



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Does Corporate Social Responsibility Influence Customer Loyalty? Insights from the Hotel Industry

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Abstract

Background

This study investigates the relationship between customers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR), hotel reputation, and customer loyalty within the hospitality sector. This study explored how customers' evaluations of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives influence their loyalty behaviors and whether this relationship is mediated by the hotel's perceived reputation. This study contributes to the literature by integrating corporate social responsibility and hotel reputation into a unified model to predict customer loyalty in the hospitality sector.

Methods

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered via convenience sampling, resulting in 391 valid responses from customers who stayed in star-rated hotels in New Delhi, India. The proposed hypotheses were assessed using PLS-SEM, and the conceptual model was further evaluated for its explanatory and predictive power.

Results

Open Peer Review

Approval Status    

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The study revealed that corporate social responsibility and hotel reputation significantly and positively impact customer loyalty. Furthermore, hotel reputation partially mediates the relationship between corporate social responsibility and customer loyalty. The model demonstrated good explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.435$ for customer loyalty) and medium predictive relevance ($Q^2 > 0.15$), supporting the robustness of the proposed structural framework.

Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that corporate social responsibility significantly enhances customer loyalty. The partial mediating effect of hotel reputation suggests that while corporate social responsibility independently influences customer loyalty, its impact is further strengthened when accompanied by a strong hotel reputation. This study highlights the strategic importance of aligning corporate social responsibility initiatives with reputation-building efforts to foster deeper emotional and behavioral loyalty among customers.

Keywords

hotel reputation, customer satisfaction, corporate social responsibility, customer loyalty



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1. Introduction

In the hospitality sector, CSR has emerged significantly and gained a competitive edge, affecting not only direct customer assessments but also intangible elements, such as a hotel's reputation. As this sector heavily relies on building its image (Agu et al., 2024), CSR is instrumental in sustaining hotel reputation. Many hotels are aligning their CSR initiatives with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to address broader global challenges. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices significantly impact different business verticals and corporate reputation (Su et al., 2014). Several studies in different sectors have demonstrated that CSR influences customer loyalty (CSR – CL) through mediators such as customer satisfaction and trust (Lee, 2018; Leclercq-Machado et al., 2022; Al-Ghamdi & Badawi, 2019; Chung et al., 2015; Park & Kim, 2018). Although many studies have advocated the significance of CSR across various sectors, much of the work remains either theoretical or focused on Western or developed nations, with limited empirical investigation into the Indian hospitality industry (Fatma et al., 2015). In India, where consumer expectations are evolving due to awareness of sustainability and ethical consumption, empirical studies on CSR and customer behavior are scarce. The role of hotel reputation as a mediator has not been thoroughly examined in this context. Hence, the present study seeks to overcome this gap by analyzing empirical data from star-rated hotel guests in New Delhi, India, and investigating both the explanatory and predictive capabilities of the suggested theoretical framework.

2. Literature review and hypothesis development

2.1 CSR and customer loyalty

Hotels classify CSR practices into many verticals, such as philanthropic, legal-reactive, and active approaches, with the primary objective of enhancing economic performance. This classification helps us understand the CSR management model that benefits the industry (Peña-Miranda et al., 2021). Many organizations have integrated CSR into their operational strategies and promoted company sustainability and stakeholder engagement (Bohdanowicz & Zientara, 2008). However, CSR activities related to community engagement and environmental issues do not always significantly impact reputation, indicating that integrating CSR with organizational culture is crucial for performance outcomes (González-Rodríguez et al., 2019). Recent shifts towards communication and reporting suggest a growing emphasis on transparency and accountability in CSR practices (Moyeen & Mehjabeen, 2024). CSR initiatives have been widely recognized as tools for enhancing business performance and stakeholder perceptions (Sultan et al., 2024). Many studies confirm that CSR positively influences customer loyalty through different mediating factors such as image, trust, customer satisfaction, and social platform use (Liu et al., 2019; Su et al., 2014; Mohammed & Al-Swidi, 2019; Islam et al., 2022). The above arguments support the development of H1 i.e.,

H1 *Customer perception significantly affects Customer loyalty.*

2.2 CSR and hotel reputation

CSR not only affects hotel reputation but also customers' emotions (Su et al., 2014). A positive hotel reputation further impacts customer loyalty (Kandampully & Suhartanto, 2000). For hotels, it is essential to comprehend the link between customer satisfaction and their intention to return (Arora & Singer, 2006). Furthermore, the quality of service provided by a hotel is equally significant, as it greatly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty (Akbar et al., 2010). CSR initiatives enhance a hotel's reputation, which in turn boosts trust, satisfaction, and loyalty towards the company.

Such initiatives further build customer satisfaction, which serves as a mediator between CSR and CL (Lee, 2018). Additionally, a hotel's ethical perception can enhance customer identification with the brand, leading to emotional commitment and brand trust, thus ensuring long-term loyalty (Fatma & Rahman, 2017). Moreover, customer experiences in full-service hotels, which encompass functional, emotional, and social dimensions, significantly impact brand trust, leading to CL (Guan et al., 2021). The dynamic interplay between quality of service, hotel image, and customer satisfaction plays a fundamental role in establishing customer loyalty. Each of these elements contributes uniquely yet interdependently to shaping consumers' overall perception of a brand or organization. High service quality enhances perceived value, and a strong corporate image fosters trust and credibility. Collectively, they influence consumer attitudes and behaviors, thereby serving as essential drivers in the creation and maintenance of a stable, committed, and loyal customer base (Cheng, 2014). The above arguments advocate the development of H2, that is

H2 *Customer perception of CSR significantly affects hotel reputation.*

2.3 Mediating effect of hotel reputation in the CSR – CL linkage

CSR activities contribute not only to social value but also to strengthening hotel reputation and enhancing customer loyalty. It positively affects hotel reputation, which subsequently increases customer loyalty through improved trust. Reputation is a trust-building factor that deals with intangible services. However, limited research has explored how reputation acts as a psychological factor that transforms CSR perceptions into loyalty behavior (He & Li, 2011; Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013). Stakeholder theory suggests that customers tend to reward companies that reflect their social values, although these rewards are typically not immediate and instead manifest through constructs such as

reputation, which accumulate perceptions over time (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Freeman, 1984). When hotels implement CSR activities, such as promoting environmental sustainability, engaging with the community, or adopting ethical labor practices, they send positive messages to the public, contributing to the development of a strong, positive corporate reputation (He & Li, 2011). This reputation, in turn, enhances customer trust, brand admiration, and psychological closeness, all of which are precursors to loyalty behaviors such as repeat visits and advocacy (Walsh, Beatty, & Shiu, 2009). CSR activities have significantly boosted the public image of hotels, and this enhanced reputation directly influences customers' willingness to recommend and return (Lee et al., 2013). This suggests that hotel reputation works as a value transformation mechanism, where a brand's ethical and social efforts are converted into loyalty outcomes through positive stakeholder perception. Kang, Lee, and Huh (2010) also highlighted that while CSR directly impacts performance, its effect is magnified when the hotel is seen as reputable and credible. In other words, CSR alone may not be sufficient to secure customer loyalty unless customers perceive it as a reputation-enhancing activity (Pérez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2015). Customers often cannot directly assess the authenticity of CSR actions; therefore, reputation serves as a cognitive shortcut that helps them infer the long-term intentions and reliability of the hotel brand (Groza et al., 2011). When both CSR and reputation are viewed positively, customers are more likely to develop affective commitments, making them less sensitive to price and more emotionally invested in the brand. Thus, hotel reputation is not just a by-product of CSR but a strategic asset that mediates trust-building and relational value derived from socially responsible practices. Thus, the arguments presented above provide a basis for formulating H3 and H4, respectively.

H3 *Hotel reputation significantly affects customer loyalty.*

H4 *Hotel reputation mediates the relationship between CSR and customer loyalty.*

The conceptual framework for the present study is depicted in Figure 1.

To empirically examine the hypothesized relationships among the constructs CSR, HR, and CL, a system of linear equations is proposed.

$$HR = \beta_1 \cdot CSR + \varepsilon_1 \quad (1)$$

$$CL = \beta_2 \cdot CSR + \beta_3 \cdot HR + \varepsilon_2 \quad (2)$$

Whereas:

- CSR = Customer perception of corporate social responsibility
- HR = Hotel reputation (mediator)
- CL = Customer loyalty (dependent variable)
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$ = Path coefficients to be estimated
- $\varepsilon_1, \varepsilon_2$ = Error terms

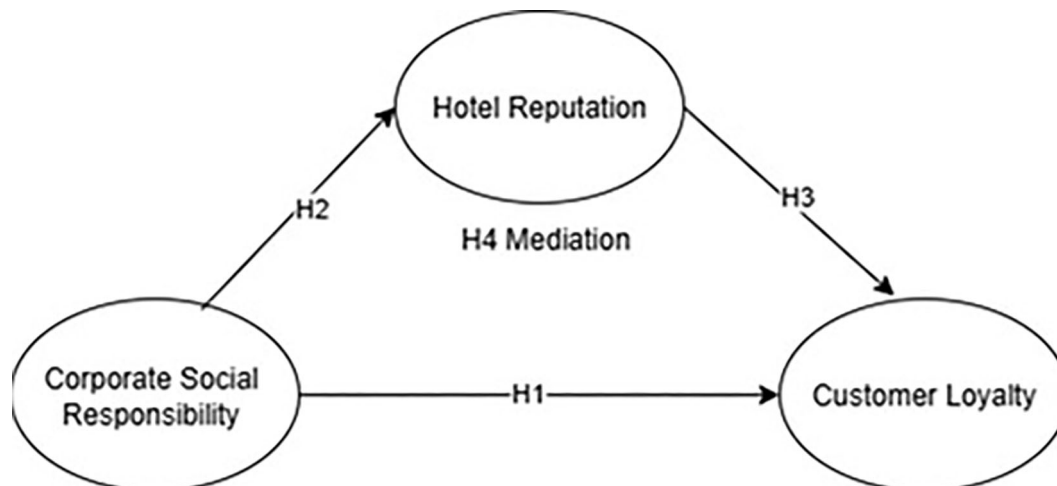


Figure 1. Author's proposed model.

The first equation expresses HR as a function of CSR. This implies that hotel's CSR has a direct influence on how the hotel's reputation is perceived, where β_1 represents the path coefficient, and ϵ_1 accounts for unexplained variance or error. The second equation outlines CL as influenced by both CSR and HR. Here, CL is shaped not only directly by CSR (coefficient β_2) but also indirectly through the mediating effect of Hotel Reputation (coefficient β_3). ϵ_2 represents the residual error in predicting customer loyalty.

3. Research methodology

This study uses cross-sectional data, and partial least squares structural equation Modelling is employed for model validation and hypothesis testing (Figure 2). PLS-SEM does not assume multivariate normality and demonstrates robustness when applied to small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2016). For data collection, a convenience sampling method was used. Structured questionnaires were distributed to customers staying at star-rated hotels in New Delhi, India, between August 5 and 9, 2025. The questionnaire used in this study was developed by the authors and comprised items adapted from previously validated research instruments. All participants in this study were aged 18 years or more. Of the 425 questionnaires distributed, 34 were excluded, and 391 were considered for the study. The items included in the questionnaire were evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, which allowed respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each statement. The scale ranged from 1 to 5, where 1 corresponded to 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree.' The CSR construct was evaluated using eight items (El Akremi et al., 2018; Kim & Kim, 2016), Customer Loyalty (CL) with five items derived from Zeithaml et al. (1996), and Hotel Reputation (HR) through three items (Chun, 2005). Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the variables.

3.1 Measurement model

Figure 3 illustrates the outer and inner loadings of the measurement model. To assess the internal consistency of the constructs, multiple reliability indicators were employed, including Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability (rho_C) (Table 2). The results revealed that all factor loadings were above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong reliability. Furthermore, Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.70 for all constructs, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The rho_A values, which provide a more accurate estimate of construct reliability in certain contexts, fell between Cronbach's alpha and rho_C values and consistently remained above 0.70. This alignment among the reliability measures confirms that the constructs exhibit strong internal reliability and consistency. To establish convergent validity, the average variance extract was used. As presented in Table 2, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs were greater than the recommended threshold of 0.50. This indicates that the measurement model exhibited acceptable convergent validity, confirming that the items intended to measure each construct shared a sufficient proportion of common variance. In addition to convergent validity, discriminant validity was assessed using several approaches. These included examining the cross-loadings of each indicator, applying the Fornell–Larcker criterion, and calculating the hetero trait–mono trait ratio of correlations (HTMT). The results from all three methods demonstrated that the constructs CSR, HR, and CL are empirically distinct from one another, thereby supporting the establishment of

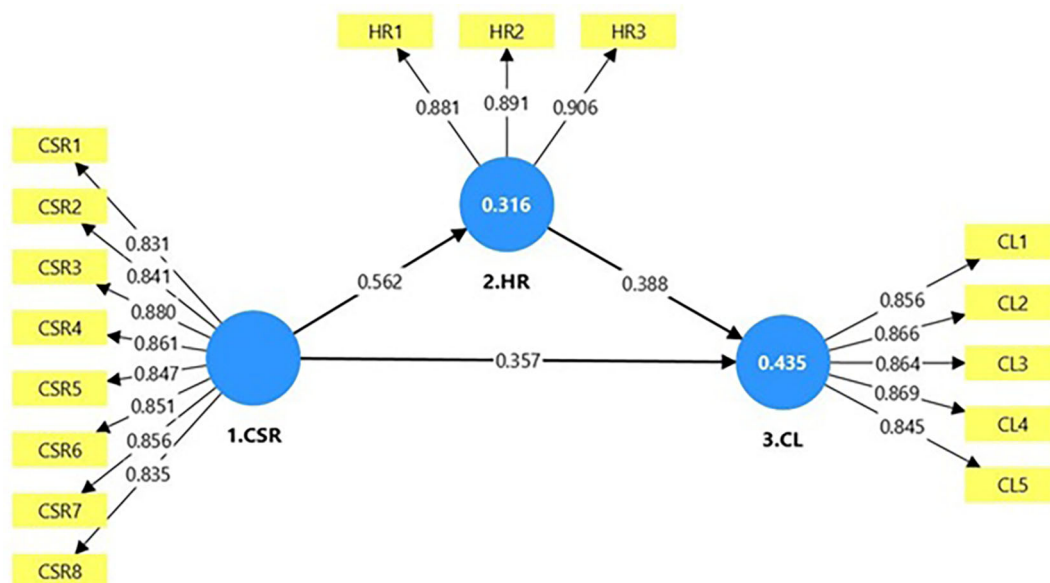
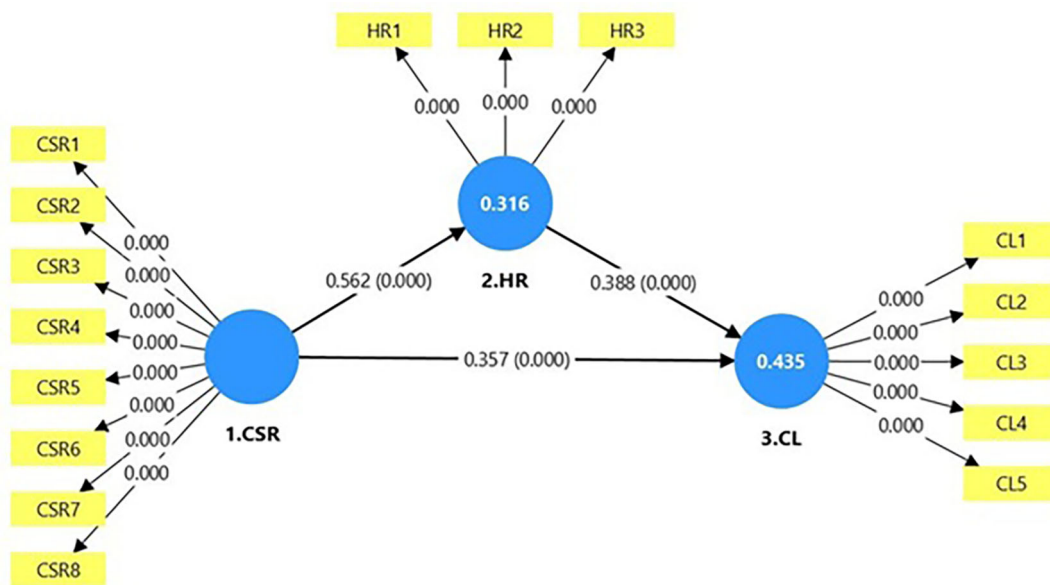


Figure 2. Measurement model illustration using PLS Algorithm. Source: Developed by the author.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

Measured Items	Mean	Standard deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness
CSR1	2.601	0.611	0.036	0.15
CSR2	2.949	0.609	0.645	0.163
CSR3	2.706	0.614	0.079	0.076
CSR4	2.691	0.655	0.12	-0.017
CSR5	2.831	0.629	0.359	0.085
CSR6	3.013	0.642	0.519	0.222
CSR7	2.969	0.659	0.301	0.033
CSR8	2.992	0.661	0.108	0.062
HR1	2.99	0.75	0.153	0.017
HR2	3.031	0.796	-0.017	-0.116
HR3	2.724	0.803	0.083	0.155
CL1	2.954	0.696	0.518	0.017
CL2	2.977	0.772	-0.093	0.04
CL3	3.422	0.707	0.217	-0.071
CL4	3.018	0.752	0.127	0.043
CL5	2.926	0.745	-0.124	0.009

Source: Compiled by the author.

**Figure 3. Structural model illustration using Bootstrapping. Source: Developed by the author.**

discriminant validity. The outcomes of all three tests are detailed in Table 3, Table 4, and Table 5. Multicollinearity for all factors was examined using VIF (Table 2). The VIF values for all factors were below 5, suggesting no multicollinearity concerns.

3.2 Structural model

The hypothesized relationships among the three core constructs—CSR, HR, and CL—are shown in Figure 3. The model was tested using path analysis with the PLS-SEM approach.

Table 2. Factor loadings, reliability and validity.

	Factor Loadings	Cronbach's alpha	(rho_A)	(rho_C)	(AVE)	VIF
Corporate Social Responsibility		0.945	0.946	0.954	0.723	
CSR1	0.831					2.542
CSR2	0.841					2.741
CSR3	0.880					3.501
CSR4	0.861					3.095
CSR5	0.847					2.84
CSR6	0.851					2.938
CSR7	0.856					2.892
CSR8	0.835					2.648
Hotel Reputation		0.873	0.877	0.922	0.797	
HR1	0.881					2.25
HR2	0.891					2.337
HR3	0.906					2.425
Customer Loyalty		0.912	0.913	0.934	0.740	
CL1	0.856					2.513
CL2	0.866					2.618
CL3	0.864					2.555
CL4	0.869					2.646
CL5	0.845					2.356

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 3. Discriminant validity - HTMT –test.

	CSR	HR	CL
CSR			
HR	0.617		
CL	0.619	0.658	

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 4. Discriminant validity - Fornell & Larcker – test.

	CSR	HR	CL
CSR	0.85		
HR	0.562	0.893	
CL	0.576	0.589	0.86

Source: Compiled by the author.

H1 explores the link between CSR and CL ($CSR \rightarrow CL$). The analysis reveals that CSR significantly impacts CL ($\beta = 0.357$, $t = 8.456$, $p < 0.01$), thereby validating H1. H2 considers whether CSR is significantly linked to HR ($CSR \rightarrow HR$). The findings confirm that CSR significantly impacts HR ($\beta = 0.562$, $t = 16.104$, $p < 0.01$), confirming H2. H3 investigates the significant association between HR and CL ($HR \rightarrow CL$). The results showed that HR significantly impacted CL ($\beta = 0.388$, $t = 8.823$, $p < 0.01$), leading to the acceptance of H3. The outcomes are presented in [Table 6](#).

Table 5. Discriminant validity-cross loadings.

	CSR	HR	CL
CSR1	0.831	0.506	0.488
CSR2	0.841	0.477	0.455
CSR3	0.880	0.502	0.526
CSR4	0.861	0.461	0.510
CSR5	0.847	0.465	0.484
CSR6	0.851	0.467	0.474
CSR7	0.856	0.496	0.492
CSR8	0.835	0.447	0.484
HR1	0.482	0.881	0.485
HR2	0.492	0.891	0.515
HR3	0.529	0.906	0.573
CL1	0.495	0.483	0.856
CL2	0.489	0.521	0.866
CL3	0.511	0.529	0.864
CL4	0.503	0.507	0.869
CL5	0.478	0.493	0.845

Source: Compiled by the author.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing.

	β	SD	t- values	p-values	Result
H1: CSR -> CL	0.357	0.042	8.456	0.000	Accepted
H2: CSR -> HR	0.562	0.035	16.104	0.000	Accepted
H3: HR -> CL	0.388	0.044	8.823	0.000	Accepted

Source: Author's own work.

3.3 Mediation analysis

H4 examined whether HR acts as a mediator between CSR and CL. Specifically, it examined whether the influence of CSR on CL is transmitted through HR, forming an indirect path (CSR $\rightarrow$ HR $\rightarrow$ CL). The results revealed a statistically significant indirect effect ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 7.807$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that CSR positively influences CL through its effect on HR. Path analysis showed that in the presence of HR as a mediator, the direct effect of CSR on CL remained statistically significant ($\beta = 0.357$, $t = 8.456$, $p < 0.01$). As both effects were significant, this suggests that HR partially mediates the CSR-CL relationship (Table 7).

Table 8 presents the findings related to the model's explanatory and predictive strengths. The R^2 value for CL was 0.435, indicating that the combined effects of CSR and Hotel Reputation (HR) accounted for 43.5% of the variance in CL. The results show a moderate level of explanatory power. Hence, the model effectively captures the key determinants of customer loyalty in the hotel industry.

Table 7. Mediation analysis.

Total effect		Direct effect		Specific indirect effect						
β	p-value	B	P-value	H9: CSR -> HR -> CL	β	t-value	Upper limit	Lower limit	p-value	Results
0.576	0.000	0.357	0.000		0.218	7.807	0.174	0.267	0.000	Partial Mediation

Source: Author's own work.

Table 8. Model's explanatory and predictive power.

Predictor(s)	Endogenous variable	R ²	f ²	Q ²
CSR	CL	0.435	0.154	0.327
HR			0.182	
CSR	HR	0.316	0.462	0.313

Source: Author's own work.

The results also revealed that both CSR and HR exert a moderate effect on CL ($f^2 > 0.15$), while CSR alone demonstrated a large effect size ($f^2 > 0.35$), underscoring its substantial role in shaping customer loyalty. The Q^2 value was assessed using a blindfolding procedure. The Q^2 values for HR and CSR were 0.327 and 0.313, respectively, both surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.15, as suggested by Hair et al. (2013). Hence, the model possesses medium predictive relevance, indicating its capability to predict endogenous constructs with reasonable accuracy.

4. Discussion and conclusion

The study reveals a significant association between CSR and CL and investigates both direct and indirect links among CSR, HR, and CL, contributing to both theoretical understanding and practical applications. The direct and positive relationship between CSR-CL supports Hypothesis 1 (Lee et al., 2013; Kim & Kim, 2016). This suggests that customers significantly consider hotels' CSR efforts when developing their emotional and behavioral loyalty. Hypothesis 2 is also validated, demonstrating CSR's significant effect on HR. These findings underscore CSR's function as a reputational signal, influencing customer perceptions of trustworthiness, quality, and credibility (Chun, 2005). Furthermore, HR significantly impacts customer loyalty, confirming Hypothesis 3. This connection illustrates the mediating process through which CSR boosts loyalty not only by directly engaging customers but also by enhancing the hotel's perceived market reputation. The path analysis in this study indicates that in the presence of the HR mediator, the direct impact of CSR on CL remains significant. As both the direct and specific indirect effects were significant, HR partially mediated the CSR-CL relationship, confirming Hypothesis 4. The partial mediation observed implies that while CSR independently influences loyalty, a substantial portion of its effect is mediated by the improvement of hotel reputation. This implies that reputation serves as a conduit for translating CSR initiatives into customer loyalty. From a model evaluation perspective, the R^2 value of 0.435 for customer loyalty demonstrates a moderate explanatory power. Moreover, the effect size analysis indicates that CSR has a large effect ($f^2 > 0.35$) on CL, while both CSR and HR exert moderate effects. The Q^2 values for HR (0.327) and CSR (0.313) confirm the medium predictive relevance of the model, reinforcing its validity for understanding and forecasting customer behavior in the luxury hotel segment. The findings of this study emphasize the need for hospitality firms to strategically oversee their CSR endeavors and reputation-building strategies, as both are crucial for enhancing customer loyalty. Furthermore, this study sets the stage for future investigations that might examine other possible mediators or moderators, such as customer trust or perceived service quality, to further elucidate CSR–loyalty linkages. These findings are particularly significant in the post-pandemic context, where consumer expectations regarding ethical and responsible business practices have intensified. Hotels that invest in socially responsible activities not only differentiate themselves in a competitive market but also cultivate deeper emotional and attitudinal bonds with their clients.

5. Practical implications

CSR in the hotel industry goes beyond simple philanthropy (Lee et al., 2013). Customers often view these efforts as indicators of a hotel's overall integrity and service quality, thereby strengthening their loyalty intentions (Han, Yu, & Kim, 2018). This study presents several key practical implications for the hospitality sector. First, it demonstrates that customers' perception of CSR efforts greatly affects their loyalty, both directly and indirectly, via the hotel's reputation (Su et al., 2014). This shows that socially responsible practices are fundamental to business operations, not just compliance or charitable acts, but also tools for customer-focused brand positioning. Second, hotel reputation highlights the importance of communicating CSR efforts to improve stakeholders' views of the brand (Lii & Lee, 2011). Hotel managers should focus on transparent communication methods, such as issuing sustainability reports, sharing stories on social media, and updating the community on engagement activities to establish and uphold a strong, credible reputation. A well-respected reputation serves as a mechanism for building trust, strengthening customers' emotional ties to the brand, and encouraging long-term loyalty. Furthermore, this study establishes a framework for hospitality businesses to measure the return on investment (ROI) of their CSR programs, evaluating not only the social impact but also customer-centric outcomes such as loyalty and advocacy. By aligning CSR initiatives with customer values and expectations, such as environmental responsibility, employee care, and ethical sourcing, hotels can foster customer loyalty and differentiate their brand in a competitive landscape (Islam et al., 2022). Hotel industry leaders must equip their frontline and customer-facing teams with the skills to embody and articulate their hotel's CSR commitments. Customer experiences are shaped

not only by the quality of amenities and services but also by the ethical behavior that guests perceive. Operationally, hotel leaders are encouraged to train and empower their frontline employees to internalize and communicate CSR values. Customer experiences are shaped not only by tangible services and amenities but also by ethical conduct and value alignment perceived during service encounters. Therefore, it is crucial to align internal culture with the external CSR narrative to fortify the link between CSR-HR-CL (Osakwe & Yusuf, 2020).

6. Limitations and suggestions for future research

A cross-sectional design was used in this study; hence, a longitudinal research design is recommended for future research to better understand the evolving nature of CSR initiatives and their influence on customer perceptions over time. The use of convenience sampling from a single geographic location (New Delhi, India) may limit the generalizability of our findings. Researchers should adopt probability sampling across diverse geographic regions and hotel categories. Incorporating alternative mediating variables could provide deeper insights into CSR - customer loyalty research. Moreover, hotel reputation as a moderating factor could be a focus of future investigations. Comparative analyses across different tiers of hospitality establishments and regional contexts may reveal context-specific CSR strategies and their effectiveness. Future investigations should integrate internal stakeholder perspectives to examine how internal CSR engagement contributes to external brand image and guest satisfaction. Additionally, interdisciplinary research integrating psychological constructs, such as customer empathy, moral identity, or ethical consumption patterns, could further enrich the theoretical understanding of why and how CSR influences customer behavior in the hotel industry.

Ethics statement

This study complied with the ethical guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki and was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of Texila American University, Zambia (Approval No. TAUZ/REC/2025/F/04, dated 5 August 2025). All participants were over 18 years of age and provided written informed consent prior to the data collection. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants' data were strictly maintained.

Data availability statement

The dataset included the values used for statistical analyses, tables, and figures, and comprised responses from 391 participants who took part in the study. The dataset is openly available on Zenodo at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15824958> (Singh, 2025a). The questionnaire used in this study is available on Zenodo at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16220978> (Singh, 2025b).

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Dr Oyelakin Idris Oyewale 

Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia

Title:

The current title does not fully reflect the study framework. Since *hotel reputation* is a key variable in the research, it should be explicitly included in the title to align with the study's conceptual model.

Abstract

- The abstract contains repetition, particularly in the first and second sentences, both of which explain the study's objective. It is advisable to retain the second sentence while revising it to include the research problem. This will establish a clear rationale and underscore the need for the study.
- The methodology section is absent. To enhance clarity and coherence, I recommend applying the **POMES framework** (Problem, Objective, Methodology, Expected Outcome, and Significance). This structure will ensure the abstract communicates the essence of the study effectively.

Introduction

The introduction provides a review of literature and identifies existing gaps. However, the **research problem is not explicitly highlighted**. To strengthen the rationale and demonstrate the urgency of the study, the research problem should be clearly articulated.

Methodology

- The study employed a convenience sampling method, but no justification was provided for its use. A rationale should be included to demonstrate why this technique was appropriate and acceptable in the context of the research.
- The exclusion of **34 respondents** from the dataset requires explanation. Clarifying the reasons for their removal will strengthen the credibility, authenticity, and reliability of the data analysis.

Contribution

The study highlights some practical contributions. However, **policy recommendations** are currently absent. Including actionable policy contributions would significantly enhance the practical relevance and impact of the study, particularly for decision-makers in the hospitality industry.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Partly

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Yes

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: CSR

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 06 October 2025

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Varinder Singh Rana

City University College of Ajman, Ajman, Ajman, United Arab Emirates

This study makes a valuable contribution to the hospitality literature by exploring the link between corporate social responsibility (CSR), hotel reputation, and customer loyalty. The research is timely, well-structured, and supported by a robust methodology using PLS-SEM with an adequate sample

size.

Findings confirm that CSR and hotel reputation significantly enhance loyalty, with reputation serving as a partial mediator. The paper is clearly written, offers meaningful theoretical and practical implications, and highlights the strategic role of aligning CSR initiatives with reputation-building.

However, the study would benefit from strengthening the literature review with recent sources and theoretical frameworks, providing more detail on measurement validity, and acknowledging sampling limitations. Addressing these points will further enhance its scientific soundness and impact.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Yes

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Hospitality and Tourism, Events, Marketing

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

Reviewer Report 30 September 2025

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Dr. Uma Pandey 

Jagran Lakecity University, India, Bhopal, India

1. At present, a few sections (e.g., Introduction, Literature Review, and some reference titles) use “*consumer*.” For clarity and alignment with your research objectives, I recommend standardizing terminology so that “*customer*” is used consistently. This will avoid confusion for readers and strengthen the focus of your argument on hotel customers rather than the broader concept of consumers.

2. The abbreviation “CL” is used to represent Customer Loyalty throughout the paper, but it is never formally introduced at first mention. For clarity and consistency, the authors should define all abbreviations (CSR, HR, CL) when they first appear and ensure uniform usage across the text, tables, and figures.

3. Section 2.1 (CSR and Customer Loyalty):

The review discusses how CSR practices influence customer loyalty. However, the hypothesis (H1) is formulated around customer perception of CSR. This creates a conceptual gap, as the supporting literature largely emphasizes CSR practices rather than perceptions. To address this, I suggest either:

(a) Adjusting the wording of H1 to align with the CSR practice-focused literature, or

(b) Expanding the literature review with studies that specifically examine perceived CSR and its effect on loyalty.

This adjustment would ensure the hypothesis is firmly grounded in prior research.

4. Section 2.2 (CSR and Hotel Reputation):

A similar issue arises with H2, where the cited studies demonstrate how CSR initiatives influence reputation, but the hypothesis is framed around customer perception of CSR. To improve coherence, the authors should either:

(a) Reframe H2 to emphasize CSR practices, or

(b) Incorporate literature explicitly linking perceived CSR to hotel reputation.

In addition, clarifying early on that CSR is conceptualized in this study as customer perception would resolve potential confusion.

5. Section 2.3 (Hotel Reputation and Customer Loyalty):

H3 (“Hotel reputation significantly affects customer loyalty”) is not sufficiently supported in the current literature review. While the discussion addresses mediation (CSR → Reputation → Loyalty), it does not clearly establish the direct relationship between reputation and loyalty. To strengthen this section, please integrate studies that explicitly test the direct effect. This will allow for a more logical sequence: (i) establish the direct effect (H3) and then (ii) build the case for the mediation hypothesis (H4).

6. The discussion overemphasizes CSR outcomes and should clarify why customers value CSR, while distinguishing between attitudinal and behavioral loyalty to match the measurement model. The conclusion repeats prior points and could be condensed into clearer managerial takeaways, highlighting that CSR is framed as customer perception. Practical implications are relevant but too

general; more actionable guidance (e.g., staff training, feedback-based CSR evaluation, aligning CSR initiatives with customer values) would strengthen the paper.

7. The study would benefit from recent citations from 2024 and 2025.

8. The title can be reframed to include the mediating role of hotel reputation.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Partly

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

I cannot comment. A qualified statistician is required.

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Tourism, Hospitality, Aviation, Gender Studies, Marketing, AI in Tourism

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however I have significant reservations, as outlined above.

Reviewer Report 30 September 2025

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Dr Priyakashna Mohanty 

Christ University, Bengaluru, India

I have gone through the paper thoroughly and I am pretty much impressed with the work. There are, however, some statements that might require explanation or theoretical backing. This is not a

mandate, but may be required for better positioning the paper.

1. The use of convenience sampling for the study needs to be justified.
2. Hotel reputation measured with only three items which may be difficult to operationalize. Authors may explain as to why there are only 3 measures selected.

Other than that, everything looks fine.

Is the work clearly and accurately presented and does it cite the current literature?

Yes

Is the study design appropriate and is the work technically sound?

Yes

Are sufficient details of methods and analysis provided to allow replication by others?

Yes

If applicable, is the statistical analysis and its interpretation appropriate?

Yes

Are all the source data underlying the results available to ensure full reproducibility?

Yes

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the results?

Yes

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Tourism, Hospitality, PLS-SEM

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard.

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