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# Discourses and Educational Initiatives for Developing Sustainability Competences of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development

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## Abstract

The adoption of the logic of developing sustainable development (SD) competences in the business environment has grown both in the literature in the area and in business initiative programs. One player that emerges with the aim of assuming leadership in this process is the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). This article aims to answer the following research question: Are the WBCSD's discourses and initiatives for developing sustainability competences spaces of various translations of corporate sustainability or a place for reaffirming logocentric and definitive discourses on the theme? For this, we analyzed the institutional documents (Vision 2050 and Action 2020) and carried out a series of on-site visits at the Brazilian and Portuguese BCSDs. In addition, we conducted a set of in-depth interviews with the managers and participants in the initiatives for developing sustainability competences (DSC). The data were analyzed according to the categories of Derrida's *deconstruction* process. The analysis of the educational initiatives of the Brazilian and Portuguese BCSDs showed that they include the various discourses on corporate sustainability in their formative approach; however, logocentric and definitive thinking about the theme is reaffirmed in that the way the Vision 2050 guidelines are carried out is limited to the application of management tools.

**Keywords:** think tank; educational actions; developing sustainability competences; WBCSD; Derrida.

## Introduction

The adoption of the logic of sustainability development (SD) competences in the business environment has grown both in the literature in the area (Lans, Blok, & Wesselink, 2013; Munck & Borim-de-Souza, 2012) and in business initiative programs (Wiek, Withycombe, & Redman, 2011). Behind this movement there is the idea that it is necessary to create educational spaces and mechanisms of transformative learning to promote the development of human capacity in work, at the individual and collective levels, to respond to pressure from civil society movements, governments, and international organizations such as the UN for practices recognized as socioenvironmental competences (Ribeiro, Cortese, Kniess, & Conti, 2019). Regarding the macroinitiatives in this field, one player that emerges with the intention of assuming leadership in this process in the business context is the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), the object of study of this research, which fosters programs for developing sustainability competences.

The Council acts in a context of the emergence and strengthening of international institutions and multilateral organizations that recommend and demand companies implement socioenvironmental management systems. These are social actors that Stone (2005) recognizes as think tanks, that is, groups that seek to influence governments and companies in areas of interest. Many of these entities aim to stimulate business practices that combine economic efficiency with ecological efficiency (Wals, 2010). The WBCSD can be considered an example of a think tank that acts in providing guidance on SD, in that it seeks to organize spaces for debate and courses for developing sustainability competences, as is the case of the Future Leaders Team (FLT), which focuses on training young businesspeople.

The WBCSD is the focus of this research due to its global relevance and heavy penetration in this field. It is a forum created in 1992 by the Swiss entrepreneur Stephan Schmidheiny with the aim of defending at the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Human Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, the interests and theses of the business segment in relation to sustainable development. The WBCSD includes 60 national and regional business councils and more than 200 companies. The aim of the entity is to foster the development of projects related with sustainability. This article seeks to analyze the formal and informal educational strategies of this entity to mobilize large companies in discourse and action geared toward sustainable development. We intend to answer the following research question: Are the WBCSD's discourses and initiatives for developing sustainability competences spaces of various translations of corporate sustainability or a place for reaffirming logocentric and definitive discourses on the theme?

To answer this question, we intend to analyze the WBCSD's discourses and initiatives in order to widen the discussion on the role of this international entity as a key think tank player, which not only guides the business agenda in relation to sustainable development, but also seeks the creation of educational spaces dedicated to developing competences focused on sustainability (Brunstein, Jaime, Curi, D'Angelo, & Mainardes, 2015). The data analysis uses Derrida (1999). The aim is not to study the text (discourses and initiatives) itself, but the translation that is being carried out in the learning approach. Translation can be understood as a reading experience, in which we seek to understand what was not read in the official interpretation of the institutions, in this case BCSD Brazil and BCSD Portugal (Bernardo, 2001, p. 346). This concerns a reading that is marked by

deviations in meaning or displacements that enable us to imagine, in the translation experience, the *deconstruction* movement (Derrida, 1997). This movement opens up the concepts to the signification experience, in which the translation process is experienced. It can thus be understood that, from this perspective, the business discourses are permeated by institutional policies, in the search to control the competences and practices of the organizational actors (Derrida, 2013, pp. 43-44). Derrida calls this process logocentrism, which is thinking based on oppositions, in which hierarchical relationships are created centralized in the power of logos, with the aim of controlling the discourses (Derrida, 1973).

This control is possible through the application of management techniques, embedded in a context marked by discourses and metaphors that explain the official and short-term interventionist interpretation to the detriment of in-depth and long-term theoretical reflection. The choice of Derrida's deconstruction as a methodology for analyzing this learning approach makes it possible to destabilize the structures and discern "in the discourse" what has still not been read "in the creation of concepts and functioning of the institutions" (Wolfreys, 2009, p. 59). For this, we carried out field studies concerning the actions and initiatives of BCSD Portugal and BCSD Brazil with regard to the development of sustainability competences (DSC). The article aims to provide two main contributions: (a) an analysis of the WBCSD's discourses and initiatives in order to discuss its role as a think tank player that not only guides businesspeople's DS agendas, but also fosters the creation of learning spaces with a view to developing sustainability competences; (b) a discussion of the implications of the DSC experiences of this agency, from the perspective of Derrida's deconstruction, enabling us to understand the translation that sustains its discourses and its educational actions in terms of ambiguities, contradictions, limits, and potentialities.

## **The emergence of think tanks as translators of the sustainability discourse**

The civil society institutions known as think tanks play an important role, as they seek to act in advising governments and businesses politically and economically, with the aim of translating the sustainable development discussion to the corporate environment. The term "think tank" emerged based on the actions of the RAND Corporation, which after the Second World War formed an advisory space for strategic planning in the USA. Stone (2005) highlights four phases in the history of think tanks. The first occurred before the Second World War, with the actions of institutes in Western Europe and the United States, emphasizing the discussion of topics related to urbanization, industrialization, and economic growth. The second phase occurred in the period after the Second World War, marked by the growth of institutes in the whole of Europe, focusing on the debate about foreign policy and security. In the third phase, from the 1970s onward, groups emerged that reflected on the economic and political instability of developing countries, in which discussions about the pillars of the Washington consensus predominated, such as privatization, financial liberalization, and deregulation. In the fourth phase, in the 1990s, the actions of think tanks were marked by new forms of global and virtual interaction and a variety of discussion topics, considering aspects related to sustainable development, after the Brundtland report (1987) and the Eco-92 Conference. These phases are not necessarily linear, but nicely express the focus of the actions of these entities on the global stage in each historical period.

In this movement, there has been diversification and specialization of focuses, with organizations that are dedicated to debating economic questions and others that specialize in discussing socioenvironmental questions (Stone, 2005). In this sense, Stone (2005) highlights international institutions and multilateral organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which acts in recommending environmental management systems and indicators with the aim of measuring and reducing the environmental impact of companies. However, Raska and Shaw (2012) question the capacity of companies to respond to the complexity of the socioenvironmental question with the application of management tools recommended by these institutions. For them, these instruments, which serve the logic of continuous improvement, are not enough to reduce environmental and social degradation at the speed that is needed. Moreover, the actions of think tanks may be limited to providing consulting on corporate environmental communication, focusing the debate on management tools and instruments, whose aim is to align discourses with shareholders (Herzig & Godemann, 2010).

One theoretical discussion that can contribute to understanding this impasse is that of Lima (2003). This author analyzes the SD discussion based on two major discursive matrices: the official one and the unofficial one. The official matrix defends the articulation between environmental conservation and economic growth and understands that the capitalist development model is capable of reconciling increased industrial production with environmental preservation. The unofficial matrix defends the strengthening of democracy with civil society and state participation in defining action strategies that collaborate in developing a sustainable society (Lima, 2003). Its defenders “react to the economic and technological reductionism that characterize the official discourse” (Lima, 2003, p. 109). Considering that think tank institutions exert a role as translators of the SD logic, crossing between the spaces of companies, civil society, and governments, it is worth understanding how close their initiatives come to the unofficial discourse, in which listening to various discourses is valued. In the case of this study, it is by analyzing the programs of the WBCSD think tank that we will observe whether the discourses and initiatives for developing sustainability competences are spaces of various translations of corporate sustainability or a place for reaffirming logocentric and definitive discourses on the theme.

## **Developing sustainability competences**

When considering the debate about the need for professionals to develop competences to address the sustainability question, different approaches can be found, according to the way each author incorporates the discussion. On one hand, some researchers treat these competences from a more functional and pragmatic perspective, associating them primarily with management tools. On the other hand, there are authors that address the topic based on a logic anchored in a critical overview of the studies in the area, which even involves questions of an ideological and power-related nature. Both perspectives provide important contributions to understanding the topic, but they have different scopes that need to be pointed out. In the more managerial logic, the concern primarily focuses on the key elements that drive a competence and its tools (defining strategy, training, competence management models, and a list of competences that should be developed and measured). In the logic more anchored in the critical studies, in turn, the concern lies with the content of that competence and its impact on the way business is conducted (which organizational

or societal model these competences serve; what organizational nature is of interest to a sustainable society).

Sehnem, Martignago, Pereira, and Jabour (2019), Munck and Borim-de-Souza (2012), Jamali (2006), and Garlet et al. (2019) argue that one of the challenges of organizations is to develop management models that favor an alignment between the organizational objectives and missions geared toward sustainability and stakeholders. In this sense, competence management assumes the role of relating the goals of different interest groups. One of the paths toward achieving this goal is to carry out DSC programs linked to the guidelines of a company's sustainability policy, commonly defined according to the stakeholders and collaborators (Wiek et al., 2011). Gitsham (2012), in turn, emphasizes the need to involve managers in projects that result in real transformations in people's lives, as a form of DSC. The author analyzes the management training programs of the companies HSBC and IBM, in which the subjects are involved in experiential learning, which consists of intervention actions in the territory, carried out based on diagnostics and dialogues with those living in the environment around the companies. Gitsham (2012) observed that mobilizing businesspeople in actions that benefit the community represents an advance in sustainability initiatives. This is because the rhetorical nature of the sustainability discourse is minimized in favor of the idea that managers assume commitments with effective actions. What this shows is that even work that is more anchored in a more functional logic, of alignment with companies' management models, needs to create competences that serve the agendas of interest groups and that result in a transformation in the lives of people in the environment around the organizations.

Based on a literature search, Dentoni, Blok, Lans, and Wesselink (2012) present a theoretical framework formed of a set of seven competences needed to advance in the direction of corporate sustainability: competence for systemic thinking, normative competence, competence for action, and strategic competence. These competences involve developing the capacity for collaboration between different social actors; the ability to reflect on interdependences between the social, economic, and environmental systems; the capacity to evaluate socioenvironmental impacts in decision making; the ability of managers to consider values and principles and outline goals not only regarding what the world is, but what it should be; taking responsibility for continuous improvements and for developing sustainability goals that go beyond the required legal aspects and use of technologies alone; the ability to communicate, engage, collaborate, negotiate, and motivate others in practical activities and in research; and, finally, designing collective projects, intervention programs, and strategies for developing sustainable practices.

But going beyond defining key competences such as those mentioned above, studies that are more anchored in the critical perspective, such as those of Kearins and Springett (2003), argue that the educational processes of managers have to lead to overcoming the dominant paradigm, that is, the one that has led us to the stage of unsustainability in which we find ourselves. For this, they propose that the learning experiences should develop reflexivity, critical capacity, and a capacity for social action and engagement. Reflexivity relates to the professional's competence in reflecting on the assumptions that sustain management, that is, how we understand our participation in building the reality and its interference in decision making. It concerns the capacity to respond to problems that arise based on the complex interdependence between individual, social, political, and economic questions. All of this requires reflection at the level of the assumptions and values that sustain company management and action. These are reflections that

lead to the following questions: How and for what do we produce? What choices do we make? Critical capacity, in turn, refers to the manager's capacity to question the power relations present in the cultural contexts in which the organization finds itself embedded, recognizing the ideology that influences these relations. Finally, social action and engagement are revealed in the capacity to carry out sustainable actions that collaborate in the global emancipation process focusing on radically changing the current structures. For the authors, these capacities can be developed in formative spaces, but, for this, the educational experience has to identify the contradictions and gaps in the sustainability discourse of the organization (Kearins & Springett).

From the same perspective, Tilbury and Wortman (2004) define a set of competences to be developed by subjects, groups, and organizations with the aim of achieving a sustainable society, such as: a vision of the future, the development of critical and reflexive thinking, systemic thinking, the building of partnerships, and participation in decision making. What stands out here is the need to reflect on the relationships between the desired future and the values of individuals, in order to identify the competences that the group should develop to achieve a shared vision geared toward SD. Developing critical and reflexive thinking would favor, for them, overcoming barriers to practicing sustainability, by provoking reflection on the power relations present in the community, neighborhood, or institutions, which restrict access to rights to their group of interests alone (Tilbury & Wortman).

In light of the above, it is worth mentioning that, considering that the theoretical approaches that address DCS vary from more pragmatic and functional positions (alignment of the actions of subjects with the sustainability guidelines established by companies), to a more critical one (which defends building a new way of thinking and acting in the company and reviewing its *raison d'être*), a risk is run (Brunnquell, Brunstein, & Jaime, 2015). These different perspectives end up producing some level of dichotomy, which does not always contribute to advancing DSC discourses and practices. Recognizing these ambiguities and gaps in the process of developing competences could make it possible to identify methodological alternatives (Palma & Pedrozo, 2019).

Amazonas (2012, p. 36) supports this reflection when the author affirms that there are limitations in the efficiency gain provided by technological innovation and that the sustainability discussion is only viable when it considers the "maintenance of strategic ecosystems and functional ecosystems vital to biogeochemical equilibrium." This reading demonstrates that developing competences focused on management tools does not prepare businesspeople for dealing with socioenvironmental questions that involve sustainable development. Thus, "economic efficiency should be secondary to the moral imperatives of equality and socioenvironmental sustainability" (Fonseca & Amazonas, 2011, p. 97).

That is, the construction of an educational process that enables more meaningful and robust DSC given the size of the challenges we face needs to consider the "environmental limits, put in terms of the support capacity and resilience of natural environments and resources" (Amazonas, 2012, p. 36). More than the reproduction of Cartesian methods in DCS, collective learning processes are proposed, "supported by the invention movement and taking care of life" (Demoly & Santos, 2019). Ruth (2006) supports this reflection in affirming that

Under the regime of competence frameworks, we do not have “the examined life” but performance subjected to surveillance. At a time when it seems at least reasonable to argue that the intellectual, the scientifically-based, the technologically-developed, the rational apparatus of the developed world is failing to deliver a sustainable and coherent future for the planet..., we can surely conclude that the notions of competence, embedded in that apparatus, are also questionable. (Ruth, 2006, p. 215)

In this sense, Palma, Pedrozo, and Alvez (2019) argue that businesspeople need to be trained to fulfill the expectations of stakeholders (socioenvironmental questions) and not only the demands of shareholders (economic efficiency). That is, the decisions of managers in the sustainable logic occur from a systemic and integrative perspective when they consider the environmental, social, and economic pillars (Cavenaghi & Munck, 2018). One way of developing this competence is by embracing the diversity of discourses on sustainability in the formative approach, in the context of ecosystemic services (Castillo, Pasquo, Busan, & Klier, 2019).

It is with this theoretical context in mind that we will analyze the DSC experiences of the WBCSD, especially the initiatives of the Brazilian and Portuguese councils. The inspiration for the creation of these initiatives is the Vision 2050 document, which aims to be an agenda for companies geared toward SD, and which serves as a reference for the actions of the regional business councils. Each national council, in turn, develops its own guiding document, called Action 2020, which adapts the guidelines of the Vision 2050 document to its own specificities and priorities.

## Methodological approach

Choosing Derrida’s deconstruction proposal as an analytical approach means assuming methodological thinking that favors understanding the WBCSD’s DSC discourses and actions as spaces of ambiguities and displacements (Cooper & Burrell, 1988). Deconstruction “is a way of taking a position, in its analysis works, with regard to the political and institutional structures that constitute and regulate our practices, our competences, and our performance” (Derrida, 1999, p. 108).

Thus, Derrida understands the constative responsibility of institutions as the scientific competence that describes the reality in search of the truth. Performative responsibility, in turn, is configured as a technical competence, and it is simultaneously concerned with the performance of a technical system, but also with the act of language, which “produces or transforms, by itself, in certain conditions, the situation it talks about” (Derrida, 1999, p. 105). In this sense, with the practice of language, therefore, the delimitation between the constative and the performative is made unviable, and the boundaries between thinking and acting are deconstructed, as the thinking acts and rethinks the performative, so as to displace the illusion of control that seeks to regulate and manipulate discourses, translations, competences, and performances.

In this research, that means studying the DSC initiatives in order to identify the concepts and political and institutional structures of the WBCSD revealed by the narratives and official documents, which ultimately serve as a reference for the practices and competences developed by the entity. The deconstruction was carried out through the displacement of the dichotomous positions that sustain the discourse of the WBCSD entity, revealed through the interviews and the

documentary analysis. Thus, the deconstruction enables us to observe the logocentric emphasis or otherwise of the discourses; that is, whether there is or is not an attempt to control the interpretations and translations of the subjects regarding sustainability in the corporate environment. This implies looking at the arguments of the interviewees and the documents in order to perceive what is, and what is not, marginal in the elaboration of concepts and functioning of the councils (Derrida, 2002). The data from the research were built as follows. We monitored the initiatives of both the Brazilian and Portuguese councils, with the aim of understanding the meanings of their actions, as well as the DSC methodologies and strategies developed between 2005 and 2019. In Brazil, we studied the “Business Partnership for Ecosystemic Services” (PESE), which prepares professionals for the sustainable management of ecosystems. In Portugal, we studied the “Young Managers Team” (YMT) project, which is dedicated to preparing young businesspeople to deal with sustainability in business. In this sense, it was verified that the PESE and YTM were inspired by the guidelines contained in the Vision 2050 and Action 2020 documents.

To conduct the study, we analyzed the following institutional documents: (a) the Vision 2050 Report; (b) Action 2020 – business solutions for SD, in its Portuguese version; (c) Action 2020 – business solutions for SD, in its Brazilian version. In addition, we carried out a series of on-site visits at both the Brazilian and Portuguese institutions and conducted a set of in-depth interviews, using a semi-structured script. The interviews occurred individually and involved three members of the BCSD Portugal management team, referred to as Coordination P in this study, and six members of the of the DSC program, referred to as Associates B. We sought to interview the associates who participated in different groups of the DSC program and whose companies were historically more active in the Council. Then the content of the recordings was transcribed and organized according to analysis categories inspired by the discussion proposed by Derrida.

The analytical approach of the study therefore considers the categories of Derrida’s deconstruction process: logocentrism, constative and performative structures, ambiguities, displacement, and translation. These are the key elements that guided the analysis of the WBCSD’s discourses and actions, as presented in Table 1.



Table 1  
Analysis categories

Analysis categories	Description according to Derrida	How was it applied in the research?
Logocentrism	Thinking convinced of the centrality and power of the logos, developed based on dichotomies and hierarchical relationships, with the aim of controlling and centralizing the discourses (Derrida, 2002)	We sought to identify the <i>concepts, oppositions, and DSC actions</i> of the WBCSD and discuss the relationship with the official documents under analysis (Vision 2050 and Action 2020) and with the DSC initiatives (PESE and YMT). The aim was to understand how logocentrism spreads in the discourses and actions of the Business Councils.
Constatative and performative structures, ambiguities, and displacements	These are focal points of the deconstruction approach to undo the oppositions of a discourse. Thus, based on impasses and ambiguities, the displacement of the dichotomies is carried out.	To study the structure of the WBCSD's DSC initiatives, we sought to observe how the dichotomy between performative and constative competences is revealed and explain the official discourse of the WBCSD and its regional councils.
Translation	Translation is another name for deconstruction, "it is the opening up to the other" in its singular mode of translating (Bernardo, 2002, p. 424). It is assumed that "everything becomes a discourse" and open to translations (Derrida, 2002, p. 232). In this sense, the discourse is understood as a translation process containing different forms of interpretations (Ferreira & Ottoni, 2006, p. 32).	In this study, this translation implies examining the discourses of the interviewees and the arguments of the documents in order to understand what is, and what is not, marginal in the elaboration of concepts and functioning of the councils.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

With these categories in mind, we sought to understand the meanings of the competences that are revealed in the DSC educational actions and in the learning experiences of BCSD Portugal and BCSD Brazil. Thus, we identified the concepts, practices, and oppositions revealed in the SD discourses. Afterwards, the displacement of these oppositions and dichotomies was problematized, which enabled us to recognize the ambiguities of the WBCSD's official and unofficial discourse. This entire analytical approach enabled us to understand whether the WBCSD's actions geared toward DSC opened us space for other interpretations or whether the objective was to develop a definitive, logocentric corporate sustainability discourse.

## Results

The Vision 2050 project and Action 2020 are marked by a series of translations concerning sustainable development. We discuss this translation process below.

### *Translations of SD: the Vision 2050 project and Action 2020*

The discourses of the Business Councils associated with the WBCSD, as of 2010, have been influenced by the guidelines of the Vision 2050 project. This document aimed to develop a planning

instrument to guide corporate sustainability actions worldwide, and achieve the 2050 vision described below:

In 2050, around nine billion people live well, respecting the planet's limits. The global population has started to stabilize, especially the education and economic emancipation of women and the increase in urbanization. More than six billion people, two-thirds of the population, live in cities. People have the means to meet their basic human needs, including the need for a dignified life and meaningful role in their communities. (Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2013, p. 5)

*Vision 2050 represents the thinking of the leaders of the member companies, it is our vision of the future, the path to SD, and it serves as a reference for all of our actions. (Coordination P3, 2019).*

The Vision 2050 proposal highlights aspects that do not normally form part of corporate agendas. As an ideal, the document suggests that topics such as education, gender, basic human needs, and dignity should form part of corporate concerns, which may indicate a paradigm shift in what is believed or not to be the responsibility of organizations. The term "ambiguities" as Derrida proposes nicely represents the relationship that is revealed in this discourse among companies, governments, and society. There is a dissemination of meanings, meaning that, at certain points, there is agreement in the discourse, and at others, divergences and gaps are experienced in this communication. In the document these divergences are defined by the WBCSD as dilemmas and difficult questions. The dilemmas reveal questions related to leadership on the path toward the Vision 2050 objectives. It is proposed that the responses are found through collaboration among the actors, but who will define the incentives and the modes for this dialogue? This question is discussed in the document itself and also reported by Associate P1, when analyzing the main risks in the search for this consensus, which

... center on the incapacity of key states to agree regarding the functioning of the system. The world could become more fragmented, incapable of reaching an agreement regarding the changes to carry out or the way to manage them. (Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2013, p. 32)

*Vision 2050 did not represent major advances. I think it represents a utopia that will not materialize, as it depends on the good will and involvement of the government. And it primarily requires a radical shift in the practices of the actors involved - something that, as I see it, will not happen. (Associate P1, 2019)*

The WBCSD's intention during the advance toward Vision 2050 is to produce a discourse that mobilizes and engages companies, governments, and society in the SD discussion. In this approach there is an attempt to define the role of each actor in this process, in which it is possible to observe moments of opening up and situations of closure of the discourse. A paradox is observed: at the

same time as Vision 2050 assumes characteristics of the business sector opening up to different sustainable practices, on the other hand it limits the possibilities of new translations of SD, when it seeks to close discussions in a single perspective, which focuses on short-term actions and some specific sectors, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2  
Translation process in Vision 2050 and Action 2020

Analysis Categories	Description	Analysis
Logocentrism	Opposition that is revealed in Vision 2050 and in Action 2020	Single perspective vs. different sustainable practices.
Constatative and performative structures, ambiguities, and displacements	Focal points of the deconstruction approach	Understanding about the different perspectives in the discussion of the socioenvironmental question. Ambiguities: nature of the relationship between companies, government, and society. Constatative competence: vision of the future described in Vision 2050. Performative competence: actions developed based on Action 2020.
Translation	Arguments (translations) that displace/revert the opposition and use it in a different condition	<i>In the history of the WBCSD we perceive advances in the corporate agenda and involvement, but the question arises: have specialist sectors been created with a restricted focus on marketing, or have the positioning and models of business been rethought? ( Associate B5, 2019)</i> <i>Action 2020 urges all WBCSD members to develop actions that collaborate in achieving Vision 2050, the DSC initiatives should be aligned with this thinking (Associate B6, 2019)</i> <i>It can be affirmed that the main change in the WBCSD's actions relates to the focus of its actions, before directed at sensitizing businesspeople and today focused on articulating actions with the government to develop public policies ( Associate B4, 2019)</i>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Thus, it is understood that the actions of the WBCSD as a think tank, on one hand, are presented as an initiative that seeks to define the path toward SD and the most appropriate “action strategies” to achieve the outlined objectives. On the other hand, in this approach the discourse is also opened up to the collaboration of other actors, in which risks, unforeseen events, and multiple interpretations are assumed, as something that forms part of the path.

*Vision 2050 is fundamental as it represents companies' commitment to a sustainable future, 2020 indicates what actions should be developed to achieve that future. (Associate P2, 2019)*

*The businessperson's difficulty in dealing with sustainability relates to the demand for short-term answers, this is expected and the work time is directed toward seeking goals over a two-year horizon, when these objectives are only possible to achieve, in a sustainable way, over a horizon of 10 to 15 years. (Associate B3, 2019)*

It is verified that Action 2020 is the document that systematizes the DSC projects that are organized in BCSD Brazil and in BCSD Portugal to achieve the objectives contained in Vision 2050. In this sense, the merit of Vision 2050 is recognized, as it urges businesspeople to reflect on the need to review their practices in order to respect stakeholders' sustainable management requirements (long term). Yet, as Associate B3 affirms, it is hard for the businessperson to deal with that perspective. The tendency is to focus their actions on fulfilling shareholder demands (short term).

## **Analysis of the educational initiatives for developing sustainability competences of BCSD Brazil and of BCSD Portugal**

In the next paragraphs, we analyze the educational initiatives for developing sustainability competences of the Business Councils of Brazil and Portugal.

### *The Brazilian experience (PESE)*

The Business Partnership for Ecosystemic Services (PESE) initiative emerged from a partnership between BCSD Brazil, the World Resources Institute (WRI), a US think tank that acts in the environmental area, and the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV), one of the most important business schools in Brazil. The aim was to offer a path so that Brazilian companies could evaluate the impacts of their actions on the environment, as well as understanding their dependency on ecosystems, using the Corporate Ecosystem Services Review (ESR) tool developed by the WRI Institute and by the WBCSD. For this, they train common suppliers of the member companies of BCSD Brazil.

*At the start of the project we called on all the companies that wanted to participate in PESE. As it was a pilot project the initial experience of the project involved eight participant companies. (Coordination B1, 2019)*

*The methodology involves four representatives per company, who participate in the course workshops. As it involves quite a specific and local tool, to facilitate its application we needed the participation of collaborators that act in the operational and administrative areas. (Coordination B2, 2019)*

These workshops aim to develop three constative (theoretical) competences among the participants: *understanding, critical analysis, and a vision of the future*. The understanding competence involves the ability to understand the dependence of businesses on ecosystemic services (ESs); that is, the course participants should be able to identify the most critical ESs for the

institution, evaluating risks and opportunities. The development of the critical analysis competence is translated by the businessperson's ability to not only perceive ESs as business opportunities, but rather the hope is to train that institutional agent to understand the relationship between their decisions and socioenvironmental questions. The vision of the future competence is considered fundamental, as the entire action elaborated based on the use of the ESR tool should be developed based on strategic planning. In order to develop these competences, during the PESE meetings, the coordinators of the initiative sought to provide experiences of companies that have already implemented the ESR tool, in order to show the possible difficulties to be faced. These are what Coordination B3 defines as business cases, represented by the leading companies.

*The role of the leading companies in this topic is very important, as it stimulates the other companies to engage in the project. The example of companies that are already advancing is a motivator for involving more companies in PESE. (Coordination B3, 2019)*

One example of a business case applying the tool is the experience of Associate B1. That agent sought to develop the ESR based on an analysis of the chain of beef suppliers. It assumed the challenge of not acquiring products from deforested areas in its global operations. For this, it was necessary to develop training actions with the suppliers so that they adopted tools for monitoring socioenvironmental risk. Associate B6 reports the need for internal training to learn specific knowledge, such as on biodiversity, as the original manager training does not cover that content. Another agent that participated in PESE was Associate B2, defining as a focus of action adapting its company to the requirements of the Dow Jones Sustainability Index. However, the interviewees report that some sectors of the company had difficulty understanding their role in achieving this objective.

*There are some areas that have more ease understanding and dealing with the theme of sustainability. These are generally people who have more understanding of the environmental question who are able to understand the tool and involve their sectors in the project. (Associate B1, 2019)*

*What creates difficulty in understanding ESs is the complexity of the concept. Even the areas that are aligned with the discussion have difficulty, for that reason we carry out training for all leaders seeking to make it clear how to apply this concept to our reality, showing what our strategy is and what the links are with the actions that are present in the sectors. What we understand is that the path toward achieving the objectives is the involvement of leaderships. (Associate B2, 2019)*

As observed in the learning experiences of Associate B1, Associate B6, and Associate B2, the PESE initiative, besides the constative competences, aims to develop performative competences (practices) in the actors participating in the courses, that is, of engagement and communication. The aim is to "sensitize, involve, and engage" in order to prepare them to communicate, to all sectors of the companies, the principles of the ESR tool (Associate B6). This is so that the action strategies defined are aligned with the institutional sustainability policies.

The competences developed in PESE come close to those referenced in the theoretical framework of Dentoni et al. (2012), which indicates that its training actions are in tune with the most recent debate in the area. Yet, by restricting the DSC initiatives to the application of tools such as ESR, the nature of the competences developed in the actors draws closer to the instrumental logic (Munck & Borim-de-Souza, 2012; Wiek et al., 2011), in which the aim is to align the behavior of these agents with the institution's sustainability policy. The PESE initiative coexists with this ambiguity: at the same time as promoting the learning of new competences, it also limits and instrumentalizes DSC when it associates this approach with the application of tools that seek to align the individual perspectives with the institutional proposals and logocentric discourses. This discussion is systematized in Table 3.

Table 3  
Translation processes in PESE

Analysis categories	Description	Analysis
Logocentrism	Opposition that sustains the WBCSD's logocentric thinking and is revealed in Vision 2050 and in Action 2020.	Business vs. socioenvironmental question.
Constatative and performative structures, ambiguities, and displacements	Focal points of the deconstruction approach.	<p>Difficulty of the businesspeople to understand the ES concept and its impact on business.</p> <p>Ambiguity: at the same time that the ES discussion promoted by BCSD Brazil broadens businesspeople's understanding of the socioenvironmental question, there is a reduction in its complexity when replication of the ESR is incentivized, limiting the SD and ES discussion to the management of indicators.</p> <p>Constatative competences: understanding, critical analysis, and vision of the future.</p> <p>Performative competences: engagement and communication.</p>
Translation	Arguments (translations) that displace/revert the opposition and use it in a different condition.	<p><i>When you address very generalist topics such as ecosystemic services, or ESs, it's very hard for companies to understand the applicability of the ESR (Associate B5, 2019)</i></p> <p><i>What we want is for businessperson to understand what ecosystemic services mean and the level of dependence on natural resources that their businesses present (Coordination B1, 2019)</i></p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

From analyzing the arguments of Coordination B1 and of Associate B5, it is observed that PESE provides spaces for considering the relationship of the businesses with the socioenvironmental question when the ES discussion is included on the agenda, which is scarcely considered in the corporate environment. It is this that enables the displacement of oppositions and concepts (business vs. socioenvironmental question) in the deconstruction process. However, when the replication of the ESR is incentivized, the SD and ES discussion tends to be limited to managing

indicators and applying this tool. The difficulties reported by the businesspeople, exemplified by the report of Associate B5 in Table 3, reveal that the scope of the initiative is reduced. The competences developed are sometimes limited to the participants, individually, who are scarcely able to transform them into organizational competences. Here a gap is created that the PESE program has not yet addressed.

#### *The YMT experience in BCSD Portugal*

The Young Members Team (YMT) initiative was developed in 2005 by BCSD Portugal with the aim of translating to the Portuguese reality the WBCSD program called “Future Leaders Team” (FLT). The initial aim of the YTM was to sensitize companies regarding the relationship between the socioenvironmental question and business, its impacts, and dependences.

*We translated to the Portuguese reality the FLT through the YMT. The BCSD’s initial intention was to sensitize companies to the importance of sustainability and how the environmental question affects businesses. (Coordination P1, 2019)*

*More than generating outputs, the main objective of the project is to create a network of young businesspeople sensitized to the environmental question, true SD ambassadors in the companies. (Coordination P2, 2019)*

On one hand, a logocentric perspective is observed, in which DS ambassadors in companies are sought, with the mission of spreading the WBCSD’s official sustainability discourse. On the other hand, the project opens up the opportunity for other translations as it displaces that official perspective when it affirms that “*more than creating outputs, the aim is to train a network of young people.*” This network does not break up or destabilize at the end of the project, but continues in development, enabling new interpretations based on the dialogues between the participants.

*One of the benefits of participation in the YMT was the formation of a network of contacts from different areas that can be consulted whenever doubts arise regarding the elaboration of sustainability reports. (Associate P4, 2019)*

*The YTM methodology invests in group dynamics coordinated by a psychologist, the aim is to prepare, through experiences, the businesspeople to respond to the challenges of teamwork. (Associate P5, 2019)*

As described, the YTM methodology values experiences and the formation of learning groups as a development strategy in the sustainability area. In this aspect, it draws close to the discussion of Hind, Wilson, and Lenssen (2009), with regard to the need of the actors to get involved in groups that focus on solving socioenvironmental questions, through intervention initiatives. This opening up to participation favors the involvement of professionals in sharing and planning projects. In this sense, preparing professionals in a group enhances DSC, as it provides spaces for translations and the application of the content discussed during the course (Tilbury & Wortman, 2004).

*With relation to developing competences, the project focuses on four areas: sustainability, project management, change management, and communication. Each workshop aims to fulfill an objective. The first focuses on sensitization and alignment in the knowledge of the theme. The second focuses on project management. The third discusses aspects of organizational change and the last one invests in the businessperson's capacity to involve and communicate their projects to other sectors of the company. (Coordination P3, 2019)*

*The YMT is an initiative that enables the formation of a "network" of contacts from various branches through a program structured and conceived to develop competences. The Annual Delegates' Meetings action stands out, which provided a space for discussion of the viewpoints on sustainable development among the participants. (Associate P6, 2019)*

During the YMT approach, businesspeople with little affinity in the SD discussion questioned the relevance of discussing biodiversity and ESs in the corporate environment. Moreover, they revealed that they did not know how to integrate these topics into business strategies. These questions led the group to think of ways to incorporate this discussion into companies, and to study strategies to show to businesspeople that thinking about ESs goes beyond the generation of impacts on the environment, as there is a resource dependence relationship that interferes in business development. One example was the development of a document with simplified and illustrated language that sought to highlight the concepts and tools related with managing biodiversity and ESs. In this sense, the sustainability competence of communication was stimulated, as there was the aim of translating to the corporate environment the discourse of ecosystemic services. That translation approach is represented in Table 4.



Table 4

**Translation process in the YMT**

<b>Analysis Categories</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
Logocentrism	Logocentric opposition of the WBCSD that is revealed in Vision 2050 and in Action 2020.	Business vs. socioenvironmental question
Constatative and performative structures, ambiguities, and displacements	Focal points of the deconstruction approach.	<p>During the course, the participants with little affinity in the sustainability discussion questioned the need to discuss biodiversity in the corporate environment. This encouraged the group to develop strategies for communicating the level of dependence of business on ecosystemic services.</p> <p>Ambiguity: “network” of SD ambassadors. Simultaneously, a space of multiple interpretations regarding the paths toward SD was verified, but also a place of limitation regarding the possibilities of translation, with the communication of BCSD Portugal’s official sustainability discourse.</p> <p>Constatative competences: understanding of sustainability.</p> <p>Performative competences: management of projects, changes, and communication.</p>
Translation	Arguments (translations) that displace/revert the opposition and use it in a different condition.	<p><i>It’s interesting to perceive that the YMT participants are “chosen” by the companies, this varying with the company. There are cases where the companies conduct interviews and selection processes to choose the representative who has affinity with the theme. On the other hand there are cases where they simply define the representatives without having an internal debate (Coordination P2, 2019)</i></p> <p><i>As I’m not from the sustainability area, at the start of the course I had questions that seemed obvious to the other participants, but which were fundamental for me, such as “Why discuss biodiversity in the corporate environment?” and “How do we integrate biodiversity and ecosystemic services into companies’ business strategies?” (Associate P3, 2019)</i></p> <p><i>At the start of the course I imagined that the teamwork would only work when the members were willing to seek an agreement, a consensus among the different opinions. With time, I perceived that in certain complex subjects, as is the case of sustainability, advances can only be made when the different viewpoints are valued ( Associate P6, 2019)</i></p>

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The concern with communicating the socioenvironmental question also permeated the development of course end projects that were transformed into books, with topics uncommon to the corporate universe: demographic population density, developing the local community, urbanism solutions, and social inclusion. This favored the development of new competences, which brings the DSC training close to the development goals outlined in the Vision 2050 document. They are less instrumental competences that go beyond the company’s limits.

*Internalizing is changing behavior. The companies adopted environmental management practices, but from a social viewpoint, of the link with communities, of the distribution of gains, the companies continue with an attitude of wanting to increase their profits, without there necessarily being an increase in the benefit to the community, restricting their actions to philanthropy alone without taking sustainability as a basis. (Coordination P4, 2019)*

Thus, despite the YMT's objective being the formation of a network of SD ambassadors, with the aim of multiplying the official sustainability discourse of BCSD Portugal, it was observed that during the process situations were experienced that favored the development of competences closer to the critical logic (Kearins & Springett, 2003; Tilbury & Wortman, 2004). The educational actions went beyond the mere instrumentalization of management tools. This was observed in the dialogues during the course and in the teamwork mobilized both for filling in the sustainability reports and for sharing experiences among the participants. In this sense, as the network of associates became stronger, an opportunity opened up for the development of the vision of the future competence, as the creation of proposals for integrating sustainability into business strategy was strengthened. Thus, it is observed that the YMT experiences ambiguity, at the same time as opening up an opportunity for critical DSC. The initiative also acted in disseminating the WBCSD's official discourse, seeking to limit divergent interpretations.

## Discussion

What is verified from analyzing the initiatives of a corporate body with a global reach that is beginning to act in fostering formal and informal educational actions geared toward the principles of sustainable development? On one hand, these initiatives are commendable and desirable, as they indicate actions for fostering SD in the corporate universe via education, which is accordingly understood as being able to promote the changes needed in individuals based on new know-how. The educational basis of its actions is promising, as incorporating the SD logic into organizations presupposes changing people's way of thinking and acting (Kearins & Springett, 2003). In addressing the corporate universe, the language through which the WBCSD has chosen to foster educational actions – that of developing competences – contributes to company engagement. This is because the term enjoys familiarity in the corporate world, which widely adopts competence management practices to train its collaborators to achieve the desired excellence. This initiative occurs within a context of advancement of the studies on competences associated with sustainability in the corporate universe (Gitsham, 2012; Lans et al., 2013; Wiek et al., 2011).

On the other hand, deconstructing the discourse of the educational actions allows us to observe the ambiguity that is established in this context (Derrida, 2001). Although we verify an advance in the knowledge on sustainability and its different perspectives, there is difficulty in developing competences focused on changing statutes, rules systems, and business models (Sehnem et al., 2019). That is, there is a diversity of sustainability discourses embedded in the formative approach, but the conflicts and sociocultural plurality are not valued as strategies for problematizing the relationship between ecosystemic services and business (Castillo et al., 2019). The attempt to incentivize new topics and corporate objectives that break with the unsustainable logic in which we live coexists with the need to exercise control, defining the contents and objectives

of corporate training in this process. But what are those objectives? What nature of competence is concerned?

The educational actions of the WBCSD as a think tank may even to some degree draw close to Ruth's (2006) criticism of competence models. For that author, there is an exacerbated concern among companies for more competences, instead of worrying about better competences, understood as those geared toward a sustainable and coherent future for the planet. It would not be unreasonable to worry that the DSC programs, which should primarily break with what Ruth calls the "surveillance trap," are subjugating their actions to that same logic. That is, instead of breaking with an unsustainable business model, proposing another way of producing and stimulating another way of consuming, the competences that are being developed may serve in maintaining the same business model that has sustained organizational life for years. Some not particularly radical changes are introduced, which help more in adapting companies to sustainability demands from their own market, than in developing another relationship between them and society (Kearins & Springett, 2003; Tilbury & Wortman, 2004). Vision 2050 highlighted aspects that do not normally form part of corporate, but rather government agendas. The document argues that topics such as education, gender, basic human needs, and dignity should form part of business and serve as inspiration for developing constative competences (understanding, critical analysis, and a vision of the future). Action 2020, in turn, assumes a more formative responsibility, in which it is questioned which technical competences businesspeople need to develop to deal with socioenvironmental questions (engagement and communication). That instrumentalization of the Vision 2050 and Action 2020 documents is consistent with what Gitsham (2012) affirms. Although the DSC actions are anchored in a more functional logic, opportunities are observed for transforming the life of the local community around organizations. This vision also reverberates in the discussion of Garlet et al. (2019) that defends developing management models that guide the corporate mission toward sustainability and stakeholders' expectations.

In addition, there is a gap between the two documents that has hindered the development of sustainability competences. The expectation was that Vision 2050 would serve as guidance for the elaboration of Action 2020. Yet, despite Vision 2050 mentioning the need for economic emancipation and the importance of preparing businesspeople for exercising a significant role in the community, it is verified that Action 2020 has not adequately appropriated those concepts. This has interfered in the capacity for social action and engagement, and has been revealed in the difficulty of reflecting on the values that sustain corporate management and action. To address that gap the formative spaces would need to promote an emancipation process focused on radically changing the current structures, which has not been verified (Kearins & Springett, 2003).

The PESE experience in BCSD Brazil sought to prepare businesspeople for understanding the implications of biodiversity and ecosystemic services (ESs) in business. The impasse that enabled the displacement of the opposition between companies and the environmental question was the initial difficulty in perceiving the relationships of dependence of business on natural resources, which stimulated the discussion of the subjects uncommon to businesspeople's day-to-day. Associates reported that the companies sought to assume sustainable relationships with suppliers, training them to monitor the environmental and social risk of their activities, in a process of communication with the local community, which reveals alignment with the systemic and integrative perspective (Cavenaghi & Munck, 2018).

Yet, paradoxically to these initiatives, the search to define a tool (ESR) to deal with these impasses has ended up incentivizing competences closer to the instrumental logic, in which the alignment of the institution's interests has limited the understanding of the complexity of the topic. Logocentric thinking, in this case, has sought to direct the competence of critical analysis, of engagement, and of communication in the steps described in the ESR, reducing the vision of the future to the principles and guidelines within the companies' limits and objectives.

In the case of the YTM in BCSD Portugal, the gap that enabled the official SD discourse to be destabilized and other translations to disseminate was revealed in at least two events. The first was the choice of the participants in the project. The non-definition of a methodology for this stage, with freedom for the companies to choose, opened up space for the participation of professionals in different stages of understanding SD. This caused discussions during the course, with divergent interpretations about the way for the business sector to engage in addressing socioenvironmental questions. Another question relates to the vision regarding the formation of a network of SD ambassadors. The aim was for these focal points to simply replicate the official discourse in the associated companies. However, what was observed was the emergence of various corporate sustainability discourses during the process, which meant the businesspeople were faced with a diversity of interpretations in the DSC process.

With regard to the methodology for developing competences, the YMT focuses on an approach that involves sensitization, project management, organizational change, and communication capacity. On one hand, an instrumental DSC model is identified that converses with the thinking of Wiek et al. (2011), given that the aim of the incentive is to define a list of competences to be acquired and managed through training and indicators. On the other hand, this experience in BCSD Portugal converses with the research of Dentoni et al. (2012) with regard to developing the capacity for collaboration among the different social actors. It is noteworthy that this conflict of perspectives contributes to businesspeople reflecting on the interdependences between the social, economic, and environmental systems and the implications in business. Moreover, the YMT experience showed that the search for consensus is limiting, since in the discussion of complex subjects, such as sustainability, advances are made when different viewpoints are valued (Palma & Pedrozo, 2019).

Therefore, the analysis of the educational initiatives of BCSD Portugal and of BCSD Brazil indicates formative proposals focused on economic efficiency. This is because they present a strong instrumental component, of the application of management tools, which have already been called into question due to their actual capacity to contribute to the changes needed in companies (Raska & Shaw, 2012). That is, a gap is perceived in these initiatives consistent with the criticisms of Kearins and Springett (2003). The authors affirm that the educational processes do not discuss in-depth the power relations and ideologies that permeate the cultural contexts in which organizations find themselves. One of the barriers that hinder the practice of sustainability is the absence of methodologies that favor the development of critical and reflexive thinking about the social structures that limit access to rights to a restricted group of stakeholders (Tilbury & Wortman, 2004).

The ambiguity, the gaps, and the oppositions that Derrida (2002) covers so extensively once again contribute to observing the behavior that predominates in the DSC initiatives. The BCSD Portugal program differs by incorporating objectives that go beyond profit maximization and that have a strong social impact; however, the management of indicators and the search for short-term

goals are still prioritized. This is also revealed in BCSD Brazil, which advances by discussing the management of ecosystems, but reduces the complexity of the debate when it focuses on the replication of the ESR tool.

In the DSC approach of PESE and the YTM we verify the predominance of the functional and pragmatic perspective, given that the competences developed in these initiatives tend to adapt the subjects to the logic of corporate sustainability, while ignoring an analysis of the structural changes that need to be carried out to break with the unsustainable future (Ruth, 2006). In the various corporate sustainability discourses in the WBCSD's formative approach, however, logocentric thinking is reaffirmed when focusing on the learning of management tools to address economic efficiency and little time is dedicated to studying ecosystemic limits, equality, and sociocultural contexts (Amazonas, 2012; Castillo et al., 2019).

It is therefore observed that the WBCSD needs to advance toward its dual responsibility in relation to the socioenvironmental question. The entity needs to see itself as a think tank that carries out initiatives that collaborate in the development of competences among the agents of its associated companies (shareholders), while at the same time assuming its responsibility in the concreteness and scope of the sustainable initiatives it fosters (Palma et al., 2019). An educational action of the proportion that an entity with the power of penetration of the WBCSD can achieve has to be constantly questioned, reviewed, and pressured to actually address the objectives that are proposed and resort to more sustainable methodologies to achieve some efficiency in the change, and thus recognize the various translations regarding corporate sustainability that can be assumed in the learning experiences of the entity. Thus, besides being a global organization that proposes programs for developing competences and models, the WBCSD needs to reinvent itself and be open to other translations, recognizing the various readings and relationships that permeate the learning approach and DSC. More than the reproduction of Cartesian teaching methods, it is hoped that the entity will multiply the educational experiences that are supported by the "invention movement and caring for life" (Demoly & Santos, 2019).

In this sense, as an indication of an opportunity for more in-depth research in future studies, we suggest seeking to analyze the DSC initiatives promoted by the WBCSD in other countries, given that this research focused on the experiences of the Business Councils of Brazil and Portugal. Moreover, this study heard coordinators and associates who revealed their reflections on the WBCSD's actions. We believe that interviews with representatives of other entities would favor the incorporation of more perspectives on corporate sustainability. Examples include the programs studied by Gitsham (2012). In these experiences businesspeople are mobilized in actions that benefit the community around the organizations, with concrete results in people's lives. It is worth highlighting that there are other think tanks (Foundation for Economic Education, Tinker Foundation) that act in the DSC area that could be investigated with the aim of understanding the teaching methodologies and the nature of the competences developed. We also propose that these other initiatives are studied from the deconstruction perspective, which could promote the discovery of other metaphors that translate the direction in which the DSC programs go.

## **Conclusion**

This article focused its discussion on the following research problem: Are the WBCSD's discourses and initiatives for developing sustainability competences spaces of various translations of corporate sustainability or a place for reaffirming logocentric and definitive discourses on the theme? To answer that question we studied institutional documents (Vision 2050 and Action 2020) and carried out a series of on-site visits and interviews at the Brazilian and Portuguese BCSDs. The methodology used for the data analysis was inspired by Derrida's deconstruction. This enabled us to understand the discourses as a translation process embedded in different perspectives that mobilized different competences, given that, from the Derridian perspective, these should be read as something provisional and open to interpretations.

The analysis of the educational initiatives of the Brazilian and Portuguese BCSDs showed that the various discourses on corporate sustainability are embedded in the formative approach of these institutions. However, their logocentric and definitive thinking regarding the theme is reaffirmed in understanding that the way of carrying out the Vision 2050 guidelines is primarily limited to the application of management tools.

As a methodological approach, deconstruction was shown to be an interesting path to reviewing the translations of businesspeople regarding sustainability, which can serve to advance the discussions of the competence studies from an interpretivist perspective. Moreover, the results presented may also serve as a reference for other researchers to analyze corporate experiences geared toward sustainability that are currently underway, investigating to what extent they break with the logocentric logic. They could also inspire corporate development actions that combine significant learning methodologies based on a review of the interpretations and translations regarding environmental limits and social questions, opening up an opportunity to advance the practices for developing sustainability competences in our society.

However, this research has its limitations, which could be understood as opportunities for future studies. Given that the translations regarding the sustainability competences identified in the educational initiatives of BCSD Brazil and BCSD Portugal relate to specific situations experienced by the actors participating in the formative approach of these entities, we suggest that new studies consider the translations of other actors of the regional councils linked to the WBCSD belonging to other geographical and cultural regions. Another limitation of this study relates to the time accompanying the formative experiences, and we suggest that new investigations resort to longitudinal proposals. Moreover, the analysis undertaken in this research was conducted after the training ended, so we recommend that other studies accompany the development of competences of corporate actors before, during, and after the formative processes.

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The authors declare there are no conflicts of interests.

### **Authors' contributions**

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