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## ***Competitive Advantage in the Hotel Industry: case study of a Brejo Paraibano Hotel, Brazil***

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## ABSTRACT

When well managed and aligned, the resources and capabilities of an organization guarantee sustainable competitive advantage and success. In this respect, using the Resource-Based View framework, this article aimed to analyze the strategic resources that sustain the competitive advantage of a hotel in Brejo Paraibano, Brazil. This is a descriptive case study that used a semistructured interview as the main data collection technique. A qualitative approach was applied, and the results were analyzed using the following techniques: content analysis and the VRIO framework. The results show that accommodations exhibited competitive parity, while the resources work team and formal integrated structure demonstrated temporary competitive advantage. Leisure infrastructure, geographic location, the restaurant, and financial capability showed potential in creating a sustainable competitive advantage. Thus, it is essential to conduct studies on competitive advantage within the hotel industry, given that it could help hotel managers make more assertive decisions to guarantee the best strategic positions and a sustainable competitive advantage.

**Keywords:** Competitive advantage. Resource-Based View. VRIO model. Hotel industry.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is beneficial to a locality because it promotes cultural elements, preserves cultural heritage, and creates jobs (Galvão, Souza, & Silva, 2010), which ultimately benefits the local economy and development of destinations, increasing GDP in several countries (Santos & Flores, 2017; Silva, 2020). As such, tourist activities are increasingly part of a highly complex and competitive environment.

The tourist components of a locality are a set of specific resources that make it attractive to tourists, such as natural heritage, architecture, popular sites, and the hotel industry. Of these, the last component is the most prominent (Santos, Almeida, & Miranda, 2021).

The mobility of the hotel industry allows it to provide a range of services, such as accommodation, restaurants, bars, and guest houses, among others (Silva, 2020). It is also an important link between tourists and destinations and aims to provide services that guarantee customer satisfaction, including accommodation, food, entertainment, safety, and well-being (Maurício & Ramos, 2011).

In this respect, the hotel industry can achieve a competitive advantage from the moment it identifies and recognizes that which it does best, in other words, when it identifies the resources that are superior to those of competitors, representing its core competency (Silva,

2001). Thus, hotel managers must recognize their strategic resources and devise effective strategies that are feasible and suitable in creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

The propose that for a company to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage, it has to mobilize a set of internal resources and capabilities, based on the specificities and competitive value of its resources (Barney & Hesterly, 2007; Crick, 2019; Sánchez, 2020). Moreover, these resources and capabilities should be heterogeneous, that is, superior to those of its competitors, as well as long-term and difficult to imitate. The VRIO Model can be applied to identify the strategic potential of an organization's resources (Barney & Hesterly, 2007).

Considering the increasingly competitive environment of the hotel industry and the importance of this sector as a strategic resource for the tourism of an area, the present study aimed to analyze the strategic resources that sustain the competitive advantage of a hotel in Brejo Paraibano.

This study is justified for three reasons. The first is the representativeness of the hotel industry in the Brazilian economy, which is reflected in GDP data; the second is the fact that research studies relating the hotel industry with strategic resources provide theoretical and practical contributions to the field of administration; and the third is the competitive environment, characteristic of studies in this area and the object of the present article. Additionally, Brejo Paraibano has been the focus of an increasing number of studies involving tourism in the region, such as those by Nunes and Martins (2019) and Oliveira and Salgado (2021).

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents the theoretical framework used to analyze the two main sections discussed in this study. Section 2.1 contains a description of the main Resource-Based View concepts and its most important characteristics, while section 2.2 explores competitiveness in the hotel industry.

### 2.1 Resource-Based View

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is considered an essential approach in the management literature (Kraaijenbrink, Spender, & Groen, 2010; Varga, Sipos, Rideg, & Lukovszki, 2024) and has been widely applied in studies analyzing company growth (Nason & Wiklund, 2018; Antoniadis, 2021). RBV proposes that a company's competitive advantage is

sustained by its internal sources (Kraaijenbrink et al., 2010; Cuthbertson & Furseth, 2022), namely, its resources and capabilities.

There are several approaches that analyze competitive advantage, with two focusing predominantly on obtaining a competitive advantage: the Michael Potter analytical models and the Resource-Based View. Michael Porter's studies concentrate on analyzing a company's positioning, with the belief that competitive advantage lies in factors external to its organization.

By contrast, the approach used by J. B. Barney proposes that competitive advantage is obtained from a combination of the specific resources and capabilities of a company, that is, its internal aspects (Ito & Gimenez, 2011). The seminal studies of this approach are those by Penrose (1959), Barney (1991; 2001), Peteraf (1993) and Wernerfelt (1984) (Pugas, Calegario, & Antonialli, 2013; Salgado & Colombo, 2015; Vasconcelos & Cyrino, 2000; Pavão, Sehnem, & Hoffmann, 2011).

According to Barney and Hesterly (2007), competitive advantage is the higher economic value a company creates about its competitors. This economic value is the difference between the benefits and the total cost of a product or service. Ito and Gimenez (2011) added that companies can obtain a sustainable competitive advantage by cultivating, developing, and accumulating its exclusive resources.

Concerning the components of RBV, Wernerfelt (1984) states that a resource is anything that represents a strength or weakness in a particular company. Resources are a company's tangible and intangible assets, including its machines, reputation, procedures, and knowledge, among others (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney & Hesterly, 2007; Chedrawi & Atallah, 2022). In this respect, Winckler, Zen and Prevot (2022) reported that resources are the essential basis of RBV.

Resources are divided into four categories: financial, physical, human and organizational. Financial resources are all the monetary capital that companies use to implement strategies. Physical resources include all the physical technology applied in a company, such as equipment and geographic location. Human resources are aspects such as worker training, experience, intelligence and relationships. Finally, organizational resources are people skills within the formal structure of a company, its culture, or informal relationships (Barney & Hesterly, 2007).

Capabilities are an essential element of an organization's resources. They are also defined as tangible and intangible and consist of the actions a company takes to leverage its other resources (Chaudhuri, Chatterjee, & Vrontis, 2023). Thus, although capabilities themselves cannot induce a company to create or implement strategies, they can drive the use

of other resources to devise and enact strategies (Barney & Hesterly, 2007) that promote steady growth (Pugas et al., 2013).

Two RBV elements are considered essential in achieving competitive advantage: heterogeneity and resource immobility (Cuthbertson & Furseth, 2022; Varga et al., 2024). RBV proposes that different companies may represent different resources even if they operate in the same sector, that is, in the same area, a company may perform better than others (Barney & Hesterly, 2007). This corroborates Nason and Wiklund (2018), who reported that heterogeneous resources can explain the different performances among companies that operate under analogous conditions. The second element is immobility, whereby companies experience difficulty in acquiring certain resources, which may be costly and provide a long-term competitive advantage (Barney & Hesterly, 2007; Vasconcelos & Cyrino, 2000).

The VRIO Model is a four-question framework used to determine whether a resource can provide a competitive advantage helping understand if it is strategic or not (Chatterjee, Chaudhuri, Vrontis, & Thrassou, 2023). For a resource to be strategic to an organization, it must be valuable, rare, inimitable and organized to capture value (Barney & Hesterly, 2007; Chatterjee et al., 2023). The four questions that need to be answered are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1**

VRIO Model Questions

<b>VRIO Model</b>	<b>Questions</b>
<b>Value</b>	Can the resources of a company allow it to leverage opportunities or neutralize threats?
<b>Rarity</b>	Are resources currently controlled by few competitors?
<b>Imitability</b>	Are companies that do not have a particular resource at a cost disadvantage to obtain or develop it?
<b>Organization</b>	Are a company's policies and procedures organized to leverage valuable, rare and difficult-to-imitate resources?

Source: Adapted from Barney and Hesterly (2007).

For a resource to be considered valuable, it should allow the company to better exploit opportunities or neutralize threats, while rare resources are those difficult to find among competitors to design and execute a unique business strategy (Chedrawi & Atallah, 2022). Imitability is the financial difficulty other companies have in obtaining or developing a resource and organization refers to a company's capacity to maximize its resources and capabilities (Barney & Hesterly, 2007).

According to Hayashi, Ito, Prado-Gimenez and Pongeluppe (2018), the four elements of the VRIO Model can guarantee that a company's resources are heterogeneous even if they

operate in the same industry and that they cannot be easily replicated, thereby sustaining their heterogeneity.

## 2.2 Competitiveness in the Hotel Industry

The ability to operate in a competitive environment in which several companies compete is a way of defining competitiveness (Tothova, Chladkova, Kahunova, Formankova, & Kucerova, 2022) and, according to Nunes, Estevão and Nicolau (2018), this is a concern for any economic sector and despite being easy to understand, becomes complex when associated with other theoretical elements. Tourism is part of this competitive scenario and contributes significantly to the economic development of an area (Massukado & Teixeira, 2008). Thus, tourism firms need to be innovative, either by increasing their efficiency or by offering new high-quality products capable of satisfying customer demands (Zaragoza-Sáez, Marco-Lajara, Úbeda-García, & Manresa-Marhuenda, 2024).

The hotel industry is an essential tourism component and has faced fierce competition in recent years (Yuan, You, Xu, & Yu, 2022). Gohr and Santos (2010) state that the industry must constantly adapt to ongoing changes, such as globalization, ecological problems and supply and demand conditions. Therefore, hotels need to conduct effective strategic planning for competitiveness (Yuan et al., 2022).

Coelho and Bartolomeu (2019) emphasize that service quality is an essential factor in tourist satisfaction. Thus, the hotel industry should mobilize its resources to leverage the quality of its services or bring innovation to retain the customers (Harif, Nawaz, & Hameed, 2022). Still, According to Coelho and Bartolomeu (2019), the Brazilian hotel industry has been constantly modernizing, with quality, customer satisfaction and new technologies closely linked to success or failure.

According to Stefanini, Yamashita and Sousa (2012), tourists perceive accommodation as something beyond a comfortable one-night stay, which contributes significantly to their satisfaction level. Gohr and Santos (2010) and Coelho and Bartolomeu (2019) also reported that in addition to lodging tourists, the hotel industry provides an array of services characteristic of the area, including meals and leisure activities. The importance of hotels to a locality cannot be understated, since they also create jobs and support the development of local tourism.

Based on a bibliographic survey, there is a growing number of studies that analyze the hotel industry based on RBV and the VRIO Model, such as those by Bezerra, Pereira, Salazar and Moreira (2020), Salgado and Colombo (2015), Andrade and Polo (2018) and Vargas-

Hernández and Benítez (2022). Thus, the VRIO Model exhibits considerable applicability in studies involving RBV in the context of the hotel industry.

The first study aimed to analyze the organizational dimension of the VRIO Model at a hotel in Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte state (RN); the second to assess the resources and capabilities of the environmental management system adopted by the Verdgreen Hotel, to identify which have the potential to create competitive advantage; and the third to understand the dimensions that make up the hospitality construct, in the context of hotels and their configuration as a strategic resource and source of competitive advantage for companies in the hotel industry; the last to determine how the Posadas group has managed to maintain itself in the Mexican lodging market.

Finally, it is essential to understand the competitive hotel environment and the aspects involved in an organization's survival, since knowledge of the sector and its structure are crucial factors in market positioning (Gohr & Santos, 2010).

### 3. METHOD

The present study aimed to analyze the strategic resources that sustain the competitive advantage of a hotel in Brejo Paraibano. A qualitative design was used since its interpretive, experience-based, situational and personalistic approach (Stake, 2011) is in keeping with the study objectives.

According to Stake (2011), qualitative research is interpretive since it aims to understand the meanings from different standpoints; experience-based because it is based on field experiences and observations; situational because of its unique contexts and description of details; and personalistic in that it focuses on understanding unique viewpoints or aspects in great detail. This is a descriptive study, which, according to Gil (2021), aim at describing the characteristics of a population or a phenomenon, in this case, the strategic resources of a hotel in Brejo Paraibano.

For procedural purposes, a single case study was used to conduct an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon in its real context (Yin, 2015). A case study is characterized as an exhaustive in-depth investigation, applied in a real context to obtain a maximum number of details about the phenomenon. Different collection techniques can also be used simultaneously (Gil, 2021; Yin, 2015).

The location of this study is Brejo Paraibano, one of the 23 microregions of Paraíba state, Brazil. It contains 8 municipalities (Oliveira, 2021) with tourist destinations that actively



contribute to local development and enjoy national exposure. Galvão, Souza and Silva (2010) describe the different characteristics of Brejo Paraibano that make it a peculiar scenario, such as its rustic natural attractions, natural landscape intermingled with the socioeconomic and cultural environment and the historical value of administrative, religious and cultural buildings. In addition, the local hotel industry attracts attention due to its wide range of services.

The Brejo Destination Portal (Destino Brejo, 2024), developed by the partnership between Sebrae Paraíba, the Brejo Tourism Forum, and the municipal governments, reinforces the competitiveness of Brejo Paraibano as a tourist destination. Created to increase the flow of visitors, increase the length of stay at the destination, and create environments for generating tourism-related business, the portal is an initiative that works to improve the quality of the visitor's experience with the destination through innovative methodologies and technologies.

Specifically, the case analyzed involves a hotel in the municipality of Bananeiras which, for reasons of confidentiality, will be identified by the fictitious name Alpha Hotel. This hotel was selected for its convenience and willingness to participate in the research, in that it could provide the necessary information (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samuel, 2005), and its representativeness to municipal and state tourism.

This is the most important hotel in the region and one of the most sought-after accommodations in the entire Paraíba state. It is part of the select group of Charming Routes in the country, made up of spaces that stand out from other hotels due to the historical or architectural value of their facilities, where the modernity and luxury of the accommodations harmonize with the tradition and culture of the region where they are located. In addition, it has won two Travelers' Choice awards, promoted by TripAdvisor, in which the favorite destinations, hotels, attractions and restaurants of travelers worldwide are awarded.

It is also important to note the relevance of Bananeiras in the hotel industry, being a resource with potential for sustainable competitive advantage due to the unique accommodation possibilities that are not easily found in the region (Oliveira & Salgado, 2021). It is also an important tourist route known nationally as Caminhos do Frio (Cold Paths), a relevant tourist product for the region that has contributed significantly to its development (Chim-Miki, Ribeiro, & Moreira, 2020).

In line with a qualitative approach, the main data collection technique was the semistructured interview, to understand the meanings that the interviewees attribute to the strategic resources of the hotel (Creswell, 2010). Semistructured interviews aim to understand the study subjects about the topic explored (Silva, Godoi, & Bandeira-De-Mello, 2010). To that end, the interviews were carried out at two different times: an initial interview to gather



information on the hotel's strategic resources, with the answers compiled on a list of resources, followed by a new interview containing questions based on the four VRIO Model elements (value, rarity, imitability and organization).

The first to be interviewed was the hotel manager, in February 2022, to identify resources and capabilities. A second interview was carried out in April 2022, with the same manager, applying the VRIO Model to determine which of the previously identified resources exhibit competitive potential. Both interviews were given remotely and recorded with the permission of the interviewee. The audio recordings were transcribed in full.

Content analysis and the VRIO Model were used to analyze the data. The former involves coding and classifying texts (written or verbal), documents and images into categories to extract meaning (Cooper & Schindler, 2016). Next, the data categorized were analyzed from the standpoint of the VRIO Model, based on four aspects – value, rarity, inimitability and organization, which will identify the strategic resources of the hotel.

## 4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This section presents an analysis of the results, starting with a brief presentation of the hotel, followed by the VRIO Model analysis.

### 4.1 The Alpha Hotel Case

The Alpha Hotel is located in the municipality of Bananeiras, Paraíba state (PB). It covers 1000 square meters and is surrounded by an extensive green area. Founded in 2021, it includes a restaurant and gazebos for sunset watching and has 35 employees, including the director, senior management, heads of department, head chef, maitre d', receptionists, waiters, barmen, cooks, assistants and chambermaids.

According to the manager and information obtained from the website, the hotel also has a leisure area with a swimming pool, games room, playground, horseback riding, horse and cart rides, off-road vehicles and quadricycles, and the rooms are equipped with a TV, minibar, air conditioning and free wi-fi. Local and national artists often perform in the restaurant. In addition, Bananeiras and the hotel have been expanding with new facilities, thereby adding value to the area.

### 4.2 Analysis According to the VRIO Model

The information obtained in the first interview revealed 7 resources and strategic capabilities, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

**Alpha Hotel Resources**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>PHYSICAL RESOURCES</b>	Leisure Infrastructure	Gym, leisure area, swimming pool, games room, children's playground, horseback riding, horse and cart rides, quadricycles and sightseeing tours of the city
	Accommodations	Comfortable themed rooms with air conditioning, flat-screen TV and first-class furnishings
	Geographic location	Ample structure and extensive green area in a single space
	Restaurant	Restaurant with excellent food service, entertainment and children's play area
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>	Financial capacity	Ability to generate profits from different sources (room rates, quadricycle rentals and the restaurant)
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	Work team	Staff trained to provide guests with friendly, efficient service.
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES</b>	Formal integrated structure	The director, management and employees who are responsible for ensuring the hotel runs smoothly and providing quality service

After the hotel resources and capabilities were identified, they were analyzed by the VRIO Model. The interviewee was informed about the meaning and purpose of each element of the model to ensure a better understanding and more accurate assessment. Table 3 presents the results of the VRIO Model.

Table 3

**Application of the VRIO Model**

<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>VALUABLE?</b>	<b>RARE?</b>	<b>DIFFICULT TO IMITATE?</b>	<b>EXPLOITED BY THE ORGANIZATION?</b>	<b>COMPETITIVE IMPLICATION</b>
Leisure Infrastructure	YES	YES	YES	YES	Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Accommodations	YES	NO	NO	YES	Competitive Parity
Geographic location	YES	YES	YES	YES	Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Restaurant	YES	YES	YES	YES	Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Financial capacity	YES	YES	YES	YES	Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Work team	YES	YES	NO	YES	Temporary Competitive Advantage
Formal integrated structure	YES	YES	NO	YES	Temporary Competitive Advantage

The results presented in Table 3 identify the resources considered valuable, rare, difficult to imitate and organized to capture value. Based on this information, the competitive implication of each resource for the hotel can be inferred, that is, whether it exhibits the potential to create sustainable competitive advantage, competitive parity or competitive disadvantage.

Leisure infrastructure is considered valuable because it features resources not offered by other hotels in the region, such as quadricycles, horse and cart rides and off-road vehicle tours. The hotel is also considered rare because of its extensive leisure infrastructure, whereas only the most basic items are found in other establishments. This resource is difficult to imitate due to demands such as space, logistics and financial capital. Management has been exploiting this resource, due to the extensive space available, and saw an opportunity to differentiate itself further by providing sightseeing tours and planning new business projects. As such, there is sustainable competitive advantage over other hotels in the region. This is expressed by the manager, as follows:

“Yes, I do feel we have a competitive advantage because we provide services that other hotels in the region don’t... [...] we cover an area of more than one thousand square meters, including a green area, swimming pool, horseback riding... we have quadricycles, sightseeing tours... I believe it’s more a question of having the space and logistics to provide all of these options and those to come.”

The accommodation resource is valuable because all the furnishings are of the highest quality and there are also themed rooms, such as the Arabian room, something that no other hotel in the region currently offers. However, this is not considered rare or difficult to imitate since any other competitor could easily provide themed rooms. All the resources are

interconnected and are always provided with the guests' convenience, comfort and enjoyment in mind. As such, it represents a situation of competitive parity, as the manager describes below:

“The infrastructure of the hotel is first class, both in and outside the rooms. We strive to provide guests with maximum comfort to ensure they have an enjoyable stay. This is essential. [...] The resources are well interconnected.”

The geographic location is valuable, primarily for the size of the property. In addition to having a hotel and restaurant, there is space for parking, tours, gazebos, nature walks nearby and new areas being planned and constructed. It is also a strategic location and a starting point for tours, thereby facilitating the development of these activities. It is a rare resource because there is only one hotel with a similar prime location, but it is much smaller. It is also difficult to imitate because a large investment is needed to acquire a comparable space and build a hotel. Regarding organization, geographic location has been widely exploited by the expansion of existing facilities and new undertakings nearby aimed at increasing tourist flows. Thus, there is potential to create a sustainable competitive advantage. According to the manager:

“It's a beautiful place, surrounded by nature rather than by walls or houses. There's a valley, lots of trees and space... so it's very competitive, making our location a positive point. A very good competitive advantage is that I can make significant changes, such as enlarging the hotel and creating new undertakings to increase tourist flow. Only we have this differential.”

This result is in line with the results of Stefanini et al. (2012), who identified that location is the third most relevant element for tourists in a hotel.

Another essential resource for the Alpha Hotel is the restaurant, which is considered valuable not only for its food services, but unique features such as gazebos and the spacious rustic environment. It is considered a rare resource because restaurants of this stature are not easily found in other hotels, and are difficult to imitate due to the ample space and excellent infrastructure provided to meet customer demands. Considered the hotel's most important resource, it has been exploited by hotel management, with frequent musical entertainment contributing to its results, and the unique, innovative experience indicating potential to create sustainable competitive advantage. According to the manager:

“The experience we offer is essentially our main resource, because it provides something unique with the gazebos. It’s not only a restaurant with tables inside, but also has a beautiful and spacious outside area, unlike anywhere else. So, definitely, the restaurant and hotel accommodations were all well planned and designed to provide a unique experience for the customer.”

Financial capacity is a valuable resource and the undertaking was conceived to be exploited and obtain positive results, which was achieved thanks to the hotel’s ability to generate profits from distinct sources. It is also considered a rare resource because it has greater capabilities than those of other hotels in the region due to the array of activities, entertainment and available space. It is a difficult resource to imitate because it requires large investments and the ability to apply resources to make them attractive. In terms of organization, financial capacity is considered the soul of business and has been increasing with improvements and new investments, thus providing a sustainable competitive advantage when compared to competitors. According to the manager:

“Financial capacity is the soul of business, planned and calculated in each decision. Two cornerstones are customer experience and revenue. Our every action, effort, and decision aims at ensuring a pleasant and rewarding experience for guests so that they recommend us, post on Instagram, and come back. That’s what keeps the wheel turning.”

This result is in line with that indicated by Santos and Flores (2017). In their study focused on the analysis of pricing strategies in accommodation establishments, the authors explain that the ability to generate profits from different sources is considered a strong point for the hotel industry since these aggregated services directly influence the price of the daily rate and can bring advantages to the hotels that use them.

The work team is considered a valuable resource because employees are trained to perform their duties as well as possible, thereby guaranteeing that a guest’s investment is not merely a simple stay at the hotel. This aspect is reinforced in the analysis by Bezerra et al. (2020), as the work team is revealed to be a vital resource, since they are in direct contact with the consumer of the services offered by the hotel.

It is a rare resource in that the hotels in the region have difficulty finding good staff, often requiring them to train professionals according to the hotel's culture. However, it is not

difficult to imitate because it is low-cost and easy to apply in other hotels by training employees. Organization has been emphasized by hotel management, with employee training and constant requalification in services and sales, thereby characterizing a temporary competitive advantage, as the manager explains:

“I know it’s hard to find good workers in the region. They usually have to be trained. That’s one of my roles. Constantly, daily, you have to be trained according to what I and the management team considers ideal. Our training always focuses on services and sales so that they can provide an enjoyable experience for the guest and a profitable one for the hotel.”

The integrated formal structure resource is considered valuable, primarily for being responsible for all the decisions and guidelines for the functioning of the hotel, which must be assertive to ensure continuity. It is rare for the same reason as the previous resource, that is, the scarcity of qualified labor, whereby it is difficult to find a competent and unified team in other hotels. It is also not difficult to imitate, since investments can be made in consulting companies and employee training for a reasonable cost. In terms of organization, management is always anticipating needs and investing in employee training so that the director, management and workers are aligned to deliver quality services to the guests, which reveals a potential to create temporary competitive advantage. According to the manager:

“Not only the employees in general, but the management team in charge of the hotel and restaurant, are essential since they make the decisions and establish guidelines to ensure the company's functioning, maintenance and continuity. Our reality here, in all areas of the hotel is not easy. You have to plan and train professionals well to have a solid and united team. [...] This triple hierarchy is what makes the hotel function and ensures a quality experience for our guests.” (Interviewee)

It is interesting to note that this microregion depends primarily on rural tourism and activities linked to this element by factors such as climate, the beautiful natural scenery and extensive rural areas that facilitate these activities. In the case analyzed, it was determined that the Alpha Hotel has a prime location and as such, the hotel has been exploiting closely interconnected resources to achieve satisfactory profits. This corroborates Alves, Silva and Salazar (2017), who also identified the direct relationship between geographic location and

exploiting resources as a sustainable competitive advantage in hotels in the states of Ceará and Pernambuco.

It is important to note that the results obtained for leisure and geographic location also coincide with the findings of Alves et al. (2017), who reported that both display potential to generate sustainable competitive advantage. Finally, six of the seven resources show potential to establish a temporary sustainable competitive advantage, indicating that the Alpha Hotel managed to generate a value superior to that of its competitors and exploit new opportunities from existing resources, revealing that these resources contribute positively to attracting new guests to the hotel.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the strategic resources that sustain the competitive advantage of a hotel in Brejo Paraibano. The hotel industry in the area is widely recognized and characterized for having alternative types of accommodation that meet the needs of different groups, offering a differential in tourists' perceptions. In other words, it is a case that presents a suitable reality for studies on competitive advantage in the hotel industry. In this respect, the aim of the research was achieved.

A total of 7 strategic resources were identified in the Alpha Hotel, representing essential elements for its successful competitiveness and relevance for the industry in Brejo Paraibano. About the competitive implication of the resources identified, accommodations exhibited a situation of parity. The work team and formal integrated structure displayed a temporary competitive advantage. Data analysis revealed that leisure infrastructure, geographic location, the restaurant and financial capacity showed the potential to create a sustainable competitive advantage. No competitive disadvantage resource was identified.

The resource with competitive parity is easily found in other hotels and relevant in that it contributes to the development of the hotel. From the standpoint of the director, new projects can be planned to exploit this resource and make it a potential for temporary or sustainable competitive advantage.

The resources with the potential to generate temporary competitive advantages require more attention, and despite being considered unique to the hotel, if actions that make them sustainable are not taken, these advantages may be lost. Thus, it is up to the director and management to devise strategies that exploit these resources by linking them with others to make them sustainable.



The resources with the potential to create sustainable competitive advantage reflect the hotel's excellent resource management and are therefore responsible for achieving satisfactory competitiveness. Based on these resources, the Alpha Hotel has maintained and strengthened its competitive advantage in Brejo Paraibano, primarily due to the differentials offered to tourists.

In terms of practical implications, the information obtained in the present study may serve as the basis for new investments in the hotel industry, guiding managers on which resources to concentrate their efforts to become competitive. It is also expected that the results demonstrated here can provide the hotel in question with an external view of its reality, helping to harness its potential and achieve better results.

In addition, it contributes to scientific development in the study area, given that the VRIO Model is widely recognized in applications aimed at analyzing the internal resources of organizations. In this case, it benefits the hotel industry and emphasizes the importance of using internal resources and capabilities as factors with the potential to generate sustainable competitive advantage and guarantee success. Therefore, it has enabled the advancement of understanding strategies for identifying and organizing resources in the hotel sector, revealing the importance of using a company's internal capabilities to effectively use its resources.

Although the objective presented was achieved, the following limitations should be noted: (a) the limited availability of the manager for interviews, given his busy schedule, (b) the need to conduct two interviews for data analysis, which required considerable time to conclude data collection, (c) the short time available to the manager to submit to two prolonged interviews and (d) unavailability/inability of a different manager to grant an interview for this study.

Finally, it is suggested that case studies be conducted in other hotels in the Brejo Paraibano region to obtain a comprehensive understanding at the time of analysis. In addition, to achieve a broader perspective, another suggestion would be to interview more subjects, encompassing all the employees and the tourists themselves. Another factor that deserves attention is the organizational element of the VRIO Model. Thus, it is suggested that a more in-depth study on this topic be carried out, given that the hotel analyzed exhibits temporary and sustainable competitive advantages with most of its resources, and that an organization's success depends on how resources are generated, paving the way for new discussions.

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