

Describing Skills in Hotel Management Syllabi: A View From the Field

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Abstract: Developing a course curricula is a complex and difficult task since it must reflect the fundamental technical competencies and skills, but also the soft skills that students must develop to practice a specific profession. In this sense, Higher Education Institutions have been struggling to find strategies and incorporate methodologies into their course curricula that will promote the balanced development of these technical and transversal competencies and skills. Therefore, this paper describes an exploratory study on how the competencies and skills dynamic is featured in the description of the learning outcomes of a 3-year Bachelor in Hospitality Management degree in Portugal. It analysed the forty learning outcomes of the different subjects of the degree and framed in the Reference Framework by The Council of the European Union. Moreover, it also analysed the application of the taxonomy of Bloom in describing the learning outcomes. The preliminary results show that there are some explicit learning outcomes outlined in the reference framework of the European Union but they still lack those related to soft skills development. Furthermore, the application of the taxonomy of Bloom is adequate and fully present in the learning outcomes. These results highlight the need of reviewing the description of the learning outcomes, mainly its alignment with the content and teaching and assessment methodologies adopted by the different subjects.

Keywords: bloom taxonomy, curricula, higher education, hotel management, skills

1. Introduction

In its position paper, OECD's The Future of Education and Skills 2030 project posits that future-ready students, faced with environmental, economic, and social challenges in an ever more interconnected and rapidly changing world,

need to apply their knowledge in unknown and evolving circumstances. For this, they will need a broad range of skills, including cognitive and meta-cognitive skills (e.g. critical thinking, creative thinking, learning to learn and self-regulation); social and emotional skills (e.g. empathy, self-efficacy and collaboration); and practical and physical skills (e.g. using new information and communication technology devices). (2019, p.5).

The COVID-19 pandemic made a painful case for the need for education to focus on competences and skills. It impacted economies, institutions and organizations, and individuals. It changed the way we learn, work, and lead social lives but, perhaps more importantly, the way we think about those essential human activities – they do change abruptly and unexpectedly.

The politically charged issue of the purpose of Higher Education (HE) is not new. In the EU it has long moved on from whether skills' development is a purpose of HE. HE institutions (HEIs), especially publicly funded HEIs, are expected to play a part in the skills formation system to support the twin transition (digital and green) which will entail meeting emerging skills and competences needs for jobs yet to be invented if we are to ever fill the skills gap. Lest they become obsolete, HEIs must participate in the discussion about and in the skilling, upskilling and reskilling endeavour. If skills are the new canon, as Berret (2016) posits, this new canon's creation has been led mainly by non-academic bodies, policymakers, and regulators. And, if it such endeavour was focused mostly on primary, secondary, vocational education and training (VET), and lifelong training (Trier, 2003), it has shifted to include HE as early as 2009 with the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET

2020), the setting up the Higher Education Working Group, the inception of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010, the 2011 Agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems, the 2017 EU agenda for higher Education, and most recently European strategy for universities, in January 2022. We can agree that, despite their willingness to contribute to the skills agenda, HEIs still struggle with a truly competency-based education, as in Gervais (2016) operational definition:

an outcome-based approach to education that incorporates modes of instructional delivery and assessment efforts designed to evaluate mastery of learning by students through their demonstration of the knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and behaviours required for the degree sought. (p.99)

Such a definition not only illustrates the complexity involved in teaching and assessing *competency*, but also the key role *skills* play in the dynamic makeup of the concept.

This paper discusses the results of an exploratory study on how the knowledge/skills dynamic is featured in the description of the learning outcomes of the forty subjects of a 3-year Bachelor in Hospitality Management degree in Portugal. The Literature Review presents a short overview of the literature on competencies and transversal skills as found in the official documents by Education regulators, which it articulates with key hospitality skills and the developmental approach offered in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956) as means to interpret staff's descriptions of skills and knowledge in syllabi. Section 3 presents the methodology, and the results are discussed in section 4, together with implications for further research.

2. Literature review

2.1 On competencies and skills

Official EU documentation posits *competence* as an overarching concept, comprised of knowledge, skills, and attitudes as can be found in OECD's DeSeCo Project (2005)

A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. (p.4)

and Future of Education and Skills 2030 project (2020)

Skills are the ability and capacity to carry out processes and be able to use one's knowledge in a responsible way to achieve a goal. Skills are part of a holistic concept of competency, involving the mobilisation of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to meet complex demands. (p.86)

From Becker's seminal distinction between generic skills (2008, p.11), and specific skills (*idem*, p.18), a large variety of terms have been coined to describe and categorise skills. A classic distinction can be found in discussions of the role of hard and soft skills (Andrews & Higson, 2008; Balcar, 2016; Hendarman & Cantner, 2018), but the official skills discourse has clearly shifted from the classic dichotomic generic/specific and soft/hard skills to focus on transferable skills, i.e., that "can be applied either or both: (i) across different cognitive domains or subject areas; (ii) across a variety of social, and in particular employment, situations. (Bridges, 1993), and thus are "not specifically related to a particular job, task, academic discipline or area of knowledge and that can be used in a wide variety of situations and work settings (for example, organizational skills)" (IBE - UNESCO, 2016).

More recently the term "transversal skill" has largely replaced "transferable skills" in OECD and EU official documents. The OECD Skills Outlook 2021, for example, defines the term using IBE-UNESCO's definition of transferable skills. A change that points to a greater emphasis on the fact that the need for such skills can be found (and not so much transferred) across a wide variety of situations and work settings, and to the fact that being able to transfer skills learned in particular contexts to others is, in itself, a skill (Yorke, 2006).

Despite the attention given to transversal skills, there is still no consensus on which skills are (key) transversal and should be added to the curriculum. A cursory overview of competence frameworks offers an extensive and widely varied list of transversal skills clustered around a variable number of competencies (OECD, 2005; Care *et al.*, 2012; UNESCO'S ERI-Net, 2013; UNESCO, 2016a, 2016b; VISKA project VISKA, 2017; OECD, 2019; P21 Partnership's Framework for 21st Century Learning, 2019).

For this exploratory study, we used the Reference Framework by the Council of the European Union (2018) which organises a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes around eight key competencies. Our outline includes only references to skills proper.

- 1. Literacy competence (the skills to communicate both orally and in writing [...] and to monitor and adapt their own communication [...] to distinguish and use different types of sources, to search for, collect and process information [...] critical thinking [...])
- 2. Multilingual competence (the ability to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read, understand and draft texts [...] to use tools appropriately and learn languages [...])
- 3. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering (the understanding of science as a process for the investigation through specific methodologies [...] the ability to use logical and rational thought [...] the ability to use and handle technological tools and machines [...] to recognise the essential features of scientific inquiry [...])
- 4. Digital competence (the ability to use, access, filter, evaluate, create, program and share digital content. [...] to manage and protect information, content, data, and digital identities, as well as recognise and effectively engage with software, devices, artificial intelligence or robots.)
- 5. Personal, social and learning to learn competence (the ability to identify one's capacities, focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions. [...] to learn and work both collaboratively and autonomously [...], seek support when appropriate and effectively manage one's career and social interactions. [...] resilient and able to cope with uncertainty and stress. [...] to communicate [...], collaborate in teams and negotiate. [show] tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints [...] to create confidence and feel empathy.)
- 6. Citizenship competence (the ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, [...] critical thinking and integrated problem-solving skills, [...] to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, [...] decision-making at all levels [...] to access and interact with both traditional and new forms of media and understand the role and functions of media in democratic societies.)
- 7. Entrepreneurship competence (creativity which includes imagination, strategic thinking and problem-solving, and critical and constructive reflection within evolving creative processes and innovation. [...] to mobilize resources and to sustain activity. [...] to make financial decisions relating to cost and value. [...] to effectively communicate and negotiate with others [...]);
- 8. Cultural awareness and expression competence (the ability to express and interpret figurative and abstract ideas, experiences and emotions [...] to identify and realise opportunities for personal, social or commercial value through the arts and other cultural forms and [...] to engage in creative processes.

It may be the case that transversal skills are the new hard skills. In OECD Skills Outlook 2021: Learning for Life (2021), communication, teamwork and organisational skills are referred to as being

among the transversal skills most frequently demanded by employers in a wide variety of occupations. Cognitive skills, such as analytical, problem-solving, digital, leadership and presentation skills are also highly transversal across jobs and work contexts.

Transversal skills provide a flexible structure that allows an individual to adapt to small and major shifts in job-roles, make a lateral career move or a complete career change, and to navigate changes in the labour market (OECD, 2021).

Job listings put more emphasis on the transversal skills they require of applicants because hard skills are a given and need not be explicit. [Inter]Disciplinary, epistemic, and procedural knowledge, be it more or less domain-specific, are more than merely relevant in the “knowledge economy”. They are, however, more marketable when bundled with transversal skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity and, often, attitudes or personal qualities such as responsibility, honesty, loyalty or sociability.

2.2 Skills in hospitality

According to Chung (2000) the number of hospitality management programmes has increased significantly since the 1920s, when E.M. Statler and the American Hotel Association helped the Cornell University to create the first hospitality program. The hospitality education expanded with the industry, and the programmes need to

give the students the skills and knowledge to develop their activities correctly. To Wang and Tsai (2014) since the 1990s, one of the goals of higher education has been to enhance the development of employability skills, helping graduates enrich their employment opportunities. The hospitality management programmes should train employees and potential managers to develop their careers and job competencies positively.

According to Jiang and Alexakis (2017) some industry practitioners expect certain competencies, but students provide another set of features in the hospitality management area. This reinforces the urgency of meeting the needs of the rapidly changing hospitality industry, furthering research into which competencies are essential for graduates to possess and curriculum design to meet these needs and ensure that graduates have the abilities and knowledge that the industry needs (Sisson and Adams, 2013). And, in an effort to respond to these demands, hospitality programmes currently teach the traditional areas such as lodging and food and beverage, but also events, meetings, revenue management, cruise market, as it is necessary to adapt permanently to market changes.

Still, according to Gursoy and Swanger (2004) those main areas are not sufficient from a professional point of view. Gursoy and Swanger (2004) study put forward the 20 subject areas that matter the most to reach success in the hospitality field: (1) ethics, (2) leadership, (3) preparation for industry employment, (4) internships / industry experience, (5) hospitality management and organization, (6) operations analysis, (7) overview of the hospitality industry, (8) foodservice operations, (9) computer/information technology, (10) service management, (11) strategic management, (12) principles of marketing, (13) human resources management, (14) hospitality management strategy, (15) sales/sales management, (16) food safety and sanitation, (17) accounting, (18) finance, (19) lodging operations and (20) revenue / asset management. In the second part of their study, in 2005, Gursoy and Swanger present (1) leadership, (2) communication, (3) customer service, (4) work habits, (5) ethics, (6) team building, (7) dispute resolution, and (8) goal-setting skills as the more important aspects to include in a hospitality management curriculum.

Sisson and Adams (2013) confirmed that the most essential competencies for hospitality graduates are in the soft category, and the most important three functional work areas are lodging, food and beverage, and meeting and event management, reinforcing the importance of soft competencies. To Weber, Crawford, Lee and Dennison (2013) hard skills correspond to the skills in the technical and administrative categories and soft skills correspond to the skills in the human, conceptual, leadership, and interpersonal categories. According to these authors, the terms hard and soft skills have developed over the years as a way of identifying characteristics and abilities needed to be successful in a management position (p. 314).

Some authors make the case for less specialization. Sisson and Adams (2013) stated that the hospitality programs should move to less specialization, alleviating the work of higher education teachers. And though, some academics argue that hospitality education should not be described by or reduced to supplying the industry and recognise that higher education should help develop experts who can contribute to a variety of societal and professional domains (Lugosi and Jameson, 2017), hospitality and tourism educators continually seek to design and improve program curricula to ensure that graduates are well prepared to enter the industry (Jiang and Alexakis, 2017).

If one agrees with Wang, Ayres and Huyton (2009, p.63) that one of the goals of higher education is to produce graduates with the skills that are particularly considered by employers, then, the vitality of tourism education relies, without doubt, on a robust relationship with the tourism industry, and hospitality programmes must strike a balance between service industry practitioners' demand and academic education (Jiang and Alexakis, 2017).

2.3 Bloom's Taxonomy and its revised edition by Anderson and Krathwohl

In 1956, a team of researchers led by Benjamin S. Bloom published a taxonomy of educational objectives in the cognitive domain. As the introduction to Handbook states: "It is intended to provide for classification of the goals of our educational system." (Bloom, 2)

This classification of educational objectives makes it possible to show whether there is a distribution along the continuum of cognitive processes and makes it clear when this is not achieved: "Curriculum builders should find the taxonomy helps them specify objectives so that it becomes easier to plan learning experiences and prepare evaluation devices." (1956, 2) The taxonomy classifies the processes of human learning by placing them in a

hierarchical order, ranging from the simplest to the most complex process category: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation.

In 2001, David Krathwohl, who was part of the original team working on the Handbook, co-led the team with Lorin Anderson that had the huge task of revising the above taxonomy, which was a staple in teacher education in many countries. The most notable changes in the revised edition were the rewording of cognitive processes, from nouns to verbs, the renaming of some components, and the repositioning of the last two categories. The cognitive process categories are as follows: Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create.

The change from noun to the verb is not innocent, according to Anderson & Krathwohl: “The verb generally describes the intended cognitive process. The noun generally describes the knowledge students are expected to acquire or construct” (Anderson & Krathwohl, 5).

The most significant change was the introduction of different types of knowledge, namely factual, conceptual, procedural, and metacognitive knowledge, that intersect with cognitive processes, leading to a two-dimensional framework (2001, 5).

Therefore, in the taxonomy table, the cognitive process dimension, which forms the columns, contains the six categories identified above and is placed on a continuum of cognitive complexity. The rows of the table correspond to the knowledge dimension, with its four categories which lie along a continuum from concrete (factual) to abstract (metacognitive) (2001, 27).

So as to place the objective in a cell, it is imperative to analyse the objective by locating the verb and the noun in the statement. The verb is examined in the context of the six categories of the cognitive process dimension – Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create. Likewise, the noun is examined in the context of the four types of the knowledge dimension.

As the authors acknowledge, classifying objectives is often difficult because the objective may be too vague, the statement may contain more than verbs and nouns, or the verb may be ambiguous in relation to the intended cognitive process, or the noun may be ambiguous in its intended knowledge (2001, 33). Moreover, it is essential that the person making the categorisation makes the correct inferences “because inference is involved and because each person may have access to different information, individuals may disagree about the correct classification of an objective.” (2001, 34)

3. Method

Hotel management is a markedly transdisciplinary field, which has undoubtedly benefited from the scientific and technical know-how of areas such as management, catering, tourism, accounting, human resources, IT and foreign language teaching. The confluence of different knowledge fields is clearly visible in the curricula used in higher education hotel management degrees aiming to prepare students for the real needs of the labour market. The syllabi and teaching materials proposed by the lecturers could be used to check whether the transdisciplinary variety of the curricula transfers to the terms/words used in the programmes created for each of the subjects.

The analysis of the corpus we created from the official information sheets of ESHT’s undergraduate degree in hotel management will provide important information on what skills lecturers deem important for the future professionals in this area.

3.1 Sample

Our sample is comprised of the Learning Objectives taken from the official information sheets (used for the academic year 2020/21) of each one of the subjects that make up the 6-semester undergraduate degree of Hotel Management. Forty subjects are taught throughout the 3 academic years, which corresponds to a total of 120 ECTS. The official information sheet is divided into four parts: i) identification, ii) purposes, overview, description, iii) evaluation procedures and iv) information for A3ES (Portuguese agency supervising quality assurance in HEI). The Learning Objectives are to be found in the second part of the sheets, which also includes the contents, the bibliographic references (the mandatory and supplementary material students should use) and the teaching methodology defined for each of the subjects.

Of the forty subjects students must pass to graduate, nineteen present their objectives without specifying general and specific outcomes, whereas the remaining twenty-one first enounce the general learning aims students must achieve, followed by the specific ones to be attained. The syntactic structure of the sentences making up our corpus is Verb [infinitive] + Object, which results from the fact that each of the learning objectives lecturers determine for their subjects are, semantically, the continuation of the phrase “When students complete this subject successfully, they will be able to...”

3.2 Procedure and data analysis

We gathered our corpus in Notepad++, a free source code editor, because it supports Portuguese, runs in MS Windows and the files created can be downloaded to SketchEngine, an online text analysis tool that allows its users to find out how their language works in real communication contexts, as the corpora may be explored through different frequency-based statistics.

Corpora have proved to be productive language sample materials to extract linguistic data information for creating a terminological product or for undertaking a lexicographic study — dictionaries, vocabularies, glossaries, terminology databases, thesauri, translation memory databases, etc. —, for developing linguistic analysis through data processing in computer applications, language software or terminology management tool kits — frequency wordlists, keywords, term extraction, concordance lists, collocates, taggers, lemmatizers, etc. — or for representing specialized knowledge — ontologies’ development, conceptual maps, etc..

Our corpus has 298 sentences, with a total of 4,279 words (and 5,166 tokens), of which 166 were categorised as adjectives in the Wordlist, 28 were adverbs, 5 were conjunctions, 515 were nouns, 48 were numerals, 11 prepositions, 7 pronouns, and 160 were verbs. If one searches for the meaning of the noun skill, it may help us understand why the most frequent grammatical categories occurring in our corpus are nouns and verbs:

Definition of skill (Entry 1 of 2)

- 1a: the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance
- b: dexterity or coordination especially in the execution of learned physical tasks
- 2: a learned power of doing something competently: a developed aptitude or ability language skills

Item - Noun	Frequency	Translated to
competência	30	competency
serviço	27	service
gestão	24	management
importância	23	importance
restauração	23	catering
hotelaria	22	hospitality
informação	20	information
atividade	20	activity
organização	19	organisation
unidade	19	unity
conceito	18	concept
setor	17	sector
língua	16	language
cozinha	15	kitchen
turismo	14	tourism
comunicação	14	communication

Item - Verbs	Frequency	Tanslated to
identificar	33	identify
reconhecer	22	recognise
descrever	20	describe
compreender	20	understand
aplicar	19	apply
ser	18	be
demonstrar	17	demonstrate
conhecer	16	know
desenvolver	13	develop
adquirir	11	acquire
escrever	10	write
elaborar	9	create
executar	9	perform
utilizar	9	use/manipulate
organizar	9	organise
perceber	9	understand
interpretar	9	interpret
analisar	8	analyse

Given the scope of this paper, we decided to focus our analysis on the verb “identificar” (identify) for its frequency and its association (as expressed in the concordance results taken from SketchEngine) to the skills that are more relevant to the hospitality industry (as is put forward by the lecturers determining the Learning Objectives deemed important for the subjects they taught).

4. Results

In this exploratory study, we analysed the competencies defined with the verb “identify”. We had 33 results with the verb “identify”. Therefore, we aimed to understand what were the skills associated with the verb identify. In our results, according to EU Competence framework (REF) the skills identified were Literacy competence, STEM, and Digital competence. In our results, we had one result related to digital competence, three results related to STEM, and 29 are related to literacy competence as illustrated by the examples:

- Digital competence – “Identifying information and technology needs in hotel and tourism enterprises”
- STEM – “Structure in a clear way logical reasoning, identifying consciously all its phases, considering mathematics as a tool for other curricular units”
- Literacy competence - “Identify the basic concepts in Marketing”

We also aimed to understand what were the hospitality subject of the skill. In Table 1 we can observe that the most frequent subjects are foodservice and operations, and food safety and sanitation, with seven and five entries respectively.

Table 1: Frequency and quotations according to Hospitality subject

Hospitality subject (Gursoy & Swanger, 2004)	Frequency	Quotations
Ethics	--	--
Leadership	--	--
Preparation for industry employment	4	Identify errors resulting from mother tongue interference and avoid them.
Internships / industry experience	--	--
Hospitality management and organization	1	Identify and recognise in practice the main concepts of the management of an organisation.
Operations analysis	1	Identify the role played by the catering activity in the hotel context.
Overview of the hospitality industry	3	Identify the fundamental concepts of the practice of leisure, recreation and tourism.
Foodservice operations	7	Identify the main characteristics of the several types of table and bar service.
Computer/information technology	2	Identify the information and technology needs in hotel and tourism enterprises.
Service management	3	Identify gastronomic trends.
Strategic management	--	--
Principles of marketing	1	Identify the basic concepts of Marketing
Human resources management	1	Identify hotel manager and employee skills and propose an improvement plan.
Hospitality management strategy	2	Identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of a hotel/tourism development project.
Sales/sales management	--	--
Food safety and sanitation	5	Identify the main diseases, dangers and food risks most frequently encountered in catering and hospitality.
Accounting	--	--
Finance	3	Identify capitalised values and updated values.
Lodging operations	--	--
Revenue / asset management	--	--

Additionally, according to Bloom’s theory, we aimed to understand what were the cognitive process and the knowledge dimension of the competencies using “identify” as a verb. Table 2 shows that the most frequent cognitive process is “remember”.

Table 2: Frequency and quotations according to Bloom’s cognitive process

Bloom’s cognitive process	Frequency	Quotation
Analyse	3	Identify errors resulting from mother tongue interference and avoid them.
Evaluate	1	Identifying information and technology needs in hotel and tourism enterprises.
Understand	3	Identify the different types of events and impacts produced.
Remember	18	Identify the profile and motivations of the gastronomic tourist.

Moreover, we can observe in Table 3 that the most frequent knowledge dimension associated with competencies is the Conceptual dimension. Although, the factual dimension also has a significant representation in our data.

Table 3: Frequency and quotations according to Bloom’s Knowledge dimension

Bloom’s knowledge dimension	Frequency	Quotation
Factual	8	Identify restaurant service terminology.
Procedural	2	Identify errors resulting from mother tongue interference and avoid them.
Conceptual	9	Identify and understand the importance of brand value and brand management in hospitality.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The development of syllabi is a complex and difficult process since it should reflect the fundamental competencies and skills to be developed in a given area. Therefore, HEI struggles to develop competency-based syllabi, which implies the complexity of teaching and assessing the key competencies and skills: knowledge, attitudes, values, skills, and behaviors (Gervais, 2016).

Our study shows that the results outcomes described in the forty subjects of the 3-year degree have an emphasis on the hard competencies, namely foodservice and operations, and food safety and sanitation, in line with the hard skills identified by the author’s Weber, Crawford, Lee and Dennison (2013) and Sisson and Adams (2013). Nevertheless, it also shows a lack on hard skills identified by those authors like lodging and meeting and event management. This result can be justified by the fact of this study only analysed the verb “identify” since the syllabi have subjects related to lodging, events, accounting, revenue management and internship, despite they are not identified with any frequency in Table 1.

Moreover, the literature (Weber, Crawford, Lee & Dennison, 2013, Sisson & Adams, 2013, Mitchell, Skinner & White, 2010) advocates that the balance between soft and hard skills should be equal or even the soft should have superior importance, namely the ones related with human, conceptual, leadership, and interpersonal skills. In this matter, our results show that the syllabi had a lack of soft skills described in their subjects since only were identified the ones related to Human resources management.

Relatively to the EU Reference Framework (2018), our results also show that the syllabi describe three of the eight key competencies, namely, one result related to digital competence, three results related to STEM, and 29 are related to literacy competence, which evidences a lack of having the soft skills with bigger weight described in syllabi outcomes. We believe those two results (lack of soft skills and key competencies of the EU framework) outcomes from some miss alignment between the content, the methodologies, and the results outcomes described by the subjects.

Concerning Bloom’s taxonomy, we notice that the outcomes are framed with the cognitive process, with a bigger representation in the remember phase, and with the knowledge dimension, focusing on the conceptual phase, but also with a good representation in the factual phase.

5.1 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This study has some limitations. This study only analyses the verb “identify”, the most frequently referenced verb, but it identified 18 different verbs, therefore it should be analysed all the 18 and frame them in the Bloom taxonomy. Besides, there were other results like 16 nouns that weren’t analysed, and we believe that it could represent better results in what concerns soft and hard skills described by the learning outcomes of the subjects.

Therefore, the next step will be to analyse all the other verbs and nouns to have more accurate results concerning the soft and hard skills described in the subjects' outcomes.

Moreover, we believe that deeper analyses, like the content description and teaching and assessing methodologies, could highlight some missing soft skills described in the results outcomes but developed by the different subjects that compose the degree.

Besides, the study should be applied and compared to all syllabi of degrees in Hotel Management in Portugal to understand the overall position and alignment of competence-education in this area given by HEI.

From this study, it could be arising the comparison of the Portuguese shape of Hotel Management competencies education with other studies made in the Europe universe, for one hand to understand the application of European Union Reference Competence across countries and in another hand to understand the effective correspondence of skills obtained between degrees in the same area acquired in different European countries.

5.2 Final conclusions

This is a preliminary study on key competencies and skills described in the subject syllabi of a 3-year Bachelor Hotel Management degree that we found very promising since it can give some important insights into the management of HEI and of degrees in this field about their alignment with the EU Reference Framework and with the best practices present in literature for this study field.

In this study, even though it is still preliminary, we can notice that the content, the teaching, and assessment methodologies, may not be totally present in the result outcomes of the subjects. This alignment is fundamental to truly describe the competencies and skills of the degree, especially showing what are the soft skills that students may develop with the assessment methodologies applied.

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