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Abstract

This study aims to investigate if the visitors' perception of corporate social responsibility influences both hotel brand positioning and intention to revisit. Furthermore, it examines the indirect impact of corporate social responsibility on hotel brand positioning and intention to revisit through other major factors (identification, satisfaction, and loyalty). In total, 348 valid questionnaires were collected from customers reserved a hotel room in the UK within the last six months at the time of this investigation. Structural equation modeling was conducted to advance insight into the various influences and relationships. The results showed that there is a significant direct relationship between CSR with hotel brand positioning and indirect relationship between CSR and intention to revisit through identification, loyalty. However, surprisingly there are no relationships between CSR with satisfaction and satisfaction with loyalty. This study contributes to the existing literature on CSR in hotel management by investigating the impact of the customers' perception of a hotel's CSR on both hotel brand positioning and customers' intention to revisit. Moreover, this study also contributes to hotel management literature by investigating the indirect impact of identification, satisfaction, and loyalty on the relationship between CSR with hotel brand positioning and intention to revisit.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility; Identification; Satisfaction; Loyalty; Hotel Brand Positioning; Trust; Hospitality Sector; Intention to Revisit

Introduction

In the past few years, the significance of the tourism and hospitality industry has surged considerably in the global economy, with revenues reaching US$ 500 billion (Mobin et al., 2017). According to World Tourism Organization "total export earnings from international tourism reached USD 1.7 trillion in 2018, or almost USD 5 billion a day on average" (UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex, 2020). The retail value of the global hotel industry was 600.49 billion U.S. dollars in 2018 (Statista, 2020). Along with the increase in the number of tourists around the world, the hotel industry has witnessed rapid growth due to the nature of services it may provide for avid visitors as well as higher rates of job creation and better opportunities to share the cultural legacy of communities. Yet, this does not safeguard the hotel industry against potential negative impacts associated with it from social, economic, and environmental perspectives.

To begin with, excessive ecological footprint in heritage sites, various kinds of pollution emanated by the operations of hotels including energy consumption, use of detergents and other chemicals, carbon and heat emissions, food waste, amongst others are the hazards caused by the hotel industry (Grosbois, 2012). Likewise, Farrington et al. (2017) point out that the hospitality industry – and subsequently the hotel sub-sector- is prone to internal as well as external pressures. Economic shocks, social and political turmoil, seasonal nature of demand, negative public perceptions of the industry as paying low wages to the employees for the benefit of hotel owners, and the wealthy segment of the society are some of the factors that could deteriorate the financial performance of the hotels. In addition, value degradation, increasing rates of prostitution and unethical business practices may to some extent picture the dark side of hospitality (Mobin et al., 2017).

Under such circumstances, CSR is gaining paramount importance among industry practitioners and academia since it paves the way to establish long-term relationships with customers. However, a deeper insight is needed, especially in the hotel industry (Mohammad and Rashid, 2018) as a service context. In this respect, Xu (2014) argues that contextual specifications should be taken into account in exploring the impact of corporate responsible practices on customers' intentions and actual purchase behaviors. This mainly stems from the perception-based nature of CSR and the heterogeneity of social, economic, and cultural environments. Also, the key to gain customer support and positive brand outcomes is to focus on the target market-specific traits.

The use of CSR policies around the world is an attractive subject of interest in the last decades and the UK is among those countries that have seen this dramatic change of CSR utilization in distinguished aspects (Frey and George, 2010; Gu *et al.,* 2013). To date, CSR research has focused primarily on nonprofit organizations (Lin-Hi, et al., 2015). Also in recent days scholars in tourism and hospitality-focused on the concept of CSR in the hospitality industry (Garay Tamajón and Font, 2013; Gao and Mattila, 2014; Li *et al.,* 2019; Singal, 2014; Tsai *et al.,* 2010). With these points in mind, the objectives of the present study are two-folded. First, the notion of CSR and its possible impacts on positive consumer responses are explored in the context of UK hotels. Second, to investigate the indirect impact

of other factors such as trust on the relationship between CSR and expected consumer behaviors.

For this purpose, this study collected data from 348 visitors who have booked hotels and stayed in the UK. This study examines if CSR activities put in place by hotels can influence the loyalty and hotel brand positioning of hotel visitors. As a result, the current study is going to a) investigate the role of satisfaction and identification, loyalty, and hotel brand positioning on the intention to revisit of hotels; and b) examine the moderation role of customer trust, age, and education. Thus, this research contributes to hotel management and a growing body of research on CSR in the hospitality industry. This contribution happens through recognition of points such as the effect of CSR on loyalty, which is a central factor for the intention to revisit among the customers. The result of the current study will provide help for hotel owners and managers in the UK to enable them to have the capability of assessing their success in performing activities related to CSR. Furthermore, the results indicated that hotels can apply the outcome of this study in other areas with a common culture, or they can employ the same profile of employees to test the effect of the activities of CSR on loyalty and satisfaction of customers. Finally, this paper makes diverse contributions to the theory of CSR through the moderation role of trust, age, and education.

CSR: Concept and Significance in the Hotel Industry

In a broad sense, Brown and Dacin (1997) define the concept of CSR as the activities performed by businesses to meet their obligations towards their various stakeholders and the society at large. Being perceived as socially responsible would be of great benefit to businesses (Arikan and Guner, 2013). Initially, CSR was restricted to corporate activities aimed at reducing social harms in the form of voluntary donations or serving specific groups. Nevertheless, it has taken on wider applications over time. According to the European Commission (2011), CSR is "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis".

From an industry-specific perspective, Kumar and Sharma (2014) assert that hoteliers have increasingly focused on ethical business practices. Through investigating various measures taken by hotels worldwide, these authors conclude that adopting such behaviors is a rising trend in the industry as a result of governmental and local pressures and public concerns

about sustainable resource utilization. It is also worth noting that despite the prevalence of CSR initiatives across various industries, the outcomes have varied in terms of customer responses, and thus the overall performance of the firms. The same situation also applies to academia, where contradictory findings have baffled the scholars. For instance, while it is largely assumed that CSR engagement will decrease customers' price sensitivity, Deng (2012) argues that the relationship is not a 'what goes around, comes around' type of logic (Deng and Xu, 2017), questioning the direct nature of such associations.

Consumer-company identification

Du et al. (2007) define consumer-company identification (CCI) as the consumers' psychological attachment to the firm which results from commonalities between their own perceived identity and that of the firm (Arikan and Guner, 2013). Because of its vital role in the performance of firms, CCI has been the center of scholarly attention for some time, especially after the penetration of theories such as social identity into the realm of organizational studies. Based on the social identity theory, individuals tend to connect to social entities when they feel their self-definitional needs are at least partially fulfilled by these organizations (Huang et al., 2017). In their seminal paper, Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) state that such identification could stem from various elements, including but not limited to the brand, employees, or activities of the firm. In this regard, CSR is one of the strongest triggers of CCI since it reflects the behavior of the firms' members, communication, and symbolism as elements of corporate identity. Additionally, increasing loyalty to the current products and services, positive word of mouth, and resistance to negative information about the firm are among the contributions of consumers with higher levels of identification with the firm (Deng and Xu, 2017).

In case consumers find a certain degree of overlap between their own identity and the company's identity, they are more likely to identify with the company. Perceived CSR creates a sense of belonging towards the firm and develop positive CCI (Mobin et al., 2017). Similarly, Huang et al. (2017) view CCI as complementary to positive outcomes such as satisfaction and more importantly loyalty. These authors argue that in addition to service quality, a firm's engagement in socially responsible behaviors stands as a determining driver of CCI. Finally, Deng and Xu (2012) refer to a study carried out by Martin et al. (2009), in which consumers were found to have a stronger sense of identification with the company as a

result of its CSR efforts, leading to a higher level of loyalty. Based on the discussions above, this study proposes that:

H1a: A firm's CSR activities positively impact consumer-company identification.

Customer Loyalty

Martinez and Rodriguez del Bosque (2013) believe that loyalty entails both the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions. To shed more light, while attitudinal loyalty means favorable perceptions about the firm and emotional links to it, the behavioral aspect covers the real actions of the customer such as repurchase and positive word of mouth.

According to Tingchi et al. (2014), a firm's engagement in CSR may result in different behavioral or psychological impacts in customers depending on the nature and type of these). Referring to communities inflicted by the 2004 Tsunami in Thailand, Tingchi et al. (2014) state that firms that provided outreach services later enjoyed a more positive brand image and higher levels of customer loyalty. They also state that customers' identification with a company has a positive relationship with their repurchase intentions. To elaborate, corporate ethical practices result in higher levels of trust, subsequently leading to customers' support of the brand, more frequent recommendations, and loyalty. In addition, Al-Msallam (2015), states that customer satisfaction leads to more recommendations of the brand to others, lower switching rates, and more repeat purchases. Similarly, satisfaction is seen as a prerequisite to developing customer loyalty, with satisfied customers showing more loyalty in their purchase decisions. Following the above discussions, three hypotheses are proposed:

H1b: A firm's CSR activities positively impact customer loyalty.
H2: Consumer-company identification positively impacts customer loyalty.
H3a: Customer satisfaction positively impacts customer loyalty.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction could be defined as "the overall evaluation based on the customer's total purchase and consumption experience with a good or service over time" (Xu, 2014). Chung et al. (2015) view customer satisfaction as a major driver for the long-term profitability of businesses. Meanwhile, these scholars state that satisfaction extends beyond

the attributes of the products and services and depends primarily on customers' perceptions. Previous studies have explored the relationship between customer satisfaction and a firm's engagement in CSR activities in various industries, including telecommunications, banking, and tourism-based industries. It has also been suggested that the CSR concept and implementation should be analyzed from the customer's point of view- and not only the industry players- since little is known about the impact of CSR on customer satisfaction, loyalty and the like, with the need to take distance from manufacturing industries and focusing on service-oriented industries. It is, thus, logical to contend that more scholarly efforts should be taken to fill this gap (Mohammed and Rashid, 2018).

Referring to the study conducted by Luo and Bhattacharya (2006), Xu (2014) states that customer satisfaction has an important role in generating real market value for firms from their CSR efforts. In addition, Mohammed and Rashid (2018), hold that the success of hotels, to a great extent, depends on discovering the factors that impact customer satisfaction. With competition among hotels rising constantly, these businesses are in dire need of meeting customers' expectations and even go beyond to develop satisfaction, loyalty, and revisit intentions in them. Apart from external pressures, the dynamic nature of customers' values and aspirations is another source of complexity for hotels. More importantly, visitors now possess growing awareness regarding their planet, its natural resources, and the wellbeing of its inhabitants, with potential impact on their purchase behaviors.

Chung et al. (2015) conclude that customers' positive perceptions about the CSR activities of a firm could result in higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty. In a similar vein, Mohammed and Rashid (2018) argue that a growing number of customers are concerned with concepts beyond mere consumption experience and value the overall engagement of the firm in CSR initiatives. Such customers are thus more satisfied with companies which adopt ethical practices. These authors also refer to the stakeholder theory, stating that the multi-dimensionality of consumption means customers could be potentially attracted to firms not only as economic entities but also based on their belonging to the same community or country. Therefore, the CSR history of a company could arguably influence consumers' perceptions and satisfaction, trust, and loyalty.

Previous studies (Lee and Heo, 2009; Lee and Park, 2009) concentrated on issues such as CSR and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry, however, they did not test the connection between possession, CSR and financial performance (Singal, 2014). Previous studies examined the influence of CSR on satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Gao and Mattila, 2014; Youn et al., 2016), loyalty retention (Cronin *et al.,* 2000), revisit intention (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Assaker *et al.,* 2011) and post-purchase behavior. Based on the above discussion, we hypothesize that:

H1c: A firm's CSR activities positively impact customer satisfaction.
H3c: Satisfaction has positively impacts on intention to revisit.

Hotel Brand Positioning

Positioning is a delicate process through which companies develop their offerings in a way that conveys value to the target market. According to Palacios-Florencio et al. (2018), customers are demonstrating increasing awareness towards socially responsible behaviors of firms as confirmed by many previous scholars. Perceptions of customers in favor of such practices form positive evaluations and attitudes towards the organizations. Such CSR-based evaluations underline the positive aspects along with reducing the negative points associated from the customers' purchase in their minds. Thus, firms investing to build and reinforce such a market position could enjoy higher degrees of customer loyalty. In their study of 629 guests in four international hotels, these scholars realized that CSR has positive impacts on both customers' loyalty and their perceptions regarding the positioning of the hotel as well as their trust (as a moderating variable). In addition, customer delight and satisfaction have a considerable impact on hotel brand positioning in the hospitality industry (Yurtseven and Sandir, 2018). Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1d: A firm's CSR activities positively impact on hotel brand positioning.
H3b: Customers' satisfaction positively impacts on hotel brand positioning.

Intention to Revisit

Loyalty as an intricate and multidimensional phenomenon is an essential factor in the success of the hotels. The increase in the desire of customers to repurchase a brand and offer it to

others with a positive experience and loyalty toward brands have received much attention from prior papers (such as Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Oliver, 1997).

A propensity to (re)visit a place is called behavioral intention. Therefore, customer loyalty occurs when his tendency changes into the action (Yang and Peterson, 2004). There are four stages of customer loyalty as suggested by Oliver (1999) (i) cognitive loyalty which means having enough information about the destination makes the traveler loyal to that destination. (ii) The effective loyalty which refers to a positive feeling about a particular destination. (iii) Conative loyalty is related to the customers' commitment to repurchase. (iv) Action loyalty which is the last stage of behavioral intention is related to the mechanism by which intentions are converted to actions which refer to action control (Han et al., 2019; Oliver, 1999). Thus, recognition of behavioral intention is effective and in predicting a traveler's' future intention and loyalty toward a particular destination (Assaker *et al.,* 2011; Alizadeh and Saghafi, 2014).

The concept of brand positioning has become one of the fundamental components in modern marketing management and practitioners (Aaker and Shansby, 1982; Fuchs and Diamantopoulos, 2012; Urde and Koch, 2014). Brand positioning impacts on profitability and long-term success specific in tourism destinations (Botha *et al.*, 1999; Claveria, 2016; Pike, 2012; Pike *et al.*, 2018). As the concept of positioning is the key critical element of all upcoming efforts for the hospitality industry and probably the economic development of an area. It has a possible relation with destination in that a location could be considered as a product with brand equity, image, or loyalty. Corporate communications assist to promote the company's positioning and differentiate the company from other companies so that visitors can select the hotel which is more attractive (Chacko and Marcell, 2007). Brand positioning strategy as a valuable element help brands to generate a characteristic place in the minds of possible travelers, thus that they recognize how a place could be different from competitive places, and how it can increase their visit/revisit intention (Botha *et al.*, 1999).

H4: Loyalty has a significant impact on intention to revisit.
H5: Hotel brand positioning has a significant impact on intention to revisit.

The Moderating Role of Customer Trust

During the past few years, researchers have devoted much work to explore the social exchange constructs such as trust and satisfaction and their relationship with customer loyalty (Martinez and Rodriguez del Bosque, 2013). Park and Levy (2014) define customer trust as the belief that the actions undertaken by the firm are congruent with the consumer's expectations. Developing such a belief, as a collection of suppositions, is highly influenced by the characteristics that consumers may attribute to the firm. To Mayer et al. (1995), trust is three dimensional: Expertise trust- the belief that company has the necessary capabilities to exhibit effective performance-, integrity trust- the belief that the firm's operations and behaviors are in line with claimed values and ethical principles- and benevolence-based trust- which connotes the goodwill of the firm towards the trustor, regardless of economic motivations (Zasuwa, 2019). Accordingly, Andreu et al. (2015) point out that the customer's trust in a firm originates from its altruistic behaviors. Indeed, such positive attitudes ease future interactions with the company.

Likewise, in his study on the relationship between perceived motivations of organizations for CSR initiatives and customer responses, Zasuwa (2019) argues that trust moderates the relationship between these variables. To further support this claim, he refers to previous research (Tsai et al., 2015, and Vlachos et al., 2009), in which trust is believed to have a meaningful impact on customers' reactions to socially responsible behaviors of the firm. As such, we hypothesize that:

H6: Trust has a moderating effect between corporate social responsibility and (H6a) consumer-company identification, (H6b) loyalty, and (H6c) customer satisfaction.

The Moderating Role of Age and Education

Several researchers proposed that age and education are important variables that has a moderating impact on customer behavior, satisfaction, and loyalty (King and He, 2006; Rezaee et al., 2008; Sivesan and Karunanithy, 2013; Sharma et al., 2012; Thaichon et al., 2016). Sivesan and Karunanithy (2013) in there study discovered that there is a significant difference between the personal demographic factors such as age and education level on service quality. Sharma et al., (2012) showed the relationship between satisfaction and intentions, is stronger for older customers. Furthermore, the relationship of service quality with satisfaction and value is stronger for younger customers. The effect of commitment and

satisfaction on two types of loyalty including: behavioral and attitudinal loyalty is different considering various groups of customers specified by their age (Thaichon et al., 2016).

Dow and Karunaratna (2006) and Martin and Cervino (2011) believe that the approach for consumers to interpret information is defined by education. More educated consumers based on the cognitive process of selection, distortion, and retention makes an accurate interpretation of the information they process. As such, we hypothesize that:

H7: Age has a moderating effect between corporate social responsibility and (H7a) consumer-company identification, (H7b) loyalty, and (H7c) customer satisfaction.
H8: Education has a moderating effect between corporate social responsibility and (H8a) consumer-company identification, (H8b) loyalty, and (H8c) customer satisfaction.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The research hypotheses were tested using a sample of visitors who reserved a hotel room in the UK within the last six months at the time of this investigation. The UK is recognized as a well-known tourist destination in the last five years (Foroudi *et al.,* 2018; UNWTO, 2018). 650 questionnaires were sent out using the convenience-sampling technique from March to August 2018 and received 348 usable data. The technique was employed to disregard the possible bias regarding the validity and generalizability of the scales (Bell and Bryman, 2007; McDaniel and Gates, 2006). The survey consisted of questions aimed at understanding the perception of customers towards CSR, and how this understanding can influence customer identification, satisfaction, loyalty, hotel brand positioning, and their intention to revisit the hotel. Finally, 348 usable questionnaires were returned and examined (return rate: 53%). The characteristics of the entire population were added in the second part of the survey. Data was gathered using the face-to-face method. This method assures that the respondents targeted did answer the survey. The snowballing sampling method was also used as a distribution technique. Informants were invited to recommend others who may provide additional views (Foroudi *et al.,* 2014; 2017; 2018; Kirby and Kent, 2010). To make sure that they are familiar with a hotel, they were questioned regarding their hotel visiting-patterns. Table 1 illustrates that 58.9% of the respondents were female, students (23.6%), workers (19.5%), and top

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executive or manager (12.1%). 43.4% of the respondents were postgraduate, and 56.4% were undergraduate less than 30 years (47.7%) and above 30 years (52.3%).

<div align="center">**"Insert Table 1"**</div>

Measurement

The research measurement items were based on identified scales from prior literature, which were confirmed to be psychometrically sound (Hair *et al.,* 2006). The participants were given questionnaires, based on a 7 point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), to 7 (strongly agree). The CSR was measured based on earlier studies (Akbari *et al.,* 2019a; Akbari et al., 2019b; Diallo and Lambey-Checchin, 2017; Lai *et al.,* 2010). The concept of identification was measured with 7-items based on previous studies (Alwi and Ismail, 2013). The concept of satisfaction was measured based on the items which were adopted from Foroudi *et al.,* (2018). Additionally, loyalty (Alam *et al.,* 2012; Foroudi *et al.,* 2017; Kim *et al.,* 2008; Nguyen *et al.,* 2013; Ponsonby-Mccabe and Boyle, 2006; Söderlund, 2006; Stock *et al.,* 2013; Sweeney and Swait, 2008; Yeh, 2015) and intention to revisit (Assaker and Hallak, 2013; Maxham and Netemeyer, 2002) were measured from existing scales. Hotel brand positioning (Balmer, 2008; Foroudi *et al.,* 2017; Desai and Ratneshwar, 2003; Foroudi *et al.,* 2017; Hatch and Schultz, 2001; Jewell and Saenger, 2014; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2007; Schmitt *et al.,* 1995) and trust (Morgan and Hunt, 1994; Sirdeshmukh *et al.,* 2002) item measurement were adopted from previous studies.

The measurements of the preliminary item were examined for reliability and factor investigations as the initial examination of the sample's performance. We considered the construct, level reliability, to ensure that measurements allocated to the same factors expose a higher association with each other. The suitability of the measurement model includes investigating the statistical importance of the factor loading and the examination of the composite reliability (CR). The research scales were accepted for psychometric reliability assessments (0.89 to 0.859, i.e., all >0.70). The list of item measurements, descriptive data, and reliability for the constructs of interest are demonstrated in Table 2.

<div align="center">**"Insert Table 2"**</div>

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

To inspect the inter-relationships among the number of the study variables and to describe each variable in terms of their mutual fundamental factors, EFA (exploratory factor analysis) as a statistical procedure was employed (Hair *et al.,* 2006). Initially, eight proposed constructs were subjected to EFA to illuminate upon the factor structure in the measures; determine fundamental structures in the variables; and to examine the internal reliability through Cronbach's alpha (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). The results display that the item measurements loaded ranged from (0.70 to 0.94) which satisfied the minimum criteria for factor-loadings (Hair *et al.,* 2006). Also, KMO's (0.88>0.6) measure of sampling appropriateness recommends that the association among the items should be statistically noteworthy and it should fit as exploratory factor analysis to convey the parsimonious set of the factors.

To examine the research model and hypotheses, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation model (SEM) were adopted based on the recommendation by previous authors (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Foroudi, 2018; Hair *et al.,* 2006). In the first stage, we examined the model used for the measurement using AMOS24 Windows software. CFA was used to assess the theory regarding the association between a set of items and the factors to evaluate their discriminant validity (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Discriminant validity was scrutinized by utilizing the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) for each study, construct and it is associated with the square association between the constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The results show that each construct ranged from 0.62 to 0.85 > 0.5, and the items indicate an original underlying concept. In addition, composite reliability ranged from 0.71 to 0.79.

In the second stage, we examined regression-path to clarify the causal relationship between the observed constructs (Hair *et al.,* 2006). The current research used the incremental fit indices (TLI, CFI, and IFI) to assess the model fit as compared to the study baseline model. CFI (comparative fit index) as an incremental-index is used to assess the fit of a model with the null baseline model (0.96 > 0.90). The normed-fit-index (NFI) assessed the proportion by which a model is enhanced in terms of the fit associated with the base model (0.94 >0.90). The results indicated a good fit. The Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), and Relative Fit Index (RFI) (0.95, 0.96, and 0.92, respectively) were higher than the

recommended threshold of 0.90, and each criterion of fit therefore designated that the measurement model's fit was acceptable (Hair *et al.,* 2006). The root means squared estimate of error (RMSEA, 0.070) provides adequate distinctive information to assess a model (Hair *et al.,* 2006).

Hypothesis 1a suggests that CSR has a positive correlation with identification. The findings supports these relationships (γ=0.508, t=9.509). According to the standardized parameter estimations for hypothesis 1b (CSR --> loyalty), the results provide a significant relationship (γ=0.231, t=5.091). However, the relationship between CSR and satisfaction (H1c) was insignificant (H5: γ=-0.038, t=-0.587, *p* 0.557). Furthermore, the hypothesized impacts, directed by the evaluations of the participants, the association between CSR and hotel brand positioning (H1d) were statistically accepted (γ=0.574, t=10.263) (Table 3). Hypothesis 2 illustrates the impacts of identification towards loyalty (γ=0.244, t=5.194). Hypothesis 3a (satisfaction --> loyalty) was not reinforced by the associations reflected in the hypotheses. The result shows a meaningful difference of 0 at the 0.05 significance level, which might not be predominantly effective concerning a consumer's opinion (γ=0.051, t=1.391, *p* 0.164).

Consumers believe there is significant relationships between satisfaction and (H3b) hotel brand positioning (γ=0.155, t=30.182). However, consumers believe there are significant relationship between satisfaction and intention to revisit (H3c: γ=0.108, t=2.220). Hypothesis 4 (H4) investigates the relationship between loyalty and the intention to revisit (γ=0.292, t=3.749). However, consumers believe there are significant relationships between hotel brand positioning (H5) and intention to revisit (γ=0.276, t=5.098).

"Insert Table 3"

Refer to the moderation effect of trust in CSR and identification; the results show trust strengthens the positive association among the two constructs (H6a). Trust strengthens the positive association between CSR and loyalty (H6b). Furthermore, trust dampens the positive association between CSR and satisfaction (H6c) (Fig 2).

Also, refer to the moderation effect of age and educational degree (undergraduate vs postgraduate) on CSR and identification (H7 and H8); the findings support H8a. The proposed connection between CSR and identification is significantly more intense for the visitors with lower degrees (Path undergraduate > Path postgraduate, p < 0.01) and therefore a decree

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in education appears to increase the positive influence of CSR and identification but our findings did not support H8b and H8c. The result of Table 4 also supports that the influence of CSR on satisfaction (H7c) is greater in visitors with higher age (Path $_{old\ age}$ > Path $_{low\ age}$, p < 0.01) but the results did not support H7a and H7b.

"Insert Fig 2"

"Insert Table 4"

Discussion and Conclusions

During the past couple of years, not only governmental agencies but also various stakeholders, including customers, have voiced concerns about unethical practices adopted by businesses, requiring them to invest in ways to minimize the negative impacts of their operations on the society (Grosbois, 2012). In this respect, customers should receive focal attention due to their high propensity of being influenced by such measures (Arikan and Guner, 2013). Likewise, the importance of ethical practices has doubled in the hotel industry because hotel operations are in many cases associated with unfavorable outcomes such as unjust behaviors towards employees, damages to the natural environment, or commodification of social and cultural values of nations. Thus, hotels are increasingly engaging in socially responsible behaviors to reduce such negative associations (Gurlek et al., 2017). Meanwhile, contradictions in the findings of existing literature necessitate further exploration of this topic. As such, this research tried to explore the relationships between hotels' CSR activities and multiple customer responses, i.e. consumer-company identification, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, and hotel brand positioning with specific attention to the moderating role of trust.

The results showed that CSR was statistically correlated with consumer-company identification and hotel brand positioning. To elaborate, the active engagement of firms in CSR initiatives creates an acceptable social character for them. This is also reflected in theories such as social identity theory and self-categorization theory, where consumers are believed to develop a sense of connectedness with the firm from a cognitive perspective. Therefore, customers – and probably other stakeholders- would be more inclined to identify with companies based on their participation in socially responsible activities (Martinez and

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del Bosque, 2013) and develop a more favorable attitude towards the brand, thus improving hotels' strategic position and differentiation in the market relying on factors other than price and quality (Ali, 2014; Anselmsson and Johansson, 2007). CSR was also found to be positively correlated with customer loyalty, as addressed by other studies (Tingchi et al., 2014; Al-Msallam, 2015; Gurlek et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2017). In this regard, the notion of generalized reciprocity in the social exchange theory could be helpful, where 'the recipient of the benefit does not return benefit directly to the giver but another actor in the social circle' (Gurlek et al., 2017). Based on the reciprocity concept, hotel guests may assume their revisits, as well as favorable recommendations of socially responsible hotels to others, might improve the financial performance of such hotels and thus be beneficial for groups in need although they might not directly gain any advantage from such practices. In addition, engaging in CSR activities would create positive brand associations and positive image in the minds of the customers. So, as Kim et al. (2017) argue, such responsible behaviors would affect both attitudinal and behavioral aspects of loyalty.

Consistent with previous studies, this research endorsed positive correlations between consumer-company identification and satisfaction supported by the stakeholder theory (Chung et al., 2015; Popp and Woratschek, 2017; Millan and Diaz, 2014), satisfaction and hotel brand positioning (Yurtseven and Sandir, 2018); and hotel brand positioning and loyalty (Lundmark et al., 2009; Hinson et al., 2017). At present, rigorous efforts are made to deliver and communicate 'a buyer-concentrated value scheme' to customers across different businesses. In other words, firms engage in positioning activities to help customers understand the distinguishing elements of competing products and services and thus facilitate their decision to choose the one that possesses real value in their viewpoint (Hinson et al., 2017). As such, it is reasonable to conclude that successful positioning is equal to developing the desired image in the minds of the consumers (Upamannyu and Bhakar, 2014). It could also be argued that once customers are satisfied with the products or services they receive, they tend to have a more positive evaluation of brand position. Furthermore, companies use positioning strategies to transfer their identity to the customers and build favorable brand positions, which may ultimately lead to brand loyalty (Lundmark et al., 2009).

Although many of the findings of our research were in line with existing literature, interesting distinctions were also noticed. To begin with, many previous studies (including Stanaland et

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al., 2011; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Galbreath and Shum, 2012; Shin and Thai, 2014; Park and Levy, 2014) confirm that CSR activities are positively related to customer satisfaction. Based on the signaling theory, companies could send positive signals to customers through engaging in ethical practices, which in turn demonstrates their activities are carried out with good causes and are ultimately in line with customers' expectations (Aljarah et al., 2018). It is thus not surprising that in many cases, customers display higher levels of satisfaction after using the products and services of socially responsible firms compared to their irresponsible counterparts (Aljarah et al., 2018). Surprisingly, however, the findings of this research showed that the relationship between CSR and customer satisfaction is insignificant. Similarly, Perez et al. (2011) challenge the existence of the relationship between CSR and customer satisfaction.

In addition, customer satisfaction and loyalty are seen to be positively related in the context of hotels (for instance Kandampully and Suhartanto, 2000; Scholtz, 2014; Saleem and Raja, 2014; El-Adly, 2019). Customer satisfaction is developed when businesses manage to meet customers' expectations and even go beyond this level. Thus, it is probable that satisfaction eases customers' concerns over repeat purchase behaviors. However, our findings were in contrast with these results i.e. the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty was not confirmed as significant. As stated by Han et al. (2011), loyalty covers both attitudinal and behavioral dimensions especially in the hospitality sector, where positive feelings towards the service provider do not necessarily lead to repeat purchase behaviors. Similarly, scholars such as Bown and Chen (2001) argue that the relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty has an asymmetric nature, which means customer satisfaction does not necessarily lead to customer loyalty.

Finally, trust was found to have a moderating role in the relationship between CSR and consumer-company identification, and CSR and satisfaction As confirmed by existing studies, the perceived reasons behind CSR initiatives are in many cases considered more important than the nature of these activities, and thus have a considerable impact on the customer's attitudinal and behavioral responses to such efforts (Zasuwa, 2019). Nevertheless, the moderating role of trust in the relationship between CSR and loyalty was not significant although such an effect had been proved by previous scholars (Dominici and Guzzo, 2010; Raza et al., 2018).

Theoretical Implications

A major contribution of this research was the focus on the insignificant relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty of hotel visitors, which has received scant scholarly attention compared to the opposite stream of thought. Such divergence from previous studies could arguably arise from mounting competitive pressures among hotel owners and their efforts to capture a bigger market share through a constant increase in service quality and offering incentives. In addition, easy access to information flows and robust communication and PR strategies of businesses provide customers with increasing awareness of possible choices, which in turn challenges the widely accepted beliefs about the positive relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty. In fact, as Rather and Sharma (2017) state, mere customer satisfaction would not guarantee positive post-purchase behaviors of customers, including loyalty, in the hospitality sector despite its positive impacts on the economic performance of service providers.

Yet, an even more important feature of this research was the non-moderating role of trust in the relationship between CSR practices and customer loyalty. Although trust was found to moderate this relationship in previous studies, it could be argued that the loyalty of hotel guests results – at least to a certain extent- from their direct experience of their stay and/or value-added offerings of the hotels. In other words, ethical practices of hotels- and probably many other businesses- would not compensate for the poor quality of the service delivered. It is also worth noting that the respondents in this research came from different countries, thus having different – and even contradictory- national culture specifications based on the dimensions discussed in the Hofstede model. Although the limitations we were faced with would not allow us to analyses this issue in great detail, certain dimensions of national culture such as the degree of individualism-collectivism and masculinity-femininity could potentially impact individuals' perceptions of CSR practices of hotels, and consequently their attitudes and purchase behaviors.

Another possibility in this respect that needs further exploration is the age group of the participants in this research. To shed more light, the demographic analysis of the respondents revealed that around 46.6% of the individuals in this study were 20-29 years old. This is in line with the emergence of a new generation in the market, namely Gen Z - born in the mid-90s until the mid-2000s. Although this research did not aim to investigate the specific

consumption behaviors of this group, it is interesting to study how their underlying purchase motives might be different. Uche (2018) estimates the spending power of Gen Z to be around $29-$143 billion, with a %93 control over their families' decisions. She also points out that in comparison with millennials, Gen Z is more concerned with social and environmental issues, and is willing to buy products and services offered by socially responsible providers. However, such a decision is largely dependent on the effectiveness of the communication strategies developed by businesses. In addition, she reports that despite their belief in the power of brands to address social and ethical issues, Gen Z has not been impressed by these practices so far. Similarly, Ariker and Toksoy (2017) realized that Gen Z considers the quality and price of a product as more important than CSR efforts of the organization. In fact, these authors found out that Gen Z tends to develop positive attitudes towards socially responsible brands. Nevertheless, such favorable perceptions would not be strong enough to create purchase – and repurchase- intentions in this generation.

Managerial Implications

During the past few years, the significance of the tourism and hospitality industry has increased significantly in the global economy, with revenues reaching US$ 500 billion (Mobin et al., 2017). It is also believed that the industry has contributed to societies from economic, social, and cultural perspectives by creating direct and indirect jobs, improving infrastructures, and presenting the cultural heritage of countries. Through a more country-specific lens, hospitality is not only the biggest sub-sector in the UK's tourism industry (British Hospitality Association Report, 2017), but is also considered as the 3rd largest employer with a 72 billion pound share in the direct GVA of the country, in addition to an indirect 86 billion pounds (UK Hospitality Report, 2018). However, none of these secure the competitive position of hospitality in the UK, where possible consequences of Brexit are still unknown. Despite positive implications such as an increase in the number of tourists due to the lure of the weak pound (Rhodes et al., 2018), Sima (2017) points out that talent scarcity, higher service provision costs, the introduction of tariffs and customs regulations, potential decrease in service quality, subsequent limitations in UK's access to EU funding and departure from EU regulations on consumer protection could impact the tourism and hospitality industry negatively. She also argues that unfavorable sentiments such as uncertainty, fury and crashed image towards the UK as a tourist destination are likely to appear in the tourists' minds and thus need further analysis.

In addition, value degradation, increasing rates of prostitution, and unethical business practices are also among the factors that picture the dark side of hospitality (Mobin et al., 2017), which in turn highlight the need to engage more in ethical initiatives. In fact, under current circumstances where traditional approaches such as investing in customer satisfaction and loyalty through offering high-quality services and/or lower prices no longer yield competitive advantage and customers increasingly opt for socially responsible businesses to interact with, the significance of CSR practices becomes more evident. It is worth noting that in many cases, the growing trend of socially responsible behaviors serve to help firms get an edge over their competitors, which is well justified considering the increasing environmental volatility and changes in customers' expectations and purchase behaviors. Therefore, the results of this research offer practical and managerial insights into the hotel industry.

Despite the difficulties and costs associated with developing and implementing CSR initiatives, the findings of the present study denote practical implications. To start with, business owners- including hotel managers- need to reconsider the role of CSR practices as an inseparable part of their corporate strategy due to their positive impact on cost reductions in the long run as well as improving their brand image in the minds of the customers. All these factors could to a great extent influence their overall business performance. In addition, hotel managers should try to create a balance between their CSR efforts and other aspects of their business that affect their service quality and subsequently customer favorable intentions and behaviors, including satisfaction as well as positive word of mouth and revisit intentions- as strong indicators of customer loyalty. This gains more prominence considering the role of Gen Z and their attributes as discussed above. In other words, unrealistic manifestations of or excessive engagement in CSR practices at the expense of quality or price would not yield any benefits for hotels. Rather, it would lead to customer cynicism and dissatisfaction, thus deteriorating hotels' competitive edge in the market. Accordingly, trust-building activities should be emphasized as part of the hotels' marketing strategies. This could be achieved through adopting clear CSR reporting mechanisms as well as encouraging hotel visitors to directly take part in CSR campaigns run by the hotel. It is also worth noting that mere engagement in CSR activities would not necessarily guarantee hotels' competitive advantage. Instead, managers should also consider developing added-value practices to ensure revisits as the major revenue source of hotels, with a specific focus on Gen Z.

Limitations of the Study and Future Research

Although the present research provided valuable theoretical and practical implications, like any other research, it is inherently tied with certain limitations. For one thing, it adopted a quantitative approach to measure various constructs under study. Despite the advantages associated with the quantitative (positivist) approach such as greater generalizability of the findings to other contexts due to the large size of the sample and is less time-consuming (Rahman, 2017), a qualitative approach – i.e. interviews or focus group- provides a deeper understanding of the phenomenon through placing the researcher closer to the subject being explored (Queiros et al., 2017). Thus, future studies could be carried out adopting an interpretivism paradigm to investigate participants' experiences and emotions and offer a more holistic view of the subject (Rahman, 2017) based on the contextual specifications of the study. We employed a convenience sampling technique in this study and collected data from customers who booked a hotel in the UK in the period of six months. The main limitation of our study is that the results cannot be generalized with statistical precision as the participants belonged to the population of the research interest. So, further study could collect data from random sampling to introduce a significant bias with respect to the total population. In addition, future researchers suggested collecting longitudinal data re-examine this framework in another setting. Another path for future research is the cross-cultural comparisons.

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Table 1: Demographic profile of consumer's sample

		Frequency	Percent			Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	205	58.9	Degree	Undergraduate	151	43.4
	Male	143	41.1		Postgraduate	161	56.4
Job	Top executive or manager	42	12.1				
	Owner of a company	19	5.5	Age	39 years old or less (young)	166	47.7
	Lawyer, dentist or architect etc.	26	7.5		30 to 59 years (old)	182	52.3
	Office/clerical staffs	33	9.5				
	Worker	68	19.5				
	Civil servant	33	9.5				
	Craftsman	17	4.9				
	Student	82	23.6				
	Housewife	28	8.0				

Table 2: Descriptive analysis, factor loading, and reliability

Construct	Item measurement	Factor Analysis	Mean	Std. Deviation	Reference
CSR @ .951				AVE: .760	CR: .723
CSR1	The Hotel is very concerned with environment protection	0.891	5.7644	1.30911	Diallo and Lambey-Checchin (2017); Lai *et al.* (2010)
CSR2	The Hotel is very concerned with the local community	0.878	5.8937	1.36556	
CSR3	The Hotel offers locally manufactured products	0.845	5.8908	1.36004	
CSR4	The Hotel is fair with others	Removed - Low reliability, Item to total correlation is less than 0.5			
CSR5	The Hotel cares about clients' rights	Removed - Multiple loadings on two factors			
Identification @ .953				AVE: .732	CR: .774
IDN1	When I need to make a hotel booking, this Hotel is my first choice	0.836	5.5977	1.38297	Alwi and Ismail (2013)
IDN2	I seldom consider switching to another Hotel	0.863	5.5862	1.33282	
IDN3	To me, the Hotel is the best hotel to stay in	0.842	5.5546	1.31052	
IDN4	I believe that the Hotel is my favourite hotel	0.881	5.5603	1.33208	
IDN5	I say positive things about the hotel to other people	Removed - Low reliability, Item to total correlation is less than 0.5			Srinivasan *et al.* (2002)
IDN6	I recommend the hotel to someone who seeks my advice	Removed - Low reliability			Karaosmanoglu *et al.* (2011)
IDN7	I encourage friends and relatives to book this Hotel	Removed - Multiple loadings on two factors			
Satisfaction @ .965				AVE: .854	CR: .787
SAT1	The Hotel has great resources	0.919	5.4397	1.38303	Foroudi *et al.* (2018)
SAT3	The Hotel has an excellent travel consultation service	0.915	5.3937	1.43752	
SAT4	I am very satisfied with the overall Hotel environment	0.913	5.3937	1.40713	
SAT5	I am very satisfied with the overall atmosphere of the Hotel	0.948	5.4224	1.41514	
Loyalty @ .859				AVE: .619	CR: .759
LOY1	I have a great experience with the Hotel	0.782	5.7960	1.17676	Foroudi *et al.* (2017); Ponsonby-Mccabe and Boyle (2006)
LOY2	The Hotel has great credibility	0.823	5.9741	1.14228	Alam *et al.* (2012); Kim *et al.* (2008); Sweeney and Swait (2008)
LOY3	The Hotel is contemporary	0.786	5.7902	1.20958	Söderlund (2006)
LOY4	The Hotel is innovative	0.755	5.7328	1.35398	Nguyen *et al.* (2013); Stock *et al.* (2013); Yeh (2015)
Intention to revisit @ .951				AVE: .813	CR: .730
INV1	I consider the Hotel as my first choice	0.917	5.6121	1.26426	Assaker and Hallak (2013); Lin (2014); Matilla (2001); Maxham and
INV2	I intend to visit the Hotel on my next trip	0.908	5.6236	1.32117	

	INV3	I intend to visit the Hotel in my distant future	0.879	5.6121	1.28685	Netemeyer (2002)
Hotel Brand Positioning @ .895					AVE: .669	CR: .709
	BP1	The Hotel has a reliable target market	Removed - Multiple loadings on two factors			Balmer, 2008; Barich and Foroudi *et al.,* (2017); Kotler (1991); Jewell and Saenger (2014)
	BP2	The Hotel has a strong competitors	0.701	5.6466	1.38073	Foroudi *et al.,* (2017); Hatch and Schultz (2001); Schmitt at al., (1995)
	BP3	The Hotel has a great product and service category	0.873	5.7241	1.34905	Desai and Ratneshwar (2003); Foroudi *et al.,* (2017); Jewell and Saenger (2014)
	BP4	The Hotel has a great brand promise	0.868	5.6552	1.41891	Foroudi *et al.,* (2017); Punjaisri and Wilson (2007)
Trust @ .897					AVE: .707	CR: .716
	TR1	The services of the Hotel make me feel a sense of security	Removed - Multiple loadings on two factors			Morgan and Hunt (1994); Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002)
	TR2	I trust on the quality of this Hotel company	Removed - Low reliability			
	TR3	Hiring services of this Hotel is a quality assurance	0.841	5.2989	1.30054	
	TR4	The Hotel is interested in its customers	0.842	5.2874	1.37418	
	TR5	The Hotel is honest with its customers	0.840	5.1839	1.38771	

Table 3: Results of hypothesis testing

	HYPOTHESES RELATIONSHIPS			Estimate	S.E	C.R	*p*	Results
H1a	CSR	--->	Identification	0.508	0.053	9.509	***	Significant
H1b	CSR	--->	Loyalty	0.231	0.045	5.091	***	Significant
H1c	CSR	--->	Satisfaction	-0.038	0.065	-.587	0.557	Not- Significant
H1d	CSR	--->	Hotel Brand Positioning	0.574	0.056	10.263	***	Significant
H2	Identification	--->	Loyalty	0.244	0.047	5.194	***	Significant
H3a	Satisfaction	--->	Loyalty	0.051	0.037	1.391	0.164	Not- Significant
H3b	Satisfaction	--->	Hotel Brand Positioning	0.155	0.049	3.182	0.001	Significant
H3c	Satisfaction	--->	Intention to Revisit	0.108	0.048	2.220	0.026	Significant
H4	Loyalty	--->	Intention to Revisit	0.292	0.078	3.749	***	Significant
H5	Hotel Brand Positioning	--->	Intention to Revisit	0.276	0.054	5.098	***	Significant

Table 4: Result of Moderation

Relationships			CMIN	P	Moderator	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Results
					Degree (Undergraduate vs Postgraduate)					
CSR	→	CCI	5.711	0.017	Undergraduate	0.572	0.071	8.021	***	Significant
	→				Postgraduate	-0.344	0.068	-5.073	***	
	→	Loyalty	0.186	0.666	Undergraduate	0.310	0.070	4.418	***	Not-Significant
	→				Postgraduate	0.174	0.054	3.203	.0010	
	→	Satisfaction	0.418	0.518	Undergraduate	0.347	0.101	3.429	***	Not-Significant
	→				Postgraduate	0.065	0.078	.840	.4010	
					Age (Young vs Old)					
CSR	→	CCI	1.576	0.209	Young	0.272	0.070	3.875	***	Not-Significant
	→				Old	-0.153	0.062	-2.451	0.014	
	→	Loyalty	1.341	0.247	Young	0.012	0.068	0.182	0.855	Not-Significant
	→				Old	0.339	0.064	5.295	***	
	→	Satisfaction	11.305	0.001	Young	-0.511	0.085	-5.983	***	Significant
	→				Old	0.783	0.078	10.062	***	

Figure 1: Research model
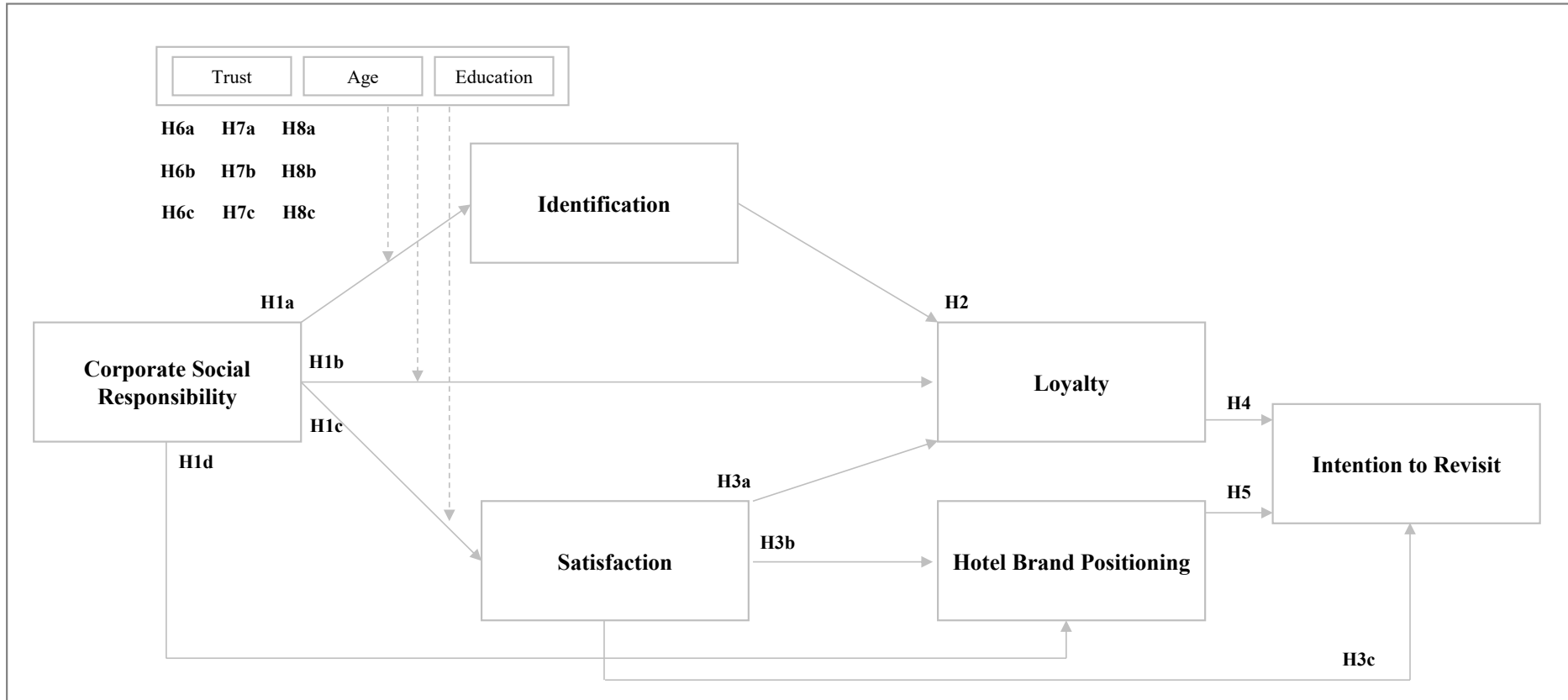
Figure 2: The result of moderation impacts

Chart 1 (Identification):
- Y-axis: Identification (1 to 5)
- X-axis: Low Corporate Social Responsibility, High Corporate Social Responsibility
- y = 0.36x + 2.57
- y = 0.16x + 2.65
- Moderator
- Legend: Low Trust, High Trust, Linear (Low Trust), Linear (High Trust)

Chart 2 (Loyalty):
- Y-axis: Loyalty (1 to 5)
- X-axis: Low Corporate Social Responsibility, High Corporate Social Responsibility
- y = 0.42x + 2.67
- y = 0.42x + 2.07
- Moderator
- Legend: Low Trust, High Trust, Linear (Low Trust), Linear (High Trust)

Chart 3 (Satisfaction):
- Y-axis: Satisfaction (1 to 5)
- X-axis: Low Corporate Social Responsibility, High Corporate Social Responsibility
- y = 0.28x + 3.18
- y = 0.48x + 1.68
- Moderator
- Legend: Low Trust, High Trust, Linear (Low Trust), Linear (High Trust)

Trust strengthens the positive relationship between CSR and Identification.

Trust strengthens the positive relationship between CSR and Loyalty.

Trust dampens the positive relationship between CSR and Satisfaction.