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Impact of corporate social (ir)responsibility on volume and valence of online  
employee reviews: Evidence from the tourism and hospitality industry

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# Impact of corporate social (ir)responsibility on volume and valence of online employee reviews: Evidence from the tourism and hospitality industry

## **Abstract**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) and irresponsibility (CSI) can influence employee voice behavior in online review platforms. This study utilizes online employee review (OER), builds upon ethical climate theory, and hypothesizes the independent and joint effects of CSR and CSI on two aspects of employee voice – OER volume and OER valence. Using novel OER data of US tourism and hospitality firms, we perform a panel data regression with industry and year fixed effects. The results indicate that firm CSR engagement increases both the volume and valence of OER, whereas CSI accelerates (attenuates) the positive CSR effect on OER volume (valence). These findings can help tourism and hospitality firms implement CSR strategies for enhancing employees' word of mouth from both volume and valence perspectives.

## **Keywords**

Corporate social responsibility; Corporate social irresponsibility; Employee voice; Online employee review; Review volume; Review valence; Ethical climate theory

## 1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), which has been an increasingly significant topic among researchers and practitioners, takes into account expectations of various stakeholders, including employees, customers, and the wider society (Farooq, Rupp, & Farooq, 2017). One primary stakeholder of any firm is its employees (Vlachos, Panagopoulous, & Rapp, 2013). Interestingly, a number of firms also engage with corporate social irresponsibility (CSI), which refers to a firm's irresponsible behavior, often with the aim of creating shareholder value at the expense of others (Armstrong, 1977). For example, Ethisphere Institute has recognized Starbucks as one of the most ethical companies due to various CSR initiatives, whereas American Consumer Culture has underrated the reputation of Starbucks due to CSI incidents such as low wage, child labor, and tax avoidance. Moreover, Kang, Germann, and Grewal (2016) studied 4,500 firms and found that there was a high correlation between CSR and CSI (36.43%), meaning that it is not unusual for firms to engage in both CSR and CSI activities.

Numerous studies have explored how CSR and CSI affect employee and firm outcomes. Research indicates that CSR positively affects employee attitudes and behaviors, such as organizational commitment (Farooq et al., 2014) and employee turnover (Hansen et al., 2011), whereas CSI has a negative impact on stakeholders (Yoon, Gürhan-Canli, & Schwarz, 2006), organizational reputation (Nardella, Brammer, & Surdu, 2020), and market reactions (Liu, Wang, & Li, 2021). However, the influence of CSR and CSI on employee voice is generally unexplored (Wang et al., 2020). Scholars suggest that the CSR-outcome relationship should go beyond the dependent variables used in prior research such as firm value and financial performance (Gond, Akremi, Swaen, & Babu, 2017). As employees care about others (Hansen, Dunford, Alge, & Jackson, 2016), CSR may make employees believe

that speaking up their suggestions and concerns (i.e., employee voice) will be effective and less risky in their organizations (Wang, Zhang, & Jia, 2020). Furthermore, there is no clear knowledge of how CSI influences employee voice behavior and moderates the CSR-employee voice relationship.

Due to the rapid expansion of digital and social media, employee voice about their firms can be expressed through these media. The advent of online employee review (OER) platforms (e.g., Indeed and Glassdoor) enables researchers to extend the consumer-generated electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) perspective to the employee context (Melián-González & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2016). According to a recent survey, 78% of job seekers utilize OER sites to form an opinion about a prospective employer, and 60% of job seekers read OERs before applying to a firm (Goldberg, 2019). Consequently, employers these days care greatly about OERs, because these OERs not only represent more objective employee evaluations about their firm, but also significantly influence a firm's external and internal reputations (Keeling, McGoldrick, & Sadhu, 2013). Given the growing salience of employee voice to the success of service businesses (Bettencourt, Brown, & MacKenzie, 2005), researchers have recently used OER ratings as a metric of employee satisfaction in their empirical studies, including the tourism and hospitality (T&H) literature (e.g., Stamolampros, Korfiatis, Chalvatzis, & Buhalis, 2020).

As many T&H firms are actively embracing CSR (Clausing, 2018), scholars have examined the role of CSR for employee behavior in the context of cultural heritage tourism (Wells et al., 2015), casino (Youn, Lee, & Lee, 2018), travel companies (Park, Lee, & Kim, 2018), and hotels (Kim, Rhou, Topcuoglu, & Kim, 2020). However, the T&H literature on CSR has paid little attention to not only its influence on employee voice (Jolly & Lee, 2021) but also the CSI's direct and moderating effects (Volgger & Huang, 2018). Researchers argue that stakeholders, including consumers and employees, might view firms' engagement in both

CSR and CSI activities as unauthentic and deceitful (Chen, Ganesan, & Liu, 2009; Kang et al., 2016). This exploration is particularly important for labor-intensive T&H firms because they suffer from a high turnover rate of employees (World Tourism Organization and International Labour Organization, 2014), and CSI may hurt firms' CSR outcomes (Lenz, Wetzel, & Hammerschmidt, 2017). Nevertheless, researchers have not taken full advantage of OER-based employee voice information for enhancing our understanding of employee reactions to CSR and CSI practices in the T&H industry (Kang et al., 2010; Stamolampros et al., 2020). Furthermore, no T&H literature to date has studied how CSR efforts affect employee voice behavior in the presence of CSI incidents, although some studies have examined effects of CSR and CSI on firm performance (e.g., Kang et al., 2010) and the effect of inclusive leadership on employee self-reported voice behavior (Jolly & Lee, 2021).

To fill these research gaps, this study attempts to address the question of how a firm's CSR and CSI activities, independently and jointly, influence two types of employee voice behavior – namely, OER volume and OER valence – in the T&H context. As for consumer-generated eWOM, OER volume refers to how much employees voice toward their firm, and OER valence refers to how satisfied employees are with their firm. Both the volume and valence of OER needs to be utilized as employee voice toward firm activities. Building upon ethical climate theory and employee voice as the main theoretical basis, we hypothesize that a firm's ethical issues of CSR and CSI may influence the ethical climate of the firm, which will ultimately influence employee voice behaviors in the form of OER volume and valence. Furthermore, we combine firm-level CSR and financial information with employee-level online review information into a panel dataset, without relying on cross-sectional and perception-based data, which provides stronger evidence for the proposed relationship in a more realistic manner.

Our results show that a firm's CSR initiatives directly increase both the volume and

valence of OER, while CSI incidents have a moderating effect, by accelerating the positive effect of CSR on the OER volume but attenuating CSR's positive effect on OER valence. The findings of this study have implications for T&H firms, allowing them to reflect the intricate CSR-employee voice relationship in a firm's CSR efforts in the face of CSI incidents, and to strategize employee voice management, which play a critical role in dealing with employee recruitment and turnover reduction (Jolly & Lee, 2021; Stamolampros et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the method used in this study clearly advances the micro-macro chasm in the CSR literature, by using voluntarily produced longitudinal data to examine the effect of a firm's CSR and CSI (i.e., macro-level) activities on aggregated employees' (i.e., micro-level) expressions about their firm.

## **2. Literature review and hypothesis development**

### *2.1. CSR and CSI*

CSR can be defined as “context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance” (Aguinis, 2011, p. 855). In short, CSR refers to a firm's actions that improve the well-being of both internal and external corporate stakeholders (Kotler & Lee, 2005). T&H researchers have generally agreed that CSR is an important firm strategy for efficiently managing workforces by increasing employees' quality of working life, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment and citizenship behavior (Youn et al., 2018). However, most CSR studies have examined the meaning and outcomes of firms' responsible behavior rather than irresponsible behavior, especially in the context of employee reactions (Bauman & Skitka, 2012).

CSI refers to a firm's actions that hurt the well-being of corporate stakeholders (Lin-Hi & Muller, 2013). CSI examples are environmental degradation and pollution, bribery, and firm actions that harm various stakeholders, including customers and employees, which are perceived to be socially irresponsible (e.g., Strike, Gao, & Bansal, 2006). CSI tends not only to engender moral anger on important stakeholders (Antonetti & Maklan, 2016) but also to put firms at a disadvantage in attracting customers, employees, and investors, further increasing financial risk (Lange & Washburn, 2012).

Given the distinct concepts of CSR and CSI, some CSR studies have shifted their perspective from monolithic (i.e., CSR-CSI independence) to integrated (i.e., CSR-CSI interdependence) (Strike et al., 2006) because large firms may have high levels of both CSR and CSI (Kang et al., 2016). In some cases, firms may ramp up CSR activities after intentional or unintentional CSI incidents (Lin-Hi & Muller, 2013). This phenomenon requires an investigation of their joint effect on employee attitudes and behaviors. When CSI incidents occur, consumers may perceive firms' CSR activities as less sincere (Yoon et al., 2006), possibly attenuating the CSR's positive effect on firm value (Lenz et al., 2017). The overall negative effect of an aggregated CSR (measured by subtracting CSI from CSR, which has been widely used in previous CSR studies) may mean that there exists the interplay among CSR, CSI, and firm performance simultaneously (Kang et al., 2016), and the CSI's negative effect may possibly exceed CSR's positive effect (Jayachandran, Kalaignanam, & Eilert, 2013). In such case, the individual impacts of CSR and CSI are concealed, which can lead scholars and managers to make incorrect conclusions on business implications of CSR and CSI. Hence, it is imperative to investigate both independent and interdependent roles of CSR and CSI in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors.

## *2.2. Online employee review (OER)*



OER, a type of eWOM that contains both positive and negative content, represents written opinions about a particular firm that are generated by current and former employees (Keeling et al., 2013). According to the source credibility framework (Pornpitakpan, 2004), firm-initiated online testimonials may be perceived to be less credible than employee-generated eWOM such as the OER used in the current study. Evidently, it has become an emerging trend that job seekers and recruiters join social media and OER platforms to have active conversations and engagement among participants (Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). OER-based recruitment techniques may attract high-quality employees because OER participants are likely to be computer literate and embrace digital and social media technology (Melanthiou, Pavlou, & Constantinou, 2015). Because T&H firms have to deal with high employee turnover (Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, & Buyruk, 2010), monitoring and understanding OER-based employee voice behavior are important for developing positive relationships with current employees and promoting firm image towards prospective employees. Researchers have identified that volume and valence are the two most commonly studied factors of eWOM, thus we explore these two OER factors in the following sections.

### *2.2.1. OER volume*

Extant literature has argued that the volume of eWOM often represents aggregated consumer preferences for a product, brand, or company (Decker & Trusov, 2010). As eWOM volume delivers information about how many consumers have experienced a particular product, it represents a cue of popularity and credibility of the company or brand (Cheung, Xiao, & Liu, 2014). Notably, eWOM volume is an important performance metric in the digital age because it has a stronger impact on sales than eWOM valence (e.g., positive, negative, or neutral eWOM), and even negative eWOM does not jeopardize sales (Babić

Rosario, Sotgiu, de Valck, & Bijmolt, 2016). Hence, eWOM volume is likely to increase other consumers' awareness of and reduce their uncertainty about a particular object (e.g., a product, service, brand, or company), regardless of whether eWOM contents are positive or negative (Chintagunta, Gopinath, & Venkataraman, 2010).

From the perspective of organizational behavior, an employee may engage in a high level of voice (i.e., employee voice) or withhold input that could be shared with others (i.e., employee silence) on OER platforms (Ashford, Sutcliffe, & Christianson, 2009). Employee voice is conceptualized as the action of communicating ideas or suggestions about job-related issues that may improve the way an organization functions (Morrison, 2011). It often refers to organizational citizenship behavior that involves verbal suggestions for the change of existing practices in a firm (Detert, Burris, Harrison, & Martin, 2013). Conversely, employee silence is defined as the "purposeful withholding of ideas, questions, concerns, information or opinions by employees about issues relating to their jobs and organization in which they work" (Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003: p. 1389). That is, employee silence is regarded as undesirable because withholding organizational improvement-related voice may harm organizational interests in growth, learning, and adaptation (Fast, Burris, & Bartel, 2014).

While an individual employee can either choose to express suggestions and concerns (voice) or choose to withhold them (silence) on OER platforms, this study focuses on the collective format of employee voice given the importance of powerful collective-level beliefs about employee voice (Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Morrison, 2011). Prior studies have demonstrated that employee voice, regardless of the content (e.g., positive or negative), is likely to improve organizational effectiveness (Morrison, 2011) and reduce employee turnover (Fast et al., 2014). In this study, we regard OER volume as the volume of employee voice behavior, which represents how many current and former employees have expressed their opinions about the focal firm on OER platforms.

### 2.2.2. OER valence

Scholars suggest that eWOM valence represents customers' positive or negative evaluations about certain products or services in the form of five-star rating systems (Chintagunta et al., 2010). The average rating score, as a typical measure of eWOM valence, can be regarded as the reviewers' overall evaluation of a product, brand, or company (Babić Rosario et al., 2016). Because customers can easily process numerical ratings, valence information can reduce information asymmetry (Viglia, Minazzi, & Buhalis, 2016), and customers likely pay more for products or services with high ratings due to the expectation of their high quality (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). In the same vein, travelers actively use the information of eWOM valence to narrow down their consideration set. For example, when travelers search numerous similar hotel options in online booking sites, they may consider the eWOM valence as important in their purchase decisions (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009).

In this study, we consider OER valence as the valence of employee voice behavior, which can be measured by average rating score derived from employee reviewers' evaluations about their firm. OER valence reflects the extent to which the firm meets employee needs (Shen, 2011). Employees who are satisfied (unsatisfied) with their firms likely engage in positive (negative) advocacy on OER platforms, which could influence the attractiveness of potential organizational recruits (Keeling et al., 2013). Scholars suggest that job applicants tend to rely on OER valence, through which they determine whether they should seek employment in particular firms (Shinnar, Young, & Meana, 2004). Furthermore, if the externally constructed image, possibly from OER valence, is positive (negative), employees may feel proud (discontented) of belonging to the firm with the positive (negative) image (Smidts, Pruyn, & Van Riel, 2001). Research on customer-oriented service industries (e.g., the T&H industry) has acknowledged that employees' positive eWOM plays a crucial

role in helping their firm to acquire new customers (Wentzel, Tomczak, & Henkel, 2014), while negative eWOM potentially hurts the firm's financial (e.g., sales) and non-financial (e.g., reputation) performance (Harris & Ogbonna, 2013).

### *2.3. Hypothesized relationship between CSR and OER*

To investigate employees' OER reactions to CSR in the face of CSI, we base our perspectives on ethical climate theory (Victor & Cullen, 1988), suggesting that organizational practices (e.g., CSR and CSI) may become antecedents of ethical climate (Hansen et al., 2016). Ethical climate can be defined as an employee's perceptions about the firm's actions within an ethical context (Schwepker, 2001). Ethical climate not only guides employees to do the right thing in their firms but also influences employee attitudes and behaviors (Newman, Round, Bhattacharya, & Roy, 2017). Based on this general framework, the following sections propose the related hypotheses that deal with independent and joint effects of CSR and CSI on OER volume and valence.

#### *2.3.1. The effect of CSR and CSI on OER volume*

To hypothesize the effect of CSR and CSI activities on OER volume, we base our argument on the relation between ethical climate and employee voice; that is, how a firm's ethical issues of CSR and CSI play an important role in subsequent employee voice behavior (e.g., Newman et al., 2017). Ethical climate theory suggests that ethical climate is formed depending on the nature and contexts of an organization (Victor & Cullen, 1988). Researchers identify two types of ethical climate: self-focused and other-focused (Arnaud, 2010). When making ethical decisions, self-focused climate denotes prioritizing the maximization of self-interests while other-focused climate indicates prioritizing the interests and well-being of

organization members and society at large (Arnaud, 2010). CSR and CSI may represent key sources of cues that influence employee judgment toward the moral nature of organizations (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). Hence, we argue that a firm's CSR and CSI practices may influence the ethical climate of the firm, which in turn, influence employee voice behaviors (Wang et al., 2020).

As CSR focuses on the welfare of internal and external stakeholders (Farooq et al. 2017), CSR activities are likely to influence the employee-firm relationship that corresponds to various psychological needs such as security, self-esteem, belongingness, and a meaningful existence (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). Employees often search for cues associating the use of their voices and choose to express their suggestions and concerns only after evaluating potential personal benefits and risks (Liang, Farh, & Farh, 2012). In this regard, CSR may lower the perceived risks among employees regarding speaking up suggestions and concerns. For example, Jolly and Lee (2021) found that inclusive leadership behaviors are likely to encourage T&H employees to speak up in their work group with ideas for new projects or changes in procedures. Hence, a firm's CSR practices can encourage employees more actively to promote cooperative work environments or socially responsible activities with positive OER voices (Hur, Moon, & Ko, 2018).

In contrast to the CSR influence, the CSI influence on the volume of OER-based employee voice can be either positive or negative. A firm's engagement with CSI activities may send employees negative cues, such as less moral and opportunistic image of their firm (Godfrey, Merrill, & Hansen, 2009). Some researchers argue that employees in the face of firm CSI activities may take a whistle-blowing action by communicating to external parties and disclosing illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices (Miceli, Near, & Dworkin, 2008). In this case, CSI may lead to an increase in the volume of employee voice. Other researchers argue that unethical leadership and CSI practices tends to reduce psychological safety of

employees (Walumbwa & Schaubroeck, 2009), which often results in employee silence (Wang & Hsieh, 2013). In this case, CSI may reduce employee voice volume.

In this study, we posit that, on OER platforms, employees are more likely to disclose positive information (e.g., CSR) about themselves and others than negative information (e.g., CSI). Researchers have found that individuals tend to disclose positive information on social media such as Facebook (Grace, Ross, & Shao, 2015). In addition, CSI may make employees believe that investing their time and effort into such firms' success is not safe (Bauman & Skitka, 2012), which may increase the perceived risks for employees to express suggestions and concerns. Hence, we argue that CSI will decrease the amount of employee voice because employee silence will increase in the face of CSI incidents and a certain amount of baseline voice is expected when there is no CSI practice.

Based on these arguments, it is assumed that the more CSR (CSI) practices a firm initiates, the more (less) OERs employees generate. We therefore hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 1a.** CSR is positively related to OER volume.

**Hypothesis 1b.** CSI is negatively related to OER volume.

### *2.3.2. The effect of CSR and CSI on OER valence*

We also hypothesize the outcome of CSR and CSI activities on employee voice in the form of OER valence based on the ethical climate theory because ethical climate enables employees to speak up their firms' ethical and unethical practices (Rothwell & Baldwin, 2007). Employees normally observe a firm's socially (ir)responsible activities that affect its stakeholders (Rupp, Ganapathi, Aguilera, & Williams, 2006). Ethical climate can enhance employees' awareness of moral obligation, prevent their engagement with unethical behaviors, and make them express about organizational problems. Scholars also argue that

employee attitudes are likely to be influenced by the extent to which employees perceive their firm's CSR or CSI actions to be fair or unfair (Cropanzano, Byrne, Bobocel, & Rupp, 2001). Given that both self- and other-centered criteria of organizational ethical climate affect employees' perceptions about their firm, it can be assumed that employees are likely to positively (negatively) react to a CSR (CSI) action due to its fairness (unfairness).

Based on these perspectives, we propose that when T&H firms engage with CSR, employees may process the CSR information to make judgments about their firm, which in turn help them develop positive opinions about their work environments (Rupp, 2011). That is, employees may look out to observe how fairly their firm treats stakeholders (i.e., CSR) and process this information internally (De Cremer & Van Hiel, 2006). As CSR likely causes employees to feel the ethical work climate (Hansen et al., 2016), they may express more positive evaluations about their firm via OER than negative evaluations. In the T&H context, researchers have identified the importance of firm CSR practices as a strong determinant for employees' well-being and job satisfaction (Kim et al., 2020; McCain, Tsai, & Bellino, 2010; Wang et al., 2020).

Conversely, when T&H employees experience CSI incidents, they likely elicit negative attitudes toward their firm and may engage in negative OER as a form of sharing affective expressions with others (Grappi, Romani, & Bagozzi, 2013). In addition, dissatisfaction and external media comment derived from the CSI presence may increase negative eWOM (Williams & Buttle, 2014). For example, CSI can be perceived as unethical corporate behavior, which in turn affects consumer resistance intentions such as boycotting, protesting, and negative eWOM (Trautwein & Lindenmeier, 2019). In the same vein, employees in a dissatisfactory state of mind tend to express their feelings by engaging in negative OERs (Wetzer, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2007). We therefore hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 2a.** CSR is positively related to OER valence.

**Hypothesis 2b.** CSI is negatively related to OER valence.

### *2.3.3. The joint effect of CSR and CSI on OER volume and valence*

To predict the joint effect of CSR and CSI on OER volume and valence, we draw on a multi-experience model of ethical climate (Hansen et al., 2016) as a theoretical underpinning. According to this model, employees continually scan all directions for contextual cues in understanding their company's overall ethical climate and form their perceptions of firm ethical climate (Rupp, 2011). Specifically, when multiple cues of ethical climate-related information are consistent (e.g., CSR only), their impact on employee reactions will be strengthened due to the cognitive consistency framework, which suggests that individuals desire consistent information about their environments (Festinger, 1957). For example, when a T&H firm engages consistently with socially responsible activities, employee attitudes toward the firm will stay positive.

However, when multiple cues are inconsistent (e.g., both CSR and CSI), the negative cues will affect not only organizational reputations (Nardella et al., 2020) but also employees' cognitive processing of overall information (Miyazaki et al., 2005). Research indicates that the coexistence of CSR and CSI – either CSR initiatives in the face of CSI incidents or CSI incidents in the face of CSR efforts – may create greater risks to firm reputation and performance (Chen et al., 2009; Kang et al., 2016; Lenz et al., 2017; Rhee & Haunschild, 2006). In our context, when CSR-implementing firms engage with CSI activities simultaneously, this inconsistent behavior may lead employees not only to speak up about their firm's opportunistic values but also to reverse their positive evaluations about CSR activities (Barnett, 2007). Specifically, contrasting evidence on firm value offered by both CSR and CSI is likely to make employees perceive the firm's CSR engagement as less



sincere (Yoon et al., 2006) and in turn, may reduce employees' evaluations about the firm's trustworthiness (Barnett, 2007).

Based on these arguments, we posit that when T&H employees are exposed to both ethical (CSR) and unethical (CSI) activities in the firm, they are likely to voice the firm's inconsistent behaviors, which further increases the overall OER volume. On the other hand, the combined cues of CSR and CSI information will lead employees to express more negative evaluations about the firm's opportunistic behaviors than positive evaluations, resulting in a decrease in the OER valence. Hence, we hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 3a.** CSI will amplify the positive effect of CSR on OER volume.

**Hypothesis 3b.** CSI will attenuate the positive effect of CSR on OER valence.

### **3. Methods**

#### *3.1. Data*

To test the proposed hypotheses in the research model (Fig. 1), this study compiled and analyzed the longitudinal panel data of CSR and CSI activities as well as OER for T&H firms in the US. Following the previous literature in general business and T&H management, we selected publicly traded T&H firms for the sample period (2011 to 2018) by utilizing the widely used financial database, COMPUSTAT. To extract a final dataset containing both CSR/CSI and OER information, we matched the T&H firms retrieved from COMPUSTAT with the CSR/CSI data available in the MSCI KLD database and the OER data available at Indeed. First, CSR and CSI data were collected from the MSCI KLD social ratings database. The MSCI KLD database, widely used in CSR studies (e.g., Kang et al., 2016; Lenz et al.,

2017), provides annual environmental, social, and governance (ESG) ratings, in terms of strengths and concerns, for publicly traded firms in seven categories, namely employee relations, environment, community, human rights, diversity, product, and corporate governance. In line with prior studies (e.g., Kang et al. 2016), we considered strengths rating as CSR and concerns rating as CSI.

[Insert Fig. 1 here]

Next, OER data in the form of volume and valence were collected from Indeed, the biggest OER platform in the US, with over 250 million unique visitors per month and 320 million reviews. Under the section of ‘company review’ on the Indeed platform, employees can generate textual reviews about their firm and rate the firm on a scale from 1 to 5 on overall and specific dimensions. Each review posted on the platform reveals the reviewer’s employment status (i.e., current vs. former), the location of the workplace, and the date of the review posted. With full compliance with the terms of use under Indeed’s permission, we collected the numeric information of OER reviews and ratings about sample firms that were available in the MSCI KLD database. Furthermore, firm-specific financial data such as total assets were collected from the COMPUSTAT database.

After combining three sources of the data and removing all the missing values, the final dataset of annual CSR, CSI, and OER information for 50 T&H firms in the US were generated. The sampled firms were selected based on North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes including full-service restaurants (722511), limited-service restaurants (722513), non-casino hotels (721110), and casino hotels (721120). The sample period ranges from 2011, in which the earliest OER was generated on Indeed, to 2018, the latest year the MSCI KLD provides full CSR and CSI information on the firms. Finally, we removed observations with missing CSR/CSI scores and financial information, and we applied the absolute value of 4 for standardized residuals as a criterion for identifying outliers

(Younger, 1979), which resulted in the final data set of 245 firm-year observations. A relatively small sample size is mainly due to the short observation period of Indeed (2011 to 2018) and the limited number of firms available in both the MSCI KLD and Indeed databases. With these limitations, our sampled observations are the most available for the main analysis of the current study.

### *3.2. Variables*

Following the relevant literature, this study operationalizes two dependent (i.e., OER volume and OER valence) and two independent (i.e., CSR and CSI) variables. OER volume is measured by the accumulated number of employee-generated reviews posted on Indeed for a firm in a given year. OER volume is further log-transformed because it is highly skewed (please see the Results section and Table 1 for its descriptive statistics). OER valence is measured by the average rating of employee evaluations of a firm for a given year. Regarding independent variables, this study uses the sum of annual strength indicators as CSR and the sum of annual concern indicators as CSI of the firm for a given year, which is consistent with Kotchen and Moon (2012) and Kang et al. (2016). The MSCI KLD database provides a binary summary of a firm's strengths and concerns for each indicator, which belongs to the seven categories. For instance, if a firm conducted a cash profit sharing in a certain year, the "employee relations" CSR indicator for the firm in that year is coded as 1, and zero otherwise. To determine a firm's CSR and CSI practices in a given year, this study follows Kotchen and Moon's (2012) method and totals the firm's scores of all strengths and concerns across all seven categories.

Furthermore, two factors that can affect OER volume and valence and thus possibly confound the results of the study are controlled in the models. First, the proportion of current

employees' OER volume (i.e., CE proportion) is controlled, because current employees might have a greater emotional connection to the firm, and this positive emotion for the firm can be a direct function of identification with the firm (Correll & Park, 2005). CE proportion is measured by the ratio of the OER volume generated by current employees to the OER volume generated by total employees. Second, firm size, measured by a firm's total assets, is included to control for the effect of slack resources and visibility that may affect the scale of human resources and the level of CSR activities (Udayasankar, 2008). We applied log-transformation to a firm's total assets to improve normality of the variable, because values of total assets are highly skewed (Table 1), and this practice is widely accepted for firm size in the strategic management context (e.g., Song & Lee, 2020).

Although the current study includes only two control variables, it should be noted that the use of a two-way fixed-effects model by industry and year controls various unobserved factors (Wooldridge, 2010) that are time-invariant, but industry-variant (i.e., heterogeneous factors across different sub-industries), as well as factors that are industry-invariant, but time-variant (e.g., economic conditions and one-time influential events). For the industry effect, the industry dummy is included in the model because industry heterogeneity may affect the firm-level CSR and OER engagement (Godfrey et al., 2010), and CSR and CSI may lead to different performance depending on the type of T&H subindustry (Kang et al., 2010). The hotel dummy is included where value of 1 is assigned if a firm belongs to the hotel industry and 0 otherwise. For the year effect, year dummies are included from 2012 to 2018 with 2011 as a reference year.

### *3.3. Models*

To examine the independent and joint effects of CSR and CSI on OER, this study

performs a two-way fixed-effects model by industry and year, in order to address possible industry and year heterogeneities (Wooldridge, 2010). A firm fixed-effects model is not applied because the loss of degrees of freedom would be too significant. Considering a relatively short sample period due to the availability of OER on the Indeed platform, of which the earliest possible data point is 2011, a severe multicollinearity problem might cause bias in parameter estimation if all firm dummies were included (Gujarati, 2003). To examine the lagged effects of CSR and CSI at year  $t$  on OER volume and OER valence at year  $t+1$ , which accounts for the endogeneity problem caused by reverse causality, the study proposes empirical models as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
OER \text{ volume (valence)}_{it+1} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times CSR_{it} + \beta_2 \times CSI_{it} + \beta_3 \times CE \text{ Proportion}_{it} + \\
& \beta_4 \times Firm \text{ size}_{it} + \beta_5 \times Hotel \text{ dummy} + \beta_6 \times Year12_t + \beta_7 \times Year13_t + \\
& \beta_8 \times Year14_t + \beta_9 \times Year15_t + \beta_{10} \times Year16_t + \beta_{11} \times Year17_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)
\end{aligned}$$

and

$$\begin{aligned}
OER \text{ volume (valence)}_{it+1} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times CSR_{it} + \beta_2 \times CSI_{it} + \beta_3 \times CSR * CSI_{it} + \beta_4 \times \\
& CE \text{ Proportion}_{it} + \beta_5 \times Firm \text{ size}_{it} + \beta_6 \times Hotel \text{ dummy}_i + \beta_7 \times Year12_t + \beta_8 \times \\
& Year13_t + \beta_9 \times Year14_t + \beta_{10} \times Year15_t + \beta_{11} \times Year16_t + \beta_{12} \times Year17_t + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (2)
\end{aligned}$$

where  $OER \text{ volume (valence)}_{it+1}$  refers to OER volume (valence) of firm  $i$  in year  $t+1$

where OER volume is log-transformed due to the severe skewness of the values;

$\ln Firm \text{ size}_{it}$  denotes the logarithm of total asset of firm  $i$  in year  $t$ ;  $\beta$  is the regression coefficient; and  $\varepsilon$  is the error term. Equation (1) is to test the main effects (i.e., H1a, H1b, H2a, and H2b) while Equation (2) is to test the moderating effects (i.e., H3a and H3b).

## 4. Results

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics and correlation matrix of the dependent and independent variables. Specifically, the average volume of a T&H firm's OER generated for one year was 1,270, and its median volume is 315, ranging from 2 to 39,223. This means that OER volume is highly skewed positively; thus, the use of log transformation is appropriate in the analysis. The average and median values of OER valence are 3.775 and 3.750, respectively, ranging from 2.5 and 5.

CSR is distributed between 0 and 11 with a mean value of 1.384, and CSI is distributed between 0 and 7 with a mean value of 0.86. This indicates that US T&H firms engage more with CSR activities than with CSI activities. **From the longitudinal and cumulative perspective (2011-2018), US T&H firms engaged with CSR activities mainly in categories of employee relations (37.8%), environment (28.9%), and diversity (21.5%), while CSI activities were related to employee relations (27.1%), product (26.7%), and diversity (26.2%). This implies that the US T&H industry engages in both socially responsible and irresponsible practices in terms of managing internal stakeholder wellbeing, but engages in relatively more socially irresponsible practices in terms of products and marketing.**

The average CE proportion is 0.302, meaning that about 30% of OERs in our sample are generated by current employees of a given firm. This shows that former employees tend to voice more opinions about their previous company on OER platforms than current employees. Finally, the results of correlation coefficients show that two dependent variables (i.e., OER volume and OER valence) have a weak association ( $r = -0.096$ ), indicating that it is worthwhile to examine two OER models separately. As correlation coefficients among independent variables are relatively low, and the highest value of variation inflation factors is 4.37, a multicollinearity problem does not exist in the model.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Table 2 presents the parameter estimates of four regression models. Specifically, the

results of Model 1 show that CSR is positively related to OER volume ( $\beta_1 = 0.221, p < 0.01$ ), which supports H1a, whereas CSI has no effect, failing to support H1b. As hypothesized, the results of Model 2 indicate that the association of CSR with CSI amplifies the CSR's positive effect on OER volume ( $\beta_3 = 0.0946, p < 0.05$ ), in support of H3a. Fig. 2 visually illustrates interaction effects between CSR (high vs. low) and CSI (high vs. low) on OER volume. The results of the CSI's insignificant (direct) effect may imply the co-existence of employee voice and employee silence in the face of CSI incidents. In other words, some employees may speak up suggestions and concerns about their firm's socially irresponsible behaviors on the OER platforms, which increases the volume of employee voice, whereas other employees tend to withhold their expressions including CSI and non-CSI-related information (i.e., employee silence). Therefore, it can be assumed that the overall effect becomes insignificant due to the tradeoff between positive and negative effects.

[Insert Table 2 here]

[Insert Fig. 2 here]

Concerning the OER valence models, the results show that CSR increases the valence of OER (Model 3:  $\beta_1 = 0.0342, p < 0.05$ , Model 4:  $\beta_1 = 0.0613, p < 0.01$ ), whereas CSI has no direct effect on OER valence, supporting H2a but not H2b. In addition, Model 4 reports the significant and negative effect of the combination of CSR and CSI on OER valence ( $\beta_3 = -0.0155, p < 0.05$ ), which is also illustrated in Fig. 3. This indicates that a firm's engagement with socially irresponsible behaviors attenuates the positive effect of CSR on OER valence, supporting H3b. That is, although CSR directly increases employee voice in the form of OER volume, CSI indirectly influences OER by amplifying the CSR's positive effect on OER volume but attenuating it on OER valence. As explained above, the results of the CSI's insignificant (direct) effect can be explained by the prevalence of employee silence in the face of CSI. This means that although CSI may lead to employees' negative attitudes toward

their firm, they are likely to hesitate to evaluate their current or former companies on the OER platforms, as shown in the consumer resistance literature (Trautwein & Lindenmeier, 2019). However, the CSI's significant moderating role in the CSR-OER valence link implies that employees tend to express more negative evaluations when they observe their firm's inconsistent behaviors such as the coexistence of both CSR and CSI activities.

[Insert Fig. 3 here]

Interestingly, the ratio of current employees' OER volume (i.e., CE proportion) decreases OER volume (Model 2:  $\beta_4 = -6.883, p < 0.01$ ) but increases OER valence (Model 4:  $\beta_4 = 0.686, p < 0.01$ ). These contrasting results imply that, in the US T&H industry, former employees play a crucial role in increasing OER volume whereas current employees contribute to the enhancement of OER valence.

## **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

Due to the importance of understanding employee reactions to firm CSR and CSI actions and the prevalence of online platform-based employee voice, this study attempts to uncover the CSR-employee voice relationship by investigating how CSR and CSI affect the volume and valence of OER in the US T&H industry. To address these objectives, we utilize a novel data set of micro- and aggregate-level volume and valence of OER along with firm-level CSR and CSI data from 2012 to 2018. Results show that CSR plays a critical role in improving employee voice behavior in both quantity (i.e., OER volume) and quality (i.e., OER valence), whereas CSI moderates the positive CSR impact on employee voice behavior by accelerating the positive impact on OER volume but reducing it on OER valence. These findings offer meaningful implications to the organizational behavior and business ethics literatures and the T&H industry in terms of managing CSR strategies and employee online



voice behaviors, which further influence employee recruitment and turnover reduction.

### *5.1. Theoretical implications*

Based on the empirical findings, this study contributes to the literatures on CSR and employee voice in three ways. First, this study extends the knowledge of the CSR outcome by linking CSR and CSI separately to OER-based employee voice for the first time. Prior research on CSR has focused mainly on exploring the effects of CSR on firm performance at the corporate level (e.g., Salaiz et al., 2020) and employee outcomes at the individual level (e.g., Farooq et al., 2017). However, those studies failed to examine the separate and combined effects of CSR and CSI on employee voice behavior. Recent marketing research that investigated the CSR and CSI effects (Kang et al., 2016; Lenz et al., 2017) does not cover their effects on employee outcomes such as employee voice behavior. Moreover, while tourism researchers have examined the relationship between CSR and employees' reactions (e.g., Kim et al., 2020; Park et al., 2018), they have not considered a role of both CSR and CSI together in building employee voice behaviors. Hence, this study fills this gap by analyzing empirical data of both firm and employee behaviors, especially from OER platforms, to examine the firm-employee behavioral relationship in the ethical context. This study confirms that CSR and CSI actions can be antecedents of an organization's ethical climate (Hansen et al., 2016), which further affects employee voice behavior. Our findings suggest that a firm's CSR (CSI) activities lead to a positive (negative) organizational ethical climate and, in turn, positively (negatively) influence employees voice toward their firm in the form of OER valence (Rupp et al., 2006).

Second, this study contributes to the employee voice literature by proposing two types of voice behavior (i.e., OER volume and OER valence) and offering evidence for the positive

effect of CSR on both the volume and valence of OER-based employee voice. Although scholars have investigated the CSR influence on employee outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention (e.g., Kim et al., 2020), to the best of our knowledge, no research to date has utilized OER information to measure the quantity (volume) and the quality (valence) of employee voice behaviors linked to CSR and CSI dimensions in both general and T&H contexts. Recent T&H research has started to use the OER valence information as the measure of employee satisfaction (e.g., Stamolampros et al., 2020), with less attention to the volume dimension as the outcome of firm CSR and CSI activities. By using the OER volume as the metric of employee voice behavior, this study empirically demonstrates that examining employee voice should be extended from a firm's internal (e.g., workplace) to external boundary (e.g., online platforms). The mere monitoring of current employees' voice through a firm's internal, formal process might ignore employees' objective and authentic evaluations about the firm's CSR and CSI actions. However, monitoring and understanding employee voice generated by both former and current employees on OER platforms are important for reflecting authentic voice toward improving organizational effectiveness (Morrison, 2011) and reducing employee turnover (Fast et al., 2014). Hence, the use of OER-based employee voice information highlights the need for more research to measure the impact of firm-initiated socially (ir)responsible behaviors on employee voice behavior in the T&H industry.

Finally, this study contributes to ethical climate theory (Hansen et al., 2016; Rupp, 2011; Victor & Cullen, 1988) by revealing that employees react positively to their firms' consistent (engaging in CSR only) behaviors but negatively to inconsistent (engaging in both CSR and CSI) behaviors. Given that most related studies are either conceptual (e.g., Rupp et al., 2006) or limited to consumer behavior setting (e.g., Miyazaki et al., 2005), the findings of the current study fills the gap by providing empirical evidence for employees' actual reactions

to a firm's socially responsible and irresponsible behaviors. Our finding of a joint effect of CSR and CSI on OER resonates with research finding that a firm's simultaneous engagement with both CSR and CSI actions has intricate effects on employee reactions (Salaiz, Evans, Pathak, & Vera, 2020). Although prior studies have examined how CSR and CSI actions interactively affect firm performance, the literature mainly addresses the questions of how CSR efforts affect employee turnover only in an independent manner (e.g., Youn et al., 2018) or how external stakeholders devalue CSR in the face of CSI (Lenz et al., 2017). Hence, the finding of the CSI's negative moderating role in the CSR-OER valence relationship adds value to the extant literature, demonstrating how CSI's negative effect on employee (internal stakeholder) attitudes can possibly exceed CSR's positive effect.

## *5.2. Managerial implications*

The current research findings offer several implications for T&H practitioners. First, T&H firms should use CSR as a lever to increase the quantity and quality of employee voice behavior on OER platforms. When developing CSR strategies, managers should offer employees opportunities to voice their views in the strategic conversation and strive to understand how employees perceive the firms' CSR priorities and implementation. Management teams should communicate how employee feedback is reflected in their strategy formulation and share CSR activities so that employees are well aware of their firms' responsible behaviors. **For instance, senior management at Hyatt reduced their salary or took 80% pay cuts to support the Hyatt Care Fund in aid of colleagues who are facing financial hardship due to COVID-19 (Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, 2020).**

**Second,** T&H managers must balance their investments in CSR activities with investments in preventing and reducing CSI incidents because employees perceive the

coexistence of CSR and CSI as more unethical than the existence of CSI incidents *per se*. For example, some Starbucks staff have suffered from understaffing and low pay for intense workloads during COVID-19 (Sainato, 2021), which are regarded as CSI practices. Although Starbucks' prior engagement with CSR practices (e.g., ethical sourcing) may enable employees to construct a positive organizational image, unethical behavior in recent employee relations can deteriorate the positive image. Conversely, although Walt Disney stopped paying over 100,000 employees due to the pandemic, it decided to provide full healthcare benefits for staff placed on unpaid leave (i.e., CSR) (de León & Geller, 2020). In the end, T&H managers need to keep in mind that socially responsible firms benefit from rich and positive employee voice, whereas socially irresponsible firms suffer from employee silence.

Third, our findings suggest that managers should pay attention to employee voice generated through OER platforms to develop positive relationships with former, current, and potential employees. Notably, job seekers and recruiters join social media and OER platforms to have active conversation and engagement among participants (Ladkin & Buhalis, 2016). For T&H firms that engage with CSR initiatives, this study suggests that those firms should keep in mind that CSR improves not only the well-being of its internal and external stakeholders but also affect employee voice expressed through OERs with a greater quantity (volume) and a better quality (valence). The sample of 50 US T&H firms used in this study shows that about 70% of OERs are generated by former employees, implying the importance of monitoring former employee reactions to the firm's CSR initiatives.

Finally, this study suggests that managers should monitor OER information of various websites on a real-time basis because OER information can represent the level of firm popularity (through OER volume) and the level of job satisfaction (through OER valence), which are often searched by job seekers. Most OER platforms reveal employees' authentic

voices on firm behaviors (e.g., CSR and CSI practices) and their reactions to firm behaviors. For example, Glassdoor and Indeed both provide OER information on employee benefits and company culture generated by current and past employees. The Muse reveals how community members such as customers, partners, investors and current employees are describing the company job seekers are researching. Fairygodboss specifically targets women in the workplace and runs discussion boards where women can connect to share experiences for women working in male-dominated fields and in potentially toxic work environments. Hence, T&H firms should monitor their firm and brand mentions and employee feedback on multiple OER sites and locations and implement active measures to build and maintain a positive firm and brand image.

### *5.3. Limitations and future research directions*

Although findings of this study provide a novel contribution to the CSR and T&H literatures, this study still suffers from several limitations. First, because this study focuses on the overall CSR(CSI)-employee voice relationship, the disaggregate-level effects of CSR and CSI subcategories (such as employee relations, environment, and community) on OER subcategories (such as CSR and CSI-related contents) was not analyzed in the current study. Although complicated, future research can collect the corresponding data and examine how the volume and valence of OER-based employee voice are influenced by specific CSR and CSI dimensions.

Second, this study also focuses on the volume and valence of OER from the numeric perspective, without the content dimension of OER. Employees are likely to freely express their opinions online, both promotive (e.g., new suggestions for better work practices) and prohibitive (e.g., concerns about existing or impending work practices) (Wang et al., 2020). Hence, researchers can have an opportunity to qualitatively explore how employees react to

the firm's CSR and CSI activities.

Third, due to limited access to organizational data, this study could not include other control factors that might affect OER behaviors. This limitation can be resolved by collecting organizational culture, leadership style, and other non-financial firm data. However, it should be noted that this limitation inevitably comes from a significant advantage of combining employees' review comments, CSR/CSI, and financial data at a firm level for the main analysis. We believe that the advantage from this noble combined dataset outweighs the cost of missing some of the more interpersonal organizational characteristics, but we still recommend future researchers to explore a possibility of collecting and incorporating such data into future studies, possibly through mixed method approaches.

Finally, as this study analyzed CSR and OER data from 2011 to 2018, the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on CSR and employee behaviors could not be incorporated in the study. Although general or pandemic-specific CSR may influence employee psychological capital during the pandemic (Mao, Morrison, & Coca-Stefaniak, 2020), the relationship between CSR/CSI and employee voice during the pandemic remains unclear. Hence, future studies could undertake an investigation into the impact of pandemic and see whether significant changes were made in terms of CSR engagement and priorities as well as workforce management practices in the T&H industry.

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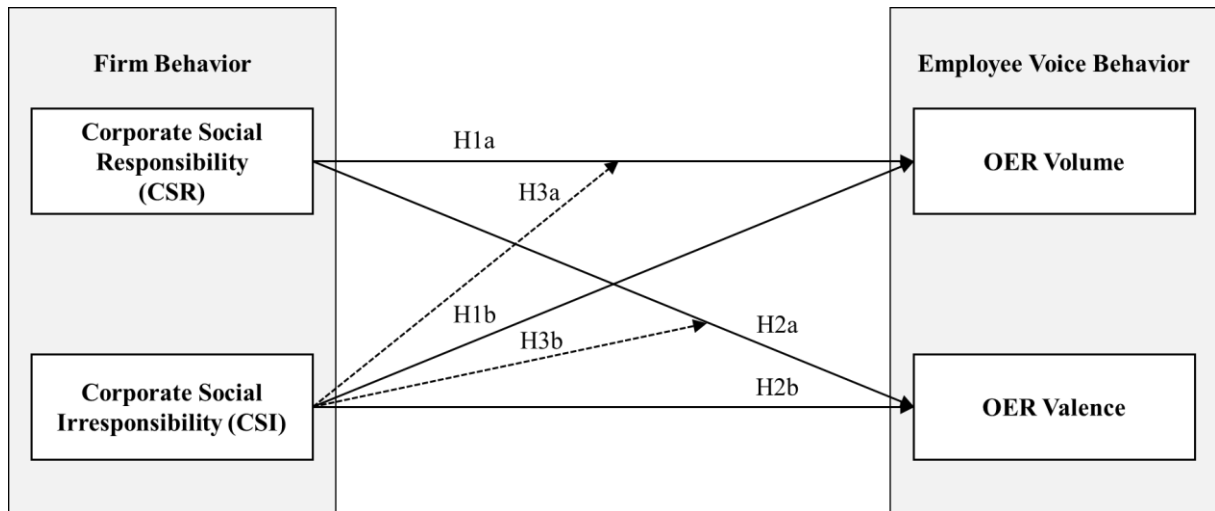
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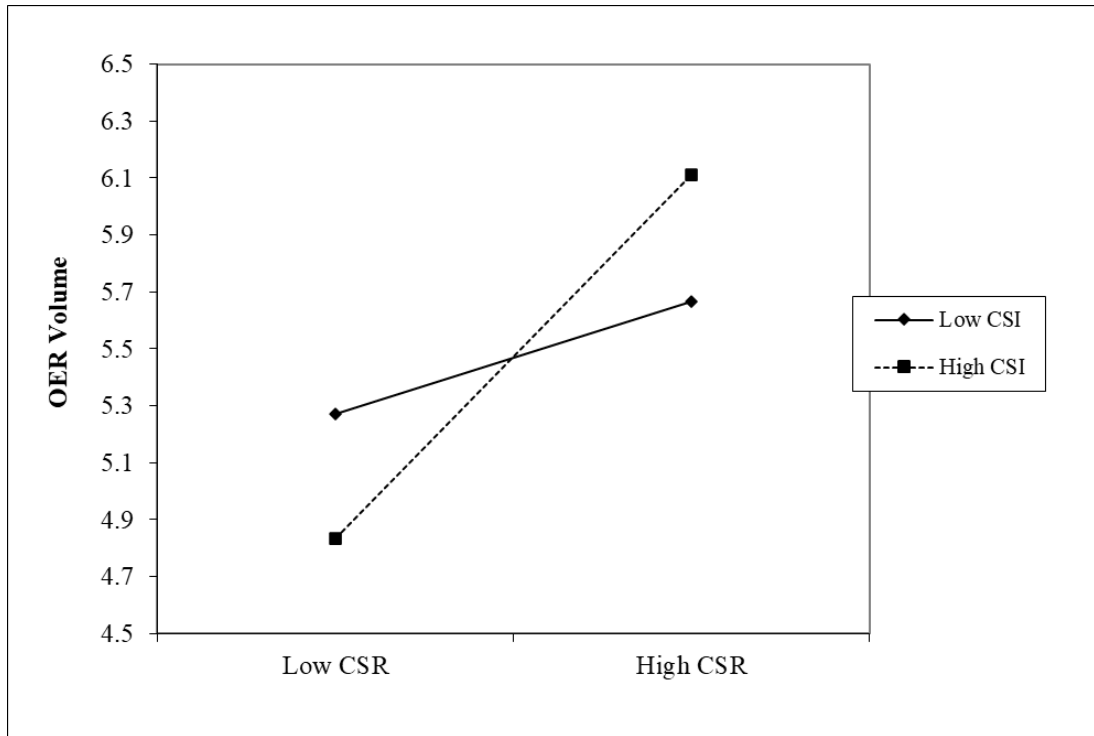
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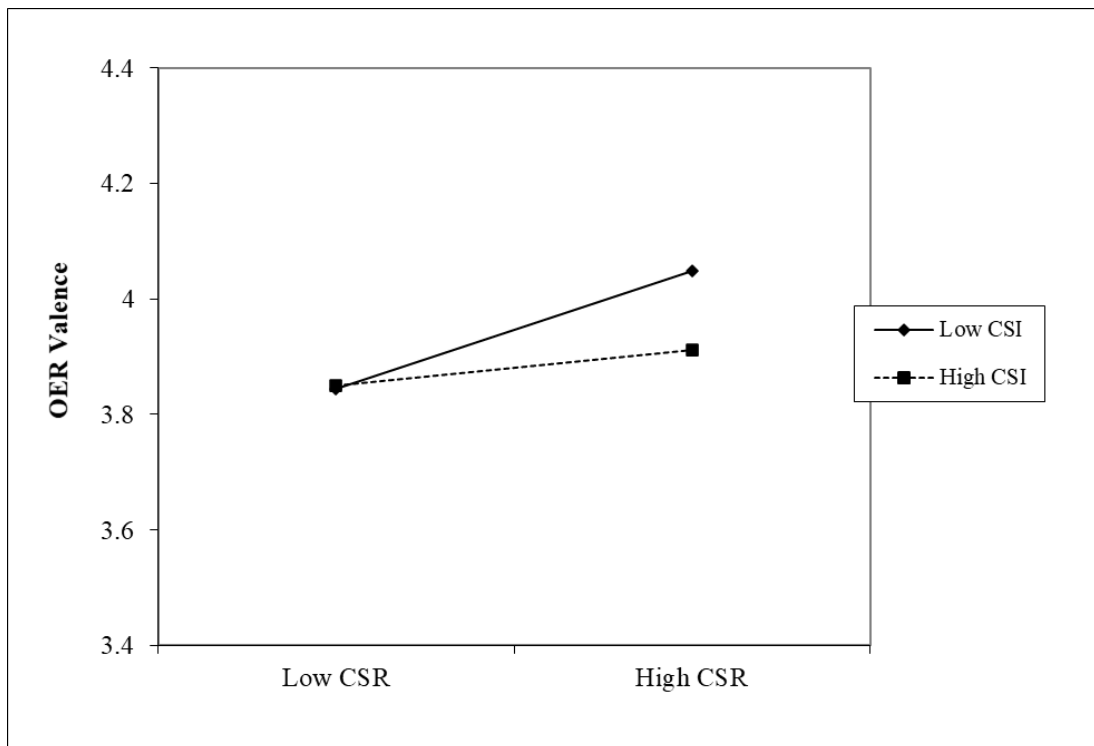
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**Fig. 1.** Research model.



**Fig. 2.** The interaction effect between CSR and CSI on OER volume.



**Fig. 3.** The interaction effect between CSR and CSI on OER valence.



**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients.

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
(1) OER volume	1.000						
(2) OER valence	-0.096	1.000					
(3) CSR	0.364**	0.138*	1.000				
(4) CSI	0.402**	0.039	0.485**	1.000			
(5) CE proportion	-0.130*	0.133*	-0.006	-0.031	1.000		
(6) Hotel dummy	-0.060	-0.061	-0.173**	-0.240**	0.040	1.000	
(7) Firm size	0.481**	0.074	0.605**	0.537**	0.081	-0.173**	1.000
Mean	1,269.820	3.775	1.384	0.860	0.302	0.320	5760.719
Median	315	3.750	1	0	0.293	0	1419.000
Standard Deviation	3,994.595	0.332	1.925	1.204	0.125	0.467	8983.592
Minimum	2	2.5	0	0	0	0	112.000
Maximum	39,223	5	11	7	1	1	37,939.000

\*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05.

**Table 2.** Parameter estimates.

Variable	DV: OER volume		DV: OER valence	
	Model 1 (Base model)	Model 2 (Base model + interaction effect)	Model 3 (Base model)	Model 4 (Base model + interaction effect)
CSR	0.221** (0.0764)	0.0550 (0.100)	0.0342* (0.0142)	0.0613** (0.0188)
CSI	0.0418 (0.119)	-0.260 (0.169)	-0.0339 (0.0222)	0.0156 (0.0315)
CSR x CSI		0.0946* (0.0379)		-0.0155* (0.00709)
CE proportion	-7.104** (0.852)	-6.883** (0.843)	0.722** (0.159)	0.686** (0.158)
Hotel dummy	-0.128 (0.240)	-0.179 (0.237)	-0.0700 (0.0447)	-0.0616 (0.0444)
Firm size	-0.0991 (0.101)	-0.0277 (0.103)	0.00189 (0.0188)	-0.00979 (0.0193)
Year 2012	0.336 (0.538)	-0.0161 (0.548)	-0.0748 (0.100)	-0.0171 (0.102)
Year 2013	0.497 (0.532)	0.328 (0.528)	-0.0438 (0.0991)	-0.0161 (0.0987)
Year 2014	0.702 (0.540)	0.358 (0.549)	-0.0275 (0.101)	0.0288 (0.103)
Year 2015	0.845 (0.540)	0.528 (0.546)	-0.117 (0.101)	-0.0650 (0.102)
Year 2016	1.587** (0.556)	1.278* (0.561)	-0.214* (0.103)	-0.163 (0.105)
Year 2017	1.471** (0.560)	1.125* (0.568)	-0.217* (0.104)	-0.161 (0.106)
Constant	7.624** (0.752)	7.603** (0.740)	3.654** (0.140)	3.657** (0.138)
Mean VIF	2.54	3.06	2.54	3.06

Note: Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

\*\* p<0.01, \* p<0.05.