidents, organizations can better protect employee well-being, enhance job quality, and contribute to social sustainability.

Table 13. Accidents at Work, 2020.

Sector	Number of Workers			
	1–9	10–249	250–499	500+
All	216	726	1376	268
Tourism	4	0	7	0

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

Table 14. Days of work lost due to accidents at work.

Year	Total	Tourism Sector
2010	6,088,165	342,538
2011	5,632,280	291,769
2012	5,161,343	290,490
2013	4,986,266	279,223
2014	5,324,131	300,729
2015	5,459,744	353,121
2016	5,333,835	364,878
2017	5,430,340	330,237
2018	4,700,278	309,428
2019	4,866,635	351,710
2020	4,389,303	222,850
2021	6,088,165	342,538

Source: Quadros do Pessoal.

In 2020, there were a total of 2796 workplace accidents across all sectors. Within the tourism sector, there were 12 workplace accidents. When comparing the total number of accidents, the tourism sector represents a small portion of the overall incidents.

Lost workdays due to accidents can result in productivity losses for both workers and organizations. By quantifying the number of days lost, policymakers and employers can assess the economic impact of workplace accidents. Implementing measures to prevent accidents and provide adequate support for injured workers can reduce productivity losses, contribute to sustainable economic growth, and support social sustainability.

Over the years, the total number of lost workdays due to workplace accidents has varied. In 2020, there were 4,389,303 lost workdays in total. The tourism sector accounted for 222,850 lost workdays in 2020. Although the tourism sector experiences a significant number of lost workdays, it represents a smaller proportion compared to the total lost workdays across all sectors. In general, the tourism sector shows a relatively lower number of workplace accidents and lost workdays compared to the total figures across all sectors.

We can now summarize the key findings for each social sustainability indicator shown in Tables 2–14:

Number of firms: The tourism sector in Portugal has seen an increase in the number of firms over the years, indicating potential job opportunities and competition. This can contribute to better working conditions and social sustainability.

Birth rate of firms: The tourism sector has shown a moderate increase in the birth rate of firms, indicating a dynamic and potentially innovative industry. However, the impact on social sustainability depends on the quality of these new firms.

Survival rate of firms: The tourism sector has consistently exhibited a higher survival rate compared to all sectors, indicating a stable and resilient industry. This can positively impact decent work and social sustainability.

Firm size: The average size of firms in the tourism sector has remained relatively constant and comparable to the overall economy. Larger firms generally have more resources to invest in employee benefits and working conditions, but it is crucial to ensure they prioritize employee welfare for social sustainability.

Turnover: Turnover in the tourism sector has followed a similar trend as the overall economy, suggesting its alignment with broader economic conditions. Stable employment and lower turnover rates contribute to better job quality and social sustainability.

Gross value added (GVA): The GVA in the tourism sector has fluctuated over the years, but it has generally contributed to the economy. It is important to ensure that the distribution of GVA benefits workers and promotes social sustainability.

Inflation: The tourism sector has experienced fluctuations in inflation rates similar to the overall economy. Controlling inflation and ensuring corresponding wage adjustments are important for maintaining decent work conditions and social sustainability.

Investment: Investment in the tourism sector has shown an upward trend, indicating potential improvements in infrastructure, technology, and worker training. However, it is important to ensure that investments prioritize long-term sustainability and decent work practices.

Employment: The number of employees in the tourism sector has fluctuated over the years, with indications of recovery and potential growth. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact, leading to a temporary decline in employment levels.

Gender representation: The tourism sector has a higher representation of women compared to men, indicating opportunities for gender equality. However, a persistent gender pay gap exists, requiring targeted policies to address and reduce the disparity.

Work duration: Employees in the tourism sector generally work longer hours compared to the average for all sectors. Balancing work and personal life is crucial for maintaining decent work and social well-being.

Part-time jobs: The tourism sector has shown remarkable growth in the number of employees in part-time jobs, outpacing the growth rate of all sectors. This trend raises concerns about job insecurity, reduced access to social benefits, and lower wages for part-time workers. The quality of part-time jobs and their impact on social sustainability need to be considered.

Wage levels: The average monthly base remunerations and earnings have increased over time in the tourism sector. The sector generally exhibits stronger growth in remuneration compared to the overall average for all sectors.

Gender pay gap: Despite improvements, a gender pay gap persists in the tourism sector, with women consistently earning less than men. Further efforts are needed to address and reduce this disparity.

Average monthly earnings: Both men and women in the tourism sector have experienced an increase in average monthly earnings over time. However, a gender pay gap remains, indicating a disparity in overall compensation.

Growth rates of average earnings by region: The growth rates of average earnings vary across regions and years in both the tourism sector and all sectors. Regional disparities need to be considered for inclusive social sustainability.

In a nutshell, the tourism sector in Portugal exhibited both positive developments and challenges in terms of social sustainability between 2010 and 2020. While the sector has shown growth, stability, and improvements in remuneration, there are nevertheless persistent issues, such as the gender pay gap and the increasing reliance on part-time employment. Addressing these challenges, promoting gender equality, ensuring decent working conditions, and supporting sustainable growth are essential for enhancing social sustainability in tourism firms in Portugal.

5. Discussion

The concept of decent work, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) [13], encompasses four pillars: employment creation, social protection, rights at work, and social dialogue. It emphasizes the provision of productive work opportunities with fair income, secure workplaces, personal development prospects, freedom of expression and organization, and equality of opportunity and treatment for both men and women.

However, empirical research reveals a mixed perception of the quality of work, working conditions, and practices in the tourism sector from a “decent work” perspective [12,14,15].

The literature highlights several issues within the tourism workplace that affect the achievement of decent work. These include informal work arrangements, extended working hours, low wages, limited social protection, and gender discrimination [10,16–28]. Moreover, inadequate working schedules, insecure employment contracts, overwork, insufficient pay, lack of progression opportunities, missed mealtimes, wage disputes, low recognition of trade unions, income insecurity, split shifts, unpaid overtime, physical violence, sexual harassment, and stress are prevalent concerns [25,29–31]. Additional issues identified in the literature include lack of respect and recognition, limited workplace autonomy, monotonous tasks, poor communication, inadequate fixtures and fittings, issues related to people’s identity at work, sexualized labor, sex tourism, racism, and seasonality [32–36].

It is important to recognize that decent work extends beyond job creation and emphasizes the quality of employment [13]. Workplace dignity is positively correlated with corporate social sustainability, suggesting that firms need to provide decent working conditions to enhance social sustainability [37]. The study categorizes corporate social sustainability indicators into eight dimensions: physical working conditions, wages, career development, health, community, clients, competitors, and the economy [37]. These indicators, derived from the literature, reflect the stakeholders’ perspective and cover a range of aspects relevant to social sustainability.

Social sustainability in tourism often focuses on specific aspects such as community engagement, local perceptions, and social impacts. It emphasizes the involvement of local communities in tourism development and the promotion of their well-being. This approach typically addresses issues such as community participation, cultural preservation, and the equitable distribution of benefits. While important, this narrow definition may overlook other crucial dimensions of social sustainability, such as labor rights, gender equality, social justice, and inclusive practices.

Adopting a broader approach to social sustainability in tourism involves expanding the scope beyond community involvement to encompass a wider range of social considerations. This includes addressing issues related to decent work, fair employment practices, social justice, gender equality, human rights, and the well-being of all stakeholders involved in the tourism sector. By adopting a comprehensive perspective, tourism destinations and stakeholders can strive to create an inclusive, equitable, and socially responsible tourism industry.

In the context of tourism and Portugal, social sustainability encompasses not only the involvement and well-being of local communities but also considerations such as labor conditions, gender equality, cultural diversity, and social inclusion. Portugal has recognized the importance of social sustainability in its tourism development strategies and policies. The country has made efforts to promote responsible tourism practices, support local communities, and safeguard cultural heritage. However, challenges still exist, including issues related to seasonality, informal work, labor rights, and the need for more inclusive and equitable tourism practices.

International and EU Operational Environment for Socially Sustainable Tourism: At the international level, organizations like the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) play significant roles in promoting socially sustainable tourism. The UNWTO has developed guidelines and initiatives to support destinations in achieving social sustainability objectives. The European Union (EU) also emphasizes social sustainability in its tourism policies, highlighting the need for responsible and inclusive tourism development.

The results indicate an increase in the number of firms in the tourism sector, suggesting potential job opportunities and competition. The growth in the number of firms can contribute to better working conditions and social sustainability. Further, the results show a moderate increase in the birth rate of firms in the tourism sector. This indicates a dynamic

and potentially innovative industry. Encouraging the birth of new firms can contribute to the overall social sustainability of the tourism sector. Both findings align with the results of [54], which emphasizes the importance of local community perceptions and development guidelines for socially sustainable tourism in cities. Moreover, the results show that the average size of firms in the tourism sector has remained relatively constant and comparable to those in the overall economy. Larger firms generally have more resources to invest in employee benefits and working conditions, in agreement with [70].

Replying to the research question: “What are the employment and remuneration trends in the tourism sector in Portugal, and what are the implications for social sustainability?” The results indicate that employment and remuneration trends in the tourism sector in Portugal have shown both positive developments and challenges in relation to social sustainability.

Tourism firms in Portugal between 2010 and 2020 have made contributions to the social dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in various ways.

Job Opportunities and Competition: The increase in the number of firms in the tourism sector suggests potential job opportunities and competition. This contributes to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by creating employment opportunities and promoting economic development. However, it is essential to ensure that these job opportunities come with fair wages, adequate working conditions, and opportunities for career advancement to fully address the social dimension of SDGs.

Stability and Resilience: The tourism sector has exhibited a higher survival rate compared to other sectors, indicating its stability and resilience. This is beneficial for SDG 1 (No Poverty) as it helps provide stability and economic opportunities for individuals and communities. Stable employment contributes to poverty reduction and social well-being.

Gender Representation and Pay Gap: The higher representation of women in the tourism sector suggests opportunities for gender equality, aligning with SDG 5 (Gender Equality). However, the persistent gender pay gap indicates a disparity in overall compensation. To fully contribute to SDG 5, efforts should be made to address and reduce the gender pay gap and ensure equal opportunities for women in terms of wages, job positions, and career advancement.

Part-time Employment and Job Insecurity: The growth in the number of employees in part-time jobs raises concerns about job insecurity, reduced access to social benefits, and lower wages. This poses a challenge to SDG 8, as it may lead to inequalities and hinder the social well-being of individuals. To contribute positively to the social dimension of SDGs, tourism firms should strive to provide stable and secure employment with fair working conditions for all employees.

Wage Levels and Job Quality: The increase in average monthly base remunerations and earnings in the tourism sector indicates some improvement in job quality. This aligns with SDG 8, as decent wages contribute to reducing inequalities and improving living standards. However, efforts should continue to address the persisting gender pay gap and ensure that wage increases are inclusive and benefit all employees.

Overall, tourism firms in Portugal from 2010 to 2020 have made contributions to the social dimension of SDGs through job creation, stability, gender representation, and improved wage levels. However, challenges remain, such as the gender pay gap and the reliance on part-time employment. To enhance their contribution to the social dimension of SDGs, tourism firms should prioritize fair working conditions, equal opportunities, and sustainable employment practices that benefit all employees. Additionally, collaboration between government, industry stakeholders, and communities is crucial to address these challenges and achieve sustainable social development in the tourism sector.

Furthermore, maintaining good relationships with stakeholders can enhance a firm's social sustainability by developing and preserving intangible assets [44]. Workplace benefits, such as improved health and safety conditions, can motivate employees, foster loyalty, reduce recruitment and training costs, and increase productivity [45,46]. Socially sus-

tainable practices can also contribute to a firm's sustainable competitive advantage by enhancing reputation and consumer trust in brand value [47,48].

Exploitative employment practices often lead to employee dissatisfaction and disengagement, high absenteeism, and resignation. Such feelings negatively affect client satisfaction and indirectly impact economic viability [71,72]. The lack of decent work in tourism poses a threat to future recruitment, engagement, and retention [73–75].

A renewed understanding of decent work, promoting dignity and fostering positive changes in firms' settings, can be key to achieving decent tourism employment, as envisaged in SDG8 [76]. Actions such as integrating dignity in the workplace through communication and manager education [77], taking pride in work as a meaningful contribution to the organization's success, reaffirming one's values and capabilities to overcome low social standing [78], and promoting a more humanistic and collaborative approach to running operations [79] are suggested in the tourism literature.

This research provides quantitative data and trends on employment and remuneration in the accommodation sector, enabling policymakers and stakeholders to make informed decisions. The analysis of the gender pay gap and gender representation adds an important dimension to the study, highlighting the need for gender equality measures in the sector. The examination of regional variations offers insights into regional disparities and the potential for targeted policies to address specific challenges in different regions.

While our study sheds light on prevailing trends in tourism work conditions and contributes to understanding decent work within the context of tourism employment and the broader global sustainability agenda, it is important to critically assess the limitations of our research. Firstly, the lack of comparable data on global work quality [80] hinders a comprehensive analysis of the quality of work in the tourism sector. This limitation restricts our ability to make robust comparisons and draw definitive conclusions about the social sustainability of tourism employment beyond the Portuguese context. Secondly, the concept of decent work itself lacks a clear and universally accepted definition [81]. This ambiguity introduces challenges in assessing and measuring decent work, making it difficult to fully capture its implications for social sustainability in the tourism sector. Additionally, conflicts arise between the goals of economic growth, full employment, and decent work [82–84]. These tensions highlight the complex trade-offs that policymakers and businesses face in pursuing social sustainability while ensuring economic prosperity and job creation. Moreover, neoliberal practices in the workplace, emphasizing competition, progress, and profitability [85] can have adverse effects on job quality, security, and benefits. These practices may undermine the social sustainability of tourism employment by prioritizing financial gain over the well-being of workers. Furthermore, the difficulty in aligning social sustainability objectives with measurable indicators [72,84,85] poses challenges in assessing progress and setting normative targets. The lack of conceptual clarity in the field of social sustainability further complicates the task of effectively measuring and monitoring social sustainability outcomes in the tourism sector.

This study's reliance on outdated data [80,86] limits our ability to capture recent developments and trends in the tourism sector. This restricts the depth of our understanding of the underlying causes and dynamics influencing employment and remuneration in the industry. Additionally, our analysis does not provide a comprehensive examination of all relevant factors that may influence employment and remuneration trends, such as economic conditions, policy changes, or industry-specific dynamics. This narrow focus limits the holistic understanding of the complex interplay between social sustainability and employment dynamics in the tourism sector. Furthermore, while statistical data can provide valuable insights, they have inherent limitations in capturing qualitative aspects, personal experiences, and diverse perspectives. Social sustainability is a multifaceted concept that cannot be fully captured by numbers alone [80,81]. Therefore, complementing statistical sources with qualitative research methods, stakeholder consultations, and participatory approaches would enhance our understanding of social sustainability in tourism by incorporating the perspectives and experiences of relevant stakeholders.

By and large, this analysis underscores the significance of corporate social sustainability in the tourism sector. It emphasizes the need for businesses to prioritize decent work, provide safe and fair working conditions, and promote equitable pay practices. By doing so, firms can enhance their social sustainability, maintain positive relationships with stakeholders, and contribute to their sustainable competitive advantage. Policymakers should work towards creating an enabling environment that supports these principles and fosters the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry. However, while this study provides valuable insights and highlights important trends, further research and analysis considering a broader range of factors would enhance the understanding of the dynamics within the tourism sector and facilitate the development of more targeted policies.

6. Conclusions

This paper examines the concepts of decent work and corporate social sustainability in the tourism industry, specifically focusing on Portugal. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the interlinkage between decent work, corporate social sustainability, and tourism employment in the specific context of Portugal, contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics and challenges within the tourism industry and providing insights for future research and practical interventions.

The enhancement of the tourism sector's reputation as a place of employment carries significant implications for addressing the growing skills shortages. Proactive efforts to improve working conditions, provide fair opportunities for career advancement, and foster a culture of dignity in the workplace are crucial. These measures not only benefit the industry but also contribute to broader societal well-being. In a broader context, sustainable development emerges as a fundamental requirement for achieving both social and economic sustainability in tourism. Integrating the principles of sustainability into the core fabric of the industry can create a positive impact on the environment, society, and the economy.

Policy Implications. This study provides valuable insight into the employment and remuneration trends of the tourism sector in Portugal and thus on social sustainability through the employees' point of view.

The findings indicate that the tourism sector in Portugal had a higher survival rate on average compared to all sectors, indicating relative stability. The average size of firms in the tourism sector remained constant throughout the years, similar to the overall economy. The tourism sector experienced fluctuations in employment levels over the years, with a decline observed during the period from 2010 to 2012, likely due to economic challenges. However, there was a gradual recovery and growth in employment until 2019, followed by a decline in 2020 attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The tourism sector generally exhibited higher growth rates in employment compared to all sectors, suggesting a relatively stronger performance in terms of employment growth.

The analysis also revealed an increasing reliance on part-time employment in the tourism sector, with significant growth observed in the number of employees in part-time positions. This trend emphasizes the dominance of part-time employment in this sector. In addition, employees in the tourism sector were found to have longer average working hours compared to the overall average for all sectors. This suggests that employees in the tourism sector generally work longer hours, regardless of their qualification level. However, the number of unionized workers in the tourism sector exhibited higher growth rates compared to all sectors, indicating stronger growth in terms of unionized employment within the tourism industry. This could explain the fact that the tourism sector showed higher growth rates in remuneration compared to the overall average, indicating a relatively stronger performance over the analyzed period. Moreover, while the tourism sector exhibited some fluctuations in real average wages compared to all sectors, it generally followed similar trends as the overall economy. In terms of remuneration, the average monthly base salaries and earnings increased over time in both the tourism sector and all sectors. However, persistent gender pay gaps were observed in tourism sector, with women consistently earning less than men. Thus, although progress has been made in

narrowing the gap, targeted policies and further analysis are needed to address and reduce gender pay disparities within the sector.

These results highlight both positive and concerning aspects related to decent work and corporate social sustainability in the tourism sector in Portugal. While the sector exhibited growth in employment and remuneration, persistent gender pay gaps, an increasing reliance on part-time employment, and longer working hours raise concerns regarding decent work practices. The higher survival rate of tourism firms suggests relative stability, but further analysis of firm performance is necessary to understand the sector's overall sustainability.

Recommendations. Based on these findings, it is imperative for policymakers and stakeholders in the tourism industry to employ targeted interventions to effectively address the gender pay gap, promote equitable work practices, and ensure social sustainability. These interventions should encompass strategies that facilitate equal opportunities, enhance working conditions, and optimize the overall well-being of employees within the sector. Furthermore, the formulation of policies aimed at sustainable tourism management and sector diversification can contribute significantly to its long-term social sustainability.

Given the profound repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry, the implementation of policies geared towards supporting employment recovery and fostering growth is of paramount importance. Such policies may encompass a range of measures, including the provision of financial assistance, the establishment of comprehensive training programs, and the execution of targeted marketing campaigns. Additionally, the identification of regional disparities in growth rates necessitates the design of policies that stimulate employment and remuneration growth in regions characterized by lower rates of growth, thereby ensuring a more balanced and inclusive national development trajectory.

Future research should aim to replicate the study in diverse contexts, explore alternative indicators and measurement approaches, and consider the perspectives of different stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. By addressing these research gaps, scholars and practitioners can advance the understanding and implementation of decent work and corporate social sustainability in the tourism sector, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability of the tourism industry.

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