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# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PERFORMANCE IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES

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**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND FIRM PERFORMANCE IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY. THE MEDIATING ROLE OF GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES**

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This paper aims to analyze the relationship between CSR and firm performance, considering on the one hand the direct relationship, and on the other hand, the possible mediation in said relationship of some variables such as GHRM and environmental outcomes.

A variance-based structural equation modeling (Partial Least Squares) was applied to a sample of Spanish hotel firms. The results obtained show the existence of a direct and positive relationship between CSR and performance. In addition, we have found an indirect effect on the aforementioned relationship through the mediation of GHRM and environmental outcomes.

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## **1. Introduction**

The recognition of the direct relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and firm performance has garnered much interest among authors lately. Their findings (Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Mishra & Suar, 2010; Vogel, 2005) are rather inconclusive, though; while a positive association between CSR and firm performance constituted a dominant theme in numerous articles (Abu Bakar & Ameer, 2011; Oeyono, Samy, & Bampton, 2011; Orlitzky, Schmidt, & Rynes, 2003; Van Beurden & Gössling, 2008), others suggested either a negative correlation or simply that no such correlation exists (Aupperle, Carroll, & Hatfield, 1985; Lima et al., 2011). Scholars have recently started to examine CRS within the hospitality literature. A significant number of these investigations revolve around the direct effect of CRS on hotel performance (Inoue & Lee, 2011; Kang, Lee & Huh, 2010; Kim et al., 2017; Lee, Kim & Kim, 2018; Leonidou et al., 2013; Theodoulidis et al., 2017). However, their results are inconclusive too.

This positive, negative or neutral results obtained from analyzing the direct relationship between CSR and firm performance cannot be 100% reliable, since such a link may be affected by some other intervening factors neglected in many studies —as highlighted by several researchers (Galbreath & Shum, 2012; Griffin & Mahon, 1997; Rowley & Berman, 2000; Wood & Jones, 1995).

Therefore, the ‘CSR-firm performance’ relationship is arguably more complicated than what the results of many previous studies suggest; hence our decision to use this study as a means to broaden the scope of previous research works on the link between CSR and firm performance within the Spanish hotel sector. A new research question will be asked with this aim in mind: ‘Do green human resource management (GHRM) and

environmental outcomes (EOs) act as mediators in the relationship between CSR and hotel performance?’

The recent interest raised by employee-focused corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethical aspects of human resource management (HRM) has gone hand in hand with an increased focus on research and practice linking CSR and HRM (Brammer, Millington, & Rayton, 2007; Cooke & He, 2010; Gond, Igalens, Swaen, & El Akremi, 2011; Morgeson, Aguinis, Waldman, & Siegel, 2013). HRM significantly influences the way in which CSR is understood, developed and enacted; similarly, how corporations approach social responsibility has implications for the treatment of workers.

Furthermore, both CSR and HRM can be seen as relevant when it comes to understanding the assumptions about not only the corporation’s role but also the relationship between employers and workers. Thus, it should come as no surprise to see that calls are made to do further research on the connection between CSR and HRM (DeNisi, Wilson, & Biteman, 2014); after all, although research has certainly been paying more and more attention to the CSR-HRM nexus, a more comprehensive examination of the relationship between these two constructs is yet to be undertaken, especially regarding the potential link between GHRM and CSR. Such an endeavor seems to us highly relevant and necessary, because several of significant interfaces exist between GHRM and CSR that have been neither sufficiently nor systematically explored. This study starts from the consideration of CSR as an antecedent factor in the implementation of a green human resource management system, assuming that the latter can act as a mediating variable between CSR and performance.

Added to the above, recent studies (Melnik et al., 2003; Jabbour, Santos & Nagano, 2010; Taylor et al., 2012; Zibarras & Coan, 2015; Kim et al., 2019) recognize that GHRM promotes attitudinal and behavioral changes among employees which ultimately improve

the company's environmental outcomes. Likewise, several studies found a positive relationship between environmental outcomes and firm performance (Li and Ramathan, 2018; Journeault, 2016; Ambec and Lanoie, 2008; Russo and Fouts, 1997; Waddock and Graves, 1997). Nevertheless, other investigations described these relationships as non-significant (Al-Tuwaijri et al., 2004; Henri and Journeault, 2010; Wagner, 2015) or even negative (Qi et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2017; Vastola et al., 2017; Latan et al., 2018). For this reason, it is our intention to confirm whether a positive relationship exists between environmental outcomes and firm performance, additionally focusing on the extent to which the variables GHRM and environmental outcomes act as play a mediating role in the relationship between CSR and firm performance.

Our findings make several contributions to the CSR and GHRM domains. Regarding the former, this study not only makes it easier to overcome some of the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between CSR and firm performance but also enlarges CSR knowledge by means of a framework which helps to explain the possible association of CSR with firm performance through the inclusion of GHRM and EOs as mediating variables. CSR additionally appears as an antecedent factor in GRHM —i.e. GHRM supports CSR activities through green skills development, green motivation and green involvement— thus providing empirical evidence of the way in which these two variables are interconnected (Voegtlin and Greenwood, 2016). A traditional gap in the literature about the effects of GHRM implementation on environmental performance was filled by verifying that GHRM positively influences environmental outcomes (Kim et al., 2019). Finally, this study extends the literature through the examination of the direct connection between environmental outcomes and hotels' performance.

The knowledge owned by hotel firms' executives about the key role played by CSR in the direct and indirect promotion of firm performance through the improvement of

GHRM and EOs consequently improves thanks to this research. It is undoubtedly important for hotel organizations to carry out pertinent GHRM, as it helps employees to feel proud of their companies' role in environmental protection. This not only reinforces these employees' commitment to their organizations but also allows the latter to obtain successful environmental outcomes. In other words, if hotels want to enhance environmental performance, they should implement environmental training and educational programs focused on encouraging their employees to take pride in belonging to a green hotel and to increase their level of commitment, thereby enabling employees to engage in eco-friendly behaviors, it all additionally supported by a CSR linked to stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Barnett, 2007).

This research work is structured as follows. An initial literature review of the constructs under study gives way to a model developed on the basis of the proposed hypotheses. A description of the methodology used and the resulting findings follows. The paper closes with the conclusions and discussion section.

## **2. Literature review and research hypotheses**

### **2.1. CSR and performance**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) can be defined as context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance (Aguinis, 2011; Rupp, 2011; Aguinis & Gavlas, 2012).

From a theoretical perspective, the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1999) sets the framework for the CSR-performance relationship; interest groups claim company resources, and in so doing implicitly require proper company behavior, such as consideration for the environment and concern for fair and just labor relations. A company's failure to act in a socially responsible way will most probably entail significant



costs and a financial burden which is bound to reduce profits, making the company less socially aware. Conversely, if companies that adopt socially responsible policies turn out to be more profitable, then socially responsible investments will provide an incentive for businesses to increase investments in CSR programs (Pava, 2008; Lin & Sambasivan, 2019).

As for the literature on the benefits and costs of CSR, many empirical studies have tested the nature of the CSR-performance relationship. The results were mixed, though. Some found a positive impact of CRS on firm performance (Bird et al., 2007; Griffin & Mahon, 1997; Orlitzky et al., 2003) while others checked that higher firm performances lead firms to devote more resources to CRS (Waddock & Graves, 1997). In turn, several studies detected no significant relationships (Hillman & Keim, 2001) or even a negative relationship between CSR and performance (Lima et al., 2011). By contrast, Trumpp & Guenther (2017) found a U-shaped CSR-CFP relationship, suggesting a “too-little-of-a-good-thing” effect (the initial costs related to CSR exceed its benefits).

Hospitality scholars have also shown interest in CSR issues, including how its adoption influences hotel performance (Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García, & Marchante-Lara, 2014; de Grosbois, 2012; Inoue & Lee, 2011; Kang, Lee, & Huh, 2010; Levy & Park, 2011; Van Beurden & Gössling, 2008; Youn, Hua, & Lee, 2015). Opinions are divided: whereas some conclude that practicing CSR enhances performance (Garay & Font, 2012; Inoue & Lee, 2011; Lee & Heo, 2009; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Rodríguez & Cruz, 2007; Rhou, Singal & Koh, 2016; Ghaderi et al., 2019), others contend that no discernible relationship exists or that expenditure on CSR can prove financially harmful (Gil, Jiménez, & Lorente, 2001; Manaktola & Jauhari, 2007). In turn, according to Singal (2014), the relationship between CSR and performance can be bi-directional, supporting

both the instrumental theory (better CSR leads to better financial performance) and the slack resources theory (better financial performance leads to better CSR).

To our knowledge, the relatively small number of CSR studies specifically focused on the hospitality industry (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018) is complemented by the inconclusiveness which characterizes the research about the relationship between CSR and hotel performance. This leads us to pose the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 1: Corporate social responsibility positively affects hotel performance.**

Some research emphasizes that many studies according to which CSR and performance are related focus on analyzing the direct relationship between both variables. Instead, some scholars (Alafi & Hasonah, 2012; Galbreath & Shum, 2012; Saeidi et al., 2015) claim that testing the direct relationship between CSR and firm performance only serves to obscure many influential factors in this relationship and that the final findings will be unreliable anyway. Therefore, those influential omitted and ignored variables should be considered and empirically examined in order to obtain reliable results. This study incorporates two interconnected variables —GHRM and environmental outcomes— thanks to which a reliable result can be obtained (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

## 2.2. CSR and green human resource management

Employees stand out as the most strategic of stakeholders, and their involvement in CSR initiatives significantly impacts on the organization's bottom line. It is suggested that employees are central CSR stakeholders (Wood & Jones 1995) and also that individuals are actually responsible for the execution of CSR initiatives, bearing most of its consequences (Aguinis & Glavas 2012). Thus, organizations cannot achieve their goals via rules and control measures alone—they also require their employees' acceptance and support of those goals (Mossholder et al. 2011).

It is through employees' actions and decision-making that many CSR strategies come to life. Human resource professionals stand in a unique position to nurture and foster CSR performance within their organizations (Inyang, Awa & Enuoh, 2011).

In our view, a comprehensive exploration of the CSR-HRM relationship constitutes a necessary endeavor, as the research attention on the link between CSR and HRM has been largely ad hoc and disjointed (Brammer, 2011). Voegtlin & Greenwood (2016) provide a theoretical review of the research aimed to connect CSR and HRM.

Studies focused on analyzing how CSR contributes to HR practices include those by Cooke & He 2010; Gully et al., 2013; Rupp et al., 2013; Shen & Jiuhua Zhu, 2011; Cooke & He, 2010; and Pless et al., 2012. In this sense, the interpretation of CSR as responsible HRM has surfaced in several studies (McCabe, 2000), suggesting that responsible HRM can be achieved through CSR. A topic currently seems to exist which arouses the interest of researchers, namely: the relationship between Green human resource management (GHRM) and CSR (Shah Ridwan Chowdhury & Asaduzzaman, 2017).

This work has as its purpose to relate green human resource management to CSR and its link with environmental and financial performance, thus considering both the instrumental CSR-GHRM approach (how CSR and HRM aspects are connected and how they can contribute to performance) and the social integrative CSR-GHRM approach (according to which CSR affects workers' commitment and motivation). The main argument is that GHRM owns the potential to offer a promising managerial framework that can support organizational efforts when translating CSR strategies into practical managerial actions and outcomes.

According to our assumption: (a) GHRM comprises a set of management practices fully embedded in a social, political, and market context where a wide variety of stakeholders make specific claims to companies, and (b) at an organizational level, consistency

between green HRM and that context leads to higher performance. More specifically, companies can use GHRM as a way to respond to stakeholders' pressures on environmental issues and, accordingly, to develop the firm's environmental outcomes. This assumption fits in with a number of recent theoretical (Ferrary, 2009; Delbridge, Hauptmeier, & Sengupta, 2011; Jackson, Schuler, & Jiang, 2014) and empirical contributions (e.g. Boon, Paauwe, Boselie, & Hartog, 2009; Guerci & Shani, 2013) which have broadened the scope of HRM research, moving beyond organizational boundaries to explore external pressures that shape the HRM system of a firm. In the specific field of GHRM, Jackson & Seo (2010) called for empirical HRM studies to understand the relationship between stakeholders' pressures and HRM practices. Our study answers that call employing the stakeholder theory (implicit in the CSR construct).

Wagner (2013) refers to GHRM as 'a subset of sustainable human resource management where the latter also comprises corporate social responsibility issues.' Following the GHRM philosophy, managers play a critical role when it comes to making their organization more socially and environmentally responsible by applying the concept of CSR in every human resource policy (Alonso-Almeida et al., 2015). This study meets the need for more research on CSR which can add other management concepts such as GHRM (Al Kerdawy, 2018).

Recent studies have shown a shortage in human resources' environmental orientation which represents a major obstacle to a successful CSR implementation (Yeh et al., 2014; Odriozola et al., 2015; Sampson & Ellis, 2015; Stuebs & Sun, 2015; Voegtlin & Greenwood, 2016). Therefore, organizations cannot fully attain the desired outcomes of their CSR practices without encouraging green human resource initiatives (Roeck & Delobbe, 2012; Manroop, 2015; Al Kerdawy, 2018).

As explained above, GHRM is defined as a set of HRM practices adopted to achieve organizational green goals which form part of CSR initiatives (Jackson & Seo, 2010). GHRM practices may include considering a candidate's green values during the recruitment and selection process, conducting green awareness and skills training, considering an employee's green behavior when offering promotions and compensation, and implementing performance appraisals (Jackson & Seo, 2010; Renwick et al., 2013). GHRM helps to develop employees' green skills and awareness, and motivates them to participate in an important aspect of CSR as are organizational green initiatives and activities.

By adopting GHRM practices, the organization sends a clear message to its employees: it is committed to the social green cause beyond any financial benefits. According to Renwick et al. (2013), three GHRM practice components —subsequently taken on and applied by other scholars— may be used: a) developing green abilities (recruitment, selection, training, and development); b) motivating green employees (performance management/appraisal; pay and reward system); and c) providing green opportunities (employee involvement and supportive climate/culture) (Moraes et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2018).

An attempt will be made in this research to disaggregate those three components into the following GHRM practices: recruitment and selection, training, performance management, rewarding, and involvement that aim to build green values as well as knowledge and skills related to green activities (Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2012; Renwick, Redman, & Maguire, 2013; Tang, Chen, Jiang, Paillé, & Jia, 2018). Green recruitment and selection involve recruiting and selecting candidates with green awareness through tests meant to ensure that employees have a positive attitude towards environmental issues complemented by questions related to environmental beliefs, values, and

knowledge (Renwick et al., 2013; Tang et al., 2018). Green training programs are designed to enhance not only employees' awareness of, knowledge of, and skills in green activities but also a climate that spurs all employees to become involved in green initiatives (Fernández et al., 2003). Green training should focus on changing attitudes and emotional involvement towards green goals (Bissing-Olson, Iyer, Fielding, & Zacher, 2013; Zibarras & Coan, 2015). Green integrated training not only includes green comprehensive programs but also links them to performance management systems—an approach which can help to create a green climate (Renwick et al., 2013; Tang et al., 2018). Green performance management involves assessing employees' performance in the green management process (Jabbour & Santos, 2008) as well as delivering feedback on their green performance (Zibarras & Coan, 2015). In line with green performance management, non-financial rewards should be offered alongside financial incentives in the form of green travel benefits, green tax, and green recognition (Tang et al., 2018). Finally, employees should be given opportunities to participate in environmental management via green involvement, including the articulation of a clear green vision, building a green learning climate and various communication channels, offering green activities, and encouraging green involvement as a whole (Tang et al., 2018; Luu, 2019). All of the above leads us to establish the following research hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 2: CSR positively relates to GHRM.**

On the other hand, Jackson and Seo (2010) argue that performance is more likely to accrue in firms which enhance ability and motivation among their employees and provide them with the opportunity to help the firm in achieving a shared vision of environmental sustainability—thereby enabling that firm to grasp more fully the revenue raising and better cost management opportunities that proactive environmental management is likely to generate. In this regard, some research has shown that a GHRM can significantly

contribute to improve the organization's financial performance. (Renwick et al., 2013; O'Donohue & Torugsa, 2016). Such findings lead us to ask ourselves whether GHRM acts as a mediating variable in the CSR-performance relationship by putting forward our next hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 3: Green human resource management positively mediates between CSR and hotel performance.**

### 2.3. Green human resource management and environmental outcomes

As highlighted above, a recent stream of study has focused on the role played by human resource management practices aimed at developing firm environmental outcomes, providing empirical support to the idea that specific GHRM practices positively correlate with environmental outcomes. A number of studies, such as those authored by Jabbour & Santos (2008) and Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano (2010), along with papers published in the special issue of *Human Resource Management* (Vol. 51, No. 6, 2012), have examined the extent to which HRM practices contribute to organizations' environmental outcomes.

Environmental outcomes are described as the commitment assumed by firms to protect the environment and to demonstrate measurable operational parameters lying within the prescribed limits of environmental care (Paillé, Chen, Boiral, & Jin, 2014). The effects of GHRM practices on corporate environmental outcomes had already been explored in previous studies (Masri & Jaaron, 2017; Kim et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019), with a number of research works investigating issues such as: the links between GHRM practices and green supply chain management (Jabbour et al., 2017; Nejati et al., 2017); individual green behavior (Pinzone et al., 2016; 2019; Chaudhary, 2019; Pham et al., 2019b); and employees' green engagement (Pham et al., 2019c). Quantitative studies have been complemented by literature reviews on GHRM (e.g. Renwick et al., 2013; Ren et al., 2018).

Accordingly, GHRM can arise as an important dimension when it comes to improving environmental outcomes (Ren et al., 2018). This suggests the convenience of explaining the extent to which some GHRM practices impact on environmental outcomes. **Green training** provides employees with the related knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Jabbour et al., 2010) which can help them to identify environmental issues and take suitable actions at the workplace for the purpose of improving their green performance (Vidal-Salazar et al., 2012). Similarly, evaluating **employees' green performance** aligns behaviors, ensures responsibility, and places the emphasis on environmental objectives (Govindarajulu & Daily, 2004), which in turn improves companies' environmental outcomes (Guerci et al., 2016). Organizations focused on **the involvement of employees** generate opportunities for the latter to apply their knowledge and abilities in green activities, to undertake green initiatives at work (Pinzone et al., 2016), and to give innovative solutions as far as waste reduction and resource usage efficiency improvement are concerned (Florida & Davison, 2001), which in turn boosts the organization's environmental outcomes.

Specifically concerning the hotel industry, our review also identified several research studies according to which GHRM adoption improves environmental outcomes (Siyambalapitiya, Zhang & Liu, 2018; Kim et al., 2019; Pham et al. 2019a; 2019b; 2019c), which encourages us to formulate the next hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 4: Green human resource management has a positive influence on hotel environmental outcomes.**

#### 2.4. Environmental outcomes and performance

Ever since Porter & Linde (1995) and Hart (1995) proposed hypotheses suggesting the use of environmental management to achieve competitive advantage, support for such proposals has both increased and been challenged. For instance, many studies have



confirmed that an increase in environmental outcomes will bring about an enhanced performance, which suggests a positive correlation between these two variables (Beurden & Gossling, 2008; Dixon-Fowler et al., 2013; Henri et al., 2017; Journeault, 2016). More precisely, companies concerned with environmental outcomes will achieve greater legitimacy levels and succeed in meeting stakeholders' expectations (Pondeville et al., 2013; Sundin & Brown, 2017), thereby fostering a positive corporate image, tax reduction and environmental costs (Rodrigue et al., 2013).

However, this debate has still not afforded a conclusive result as to whether or not improvements in environmental outcomes will be followed by a corresponding rise in financial performance (Beurden & Gossling, 2008; Dixon-Fowler et al., 2013; Grewatsch & Kleindienst, 2017). On the one hand, achieving better environmental outcomes involves additional costs, such as risk management or extra funding for capital, operations and energy—which in turn causes a lower performance. On the other hand, improved environmental outcomes can lead to better market access and product differentiation, thus improving performance (Ambec & Lanoie, 2008; Lankoski, 2008; Stanwick & Stanwick, 1998).

Despite the extensive research devoted to examine the link between environmental outcomes and performance, the discussion remains unclear (Grewatsch & Kleindienst, 2015; Trumpp & Guenther, 2017; Ullmann, 1985). Depending on the different studies, relationships are positive (Journeault, 2016; Russo & Fouts, 1997; Waddock & Graves, 1997), non-significant (Al-Tuwaijri et al., 2004; Henri & Journeault, 2010; Wagner, 2015) or negative (Qi et al., 2014; Tan et al., 2017; Vastola et al., 2017). In turn, Hang, Geyer-Klingenberg & Rathgeber (2018) conclude that the causality between environmental outcomes and performance depends on the time horizon (increasing

environmental outcomes has no short-term effect on a firm's performance, unlike what happens in the long term).

The results obtained so far are inconclusive, and no studies seem to have analyzed the relationship between environmental outcomes and performance in the hotel sector; hence our decision to state the following hypothesis.

**Hypothesis 5: Environmental outcomes positively affect hotel performance.**

Some scholars (Alafi & Hasonah, 2012; Galbreath & Shum, 2012; Griffin & Mahon, 1997; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Rowley & Berman, 2000; Wood & Jones, 1995) questioned the applied approach mostly followed by studies about the direct relationship between CSR and firm performance. In their opinion, the positive, negative or neutral results obtained by examining the direct relationship between CSR and firm performance cannot be 100% reliable, since this link may be affected by some other intervening factors which many studies have omitted—as highlighted in the introduction to this paper. This justifies our proposal: two variables such as GHRM and environmental outcomes may act as mediators between both constructs. In fact, a number of previous studies already suggested the possibility for environmental outcomes to serve as a mediating variable between CSR and firm performance in different industries (Pullman et al., 2009; Zhu et al., 2012; Ağan et al., 2016; Wang & Sarkis, 2017).

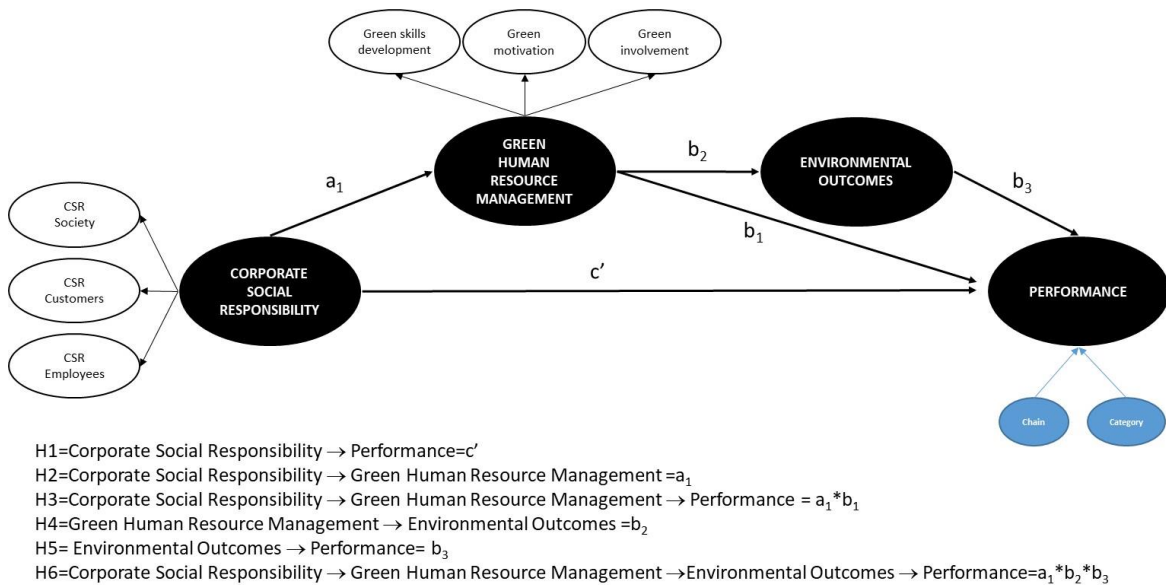
Furthermore, Jackson & Seo (2010) argue that positive financial outcomes are more likely to accrue in firms which enhance the ability and motivation of employees and thus give them the opportunity to help the firm in achieving a shared vision of environmental sustainability. In other words, implementing a green human resource management enables an organization to grasp more fully the revenue raising and better cost management opportunities that can derive from proactive environmental management (O'Donohue & Torugsa, 2016).

The considerations above lead us to put forward the last hypothesis, according to which a double mediation of the GHRM and environmental outcomes variables takes place in the CSR-performance relationship.

**Hypothesis 6: Green human resource management and environmental outcomes positively mediate between CSR and hotel performance.**

Figure 1 shows the theoretical model proposed along with the hypotheses to be tested.

Figure 1. Theoretical model and hypotheses



### 3. Research method

#### 3.1. Sample and data collection

Our sample comprises one hundred and twenty Spanish hotels. Several reasons justify our decision to focus research on this particular industry. Firstly, only few investigations have so far revolved around the study of CSR and its influence on the performance of Spanish hotels (Serra-Cantallops et al., 2018). Secondly, because aspects related to human resources (GHRM) are addressed in conjunction with CSR, the highly labor-intensive hotel industry seems interesting in this regard. And thirdly, CSR activities

can serve to distinguish a firm from its competitors within an industry where strong competition characteristically prevail.

Data collection took place through an online survey developed between January and December 2018. The measurement of variables and collected data was temporarily separated at two different points in time seeking to avoid potential problems associated with single-informant and common-method biases.

The initial stage consisted in compiling the answers given by the human resource managers of hotels about the variables “green human resource management” and “environmental outcomes.” Six months later, the hotel managers received a questionnaire referred to another two variables, namely: “performance” and “CSR.” After three reminder rounds, the hotel managers and human resource managers of 120 out of 1,000 accommodation establishments that shaped the population under study had sent us the complete set of responses. Such a sample size can be considered adequate since, according to Reinartz et al. (2009), this number of observations would suffice to reach acceptable levels of statistical power using the PLS technique.

An examination of the differences between respondents and non-respondents followed seeking to test for non-response bias. The *t*-Test revealed no significant differences based on control variables (size and category) either. A comparison was also drawn between early and late respondents in terms of demographics and model variables. The absence of differences resulting from these comparisons ( $p < 0.05$ ) provided clear evidence that non-response bias was not a problem.

### 3.2. Measures and scales

The scales used to measure each variable in our study came from prior studies and were pre-tested with 15 managers from the target respondents to ensure a proper understanding of the specific intent behind each question.

The utilization of reflective measures enabled us to operationalize the key constructs in this study. A decision was made to adopt multi-item scales strongly consolidated in the literature for construct operationalization purposes; our item measurements range on a scale from 1 (I strongly disagree) to 7 (I strongly agree). Appendix 1 provides a full list of the scales utilized and all the associated items.

*Corporate Social Responsibility.* The scales developed by Turker (2009), Bai & Chang (2015), Youn, Lee & Lee (2018) and Su & Swanson (2019) were adapted to measure corporate social responsibility towards three primary stakeholders: employees; customers; and society (Aguinis & Gavlas, 2012). The CSR variable thus appears as a second-order reflective construct made up of three first-order reflective constructs, namely: CSR Society; CSR Customers; and CSR Employees.

*Green Human Resource Management.* This study presents GHRM as comprising three components, based on the works of Renwich et al. (2013), Jabbour (2015), Pinzone et al. (2016), Masri & Jaaron (2017), Tang et al. (2018) and Pham et al (2019a, b,c). This variable was regarded as a second-order construct shaped by three first-order reflective constructs, more specifically: Green skills development (which includes recruitment, selection, training, and development practices); green motivation (which comprises performance management appraisal and reward system practices); and green involvement (which relates to the employee involvement and supportive culture).

*Environmental Outcomes.* This variable was measured through improvements in the use of the strength parameters developed by Kinder, Lydenberg, and Domini (KLD) to evaluate the full spectrum of a firm's environmental performance, thus making it possible to consider different environmental impacts at the same time (Guerci et al., 2016; Walls et al., 2012; Longoni, Luzzini & Guerci, 2018). This variable was seen as a first-order reflective construct in our model.

*Performance.* Perception measures served to capture organizational performance in this study. More precisely, eight items were used to try and capture, on the one hand, general performance criteria (market share growth, brand recognition, the company's market image, sales growth); and, on the other hand, performance variables more in line with hotel sector companies (income per room, average occupancy, customers' level of satisfaction and employees' satisfaction) (Úbeda et al., 2018; Longoni, Luzzini & Guerci, 2018).

*Control variables.* Our research work additionally monitored possible alternative explanations for the relationships set forth in the theoretical model through the inclusion of the relevant control variables, i.e. hotel size and hotel category.

The PLS-PM method was chosen to analyze the data under examination. As seen in Table 1, the results reveal a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of  $>0.70$ , an average variance extracted (AVE) of  $>0.50$  and a  $\rho_A$  of  $>0.70$ , along with a composite reliability  $>0.70$  for each variable. All of this suggests a fit with the rule of thumb assessment of measurement models recommended in the relevant literature (Hair et al., 2017), meaning that all construct items in this model are reliable and valid. In addition to assessing convergent validity, the discriminant validity or divergent validity of all latent variables used within the model were tested using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio — a new procedure in the Partial Least Squares-Path Modeling (PLS-PM) method to test discriminant validity which outplays Fornell-Larcker's criterion according to Henseler et al. (2015). Table 2 reveals an HTMT value below 0.90, which satisfies the recommended rule of thumb (Hair et al., 2017); confirmation is likewise obtained for discriminant validity following Fornell-Larcker's criterion.

Table 1. Summary of measurement models

	Cronbach's $\alpha$	rho_A	Composite reliability	AVE
<b>CSR</b>	<b>0.761</b>	<b>0.798</b>	<b>0.858</b>	<b>0.669</b>
<b>GHRM</b>	<b>0.908</b>	<b>0.926</b>	<b>0.942</b>	<b>0.844</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>0.874</b>	<b>0.889</b>	<b>0.909</b>	<b>0.669</b>
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>0.944</b>	<b>0.954</b>	<b>0.952</b>	<b>0.689</b>

Table 2. Correlations and discriminant validity results

<b>Fornell-Larcker's criterion</b>				
	<b>CSR</b>	<b>GHRM</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE</b>
<b>CSR</b>	<b>0.447</b>			
<b>GHRM</b>	0.457	<b>0.474</b>		
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</b>	0.439	0.444	<b>0.447</b>	
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	0.404	0.336	0.446	<b>0.474</b>
<b>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)</b>				
	<b>CSR</b>	<b>GHRM</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE</b>
<b>CSR</b>				
<b>GHRM</b>	0.783			
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</b>	0.566	0.485		
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	0.472	0.343	0.466	

#### 4. Results

After confirming that the indicators of all variables were reliable and valid in the first step, the time came to assess the results of our structural model and for hypothesis testing. Since PLS-PM algorithms use the iteration method, following multiple regression series, the path coefficient interpretation in PLS-PM is equal to the standardization of regression coefficients. Similarly, r-square, the variance inflation factor (VIF), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ) (Hair et al., 2017), as well as PLS, were used for algorithm selection, the SmartPLS 3 program being applied for bootstrapping.

Structural model collinearity was tested prior to carrying out a more in-depth analysis of the results obtained during the second step. The same measure in multiple regression was

utilized to assess collinearity, with the recommended VIF values  $< 3.3$  or  $< 5$  remaining acceptable for all variable predictors in the model (Hair et al., 2017). The results of our analysis (see Table 3) showed that collinearity did not interfere with the results. Our structural model was additionally evaluated by looking at the determination coefficient ( $R^2$ ), and  $Q^2$ , insofar as that coefficient measures the predictive power of our model, and the latter represents the amount of variance in the endogenous variable that can be explained by all exogenous variables. Analyzing the results in Table 3 left us with  $R^2$  values of 0.493 for GHRM, 0.197 for environmental outcomes, and 0.285 for performance.

$Q^2$  was also assessed to predict  $R^2$  accuracy —where a  $Q^2$  value above 0 indicates that the model has predictive power. Based on our analysis results,  $Q^2 > 0$ , which confirms the predictive relevance of our model. As for the goodness of fit indices produced by the model through standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR), the value of  $0.082 < 1.0$  obtained means that no discrepancy exists between an implied model and the observed correlation.

Table 3. Structural model results

Constructs	$R^2$	$Q^2$	VIF	SRMR
<b>CSR</b>	-	-	2.171	-
<b>GHRM</b>	0.493	0.389	2.580	-
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES</b>	0.197	0.116	1.346	-
<b>PERFORMANCE</b>	0.285	0.150	-	0.082

#### 4.1. Hypothesis testing

Direct hypothesis testing preceded that of mediation effects. Hypothesis testing was performed through a bootstrapping process, with a resample amount of 5,000, and using a 95% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI). Table 4 shows the results of that analysis.



As shown in table 4, the effect of CSR on performance with a coefficient value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.302 is significant at  $p=0.002$ , which provides support both for Hypothesis 1 and for the relevant theory proposed by Youn, Hua & Lee (2015), Benavides-Velasco, Quintana-García & Marchante-Lara (2014). The CSR→GHRM relationship was likewise found to be positively significant, with a coefficient value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.702 ( $p=0.000$ ), meaning that Hypothesis 2 is also confirmed—as previous studies had already suggested (Milliman, 2013; Manroop, 2015; Al Kerdawy, 2018). As regards the GRHM → environmental outcomes effect, it turns out to be significant as well ( $\beta=0.444$ ,  $p=0.000$ ), which leads us to accept Hypothesis 4, thus corroborating the findings of previous research studies authored by Siyambalapitiya, Zhang & Liu (2018) or Pham et al. (2019a; 2019b; 2019c) among others. Finally, the environmental outcomes→ performance effect with a coefficient value ( $\beta$ ) of 0.338 ( $p=0.000$ ) evidences that Hypothesis 5 is confirmed too, a result which matches those previously obtained by scholars such as Journeault (2016) and Henri et al. (2017).

Table 4. Relationships between the direct effects of variables

Structural path	Coef ( $\beta$ )	S.D.	p-Values	95% CI	Conclusion
<b>CSR→PERFORMANCE</b>	0.302	0.098	0.002*	[0.136-0.684]*	H1 supported
<b>CSR→GRHM</b>	0.702	0.044	0.000**	[0.680-0.822]**	H2 supported
<b>GRHM → E. OUTCOMES</b>	0.444	0.075	0.000**	[0.400-0.642]**	H4 supported
<b>E. OUTCOMES → PERFORMANCE</b>	0.338	0.090	0.000**	[0.291-0.588]**	H5 supported

Note: \*\*, \* statistically significant at 1 percent and 5 percent levels respectively.

#### 4.2. The mediation analysis

The final stage of our analysis revolves around the mediating effects of the variables GHRM and environmental outcomes in the relationship between CSR and hotel performance and has as its aim to test Hypotheses 3 and 6. The results derived from the mediation analyses can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of the mediating effect test

Total effect of Performance		Direct effect of CSR on PERFORMANCE		Indirect effect of CSR on PERFORMANCE				
Coef ( $\beta$ )	T value		Coef ( $\beta$ )	T value	Point estimate	Percentile <i>bootstrap</i> 95% + Bias confidence interval		
						Inferior	Superior	
<b>0.302**</b>	5.240	<b>H1=c'</b>	<b>0.271</b>	<b>3.089</b>	Total	<b>0.271**</b>	0.136	0.687
					<b>H3= a<sub>1</sub>*b<sub>1</sub></b>	<b>-0.075<sup>ns</sup></b>	-0.256	0.121
					<b>H6= a<sub>1</sub>*b<sub>2</sub>*b<sub>3</sub></b>	<b>0.106**</b>	0.059	0.175

Note: \*\* statistically significant at 1 percent level; <sup>ns</sup> not significant

The mediation exerted by the variable GHRM in the CSR-performance relationship with  $\beta=-0.075$  is not significant, since the zero value appears in the confidence interval —i.e. Hypothesis 3 cannot be accepted. Instead, the sequential mediation of GHRM and environmental outcomes in the relationship between CSR and performance gives us a result of  $\beta=0.106$  with  $p=0.001$ , which allows us to accept Hypothesis 6 (referred to sequential mediation).

#### 5. Conclusions and discussion

Despite having extensively examined the CSR-performance relationship, no clear relationship can be established due to the presence of mediators that may influence the outcome (Alafi & Hasonah, 2012; Galbreath & Shum, 2012; Saeidi et al., 2015). Our view of this relationship incorporates two mediating variables —GHRM and environmental outcomes.

The results of this study reveal the existence of a direct and positive relationship between CSR and performance within the context of three-, four- and five-star hotels in Spain. The

current findings are aligned with analyses according to which CSR does increase hotel profits and value (Bird et al., 2007; Griffin & Mahon, 1997; Garay & Font, 2012; Inoue & Lee, 2011; Lee & Heo, 2009; Margolis & Walsh, 2003; Rodríguez & Cruz, 2007; Rhou, Singal & Koh, 2016; Orlitzky, Schmidt & Rynes, 2003; Ghaderi et al., 2019).

Our findings are highlighted and discussed with respect to the main research question as follows. The empirical evidence obtained allows us to state that the partial mediation exerted by the variables variables GRHM (Renwick et al., 2013; O'Donohue & Torugsa, 2016) and environmental outcomes (Pullman et al., 2009; Zhu et al., 2012; Ağan et al., 2016; Wang & Sarkis, 2017) has an indirect effect on the relationship between CSR and hotel performance.

This study additionally confirms that CSR is an antecedent factor in GHRM practice implementation; this result matches those of some research works which analyze how CSR contributes to human resource practices (Cooke & He, 2010; Gully et al., 2013; Rupp et al., 2013). Nevertheless, our work pioneers the consideration of the hitherto-neglected link between CSR and GHRM, thus answering the call to extend CSR research into the HRM domain (Morgenson et al., 2013; Al Kerdawy, 2018), since GHRM is a newly-adopted concept which has so far received limited empirical research attention as far as CSR is concerned.

Another of our findings enables us to verify the positive influence of GHRM on environmental outcomes. This study consequently extends the GHRM literature by examining the effect caused by GHRM on environmental performance; in keeping with a number of previous studies (Paillé et al., 2013; Masri and Jaaron, 2017; Kim et al., 2019), our findings confirm GHRM implementation effectiveness. Within the green context, no scholar has yet demonstrated the interactive effects of GHRM practices on

environmental outcomes; and only very few researchers have investigated the application of GHRM practices in hotel industry (Pham et al., 2019a, b, c).

It follows from the results obtained that environmental outcomes positively influence the performance achieved by the Spanish hotels included in our sample. This supports the existing research in multiple industries that refer to positive links between environmental outcomes and firm performance (Aragón-Correa et al., 2008; Dixon-Fowler et al., 2013; Hang, Geyer-Klingeberg & Rathgeber, 2018).

Finally, in relation to Hypothesis 3, it was impossible for us to confirm the role of GHRM as a mediating variable in the relationship between CSR and hotel performance, when other studies do confirm the positive connection between GHRM and firm performance (Renwick et al., 2013; O'Donohue & Torugsa, 2016). Nonetheless, it can be inferred from the analyses performed not only that GHRM positively and significantly influences environmental outcomes but also that the mediation of these two variables (GHRM and environmental outcomes) in the CSR-performance relationship is positive and significant too, as explained above; hence why the effects of GHRM adoption essentially materialize in environmental outcomes, which in turn lead to an improved performance.

The findings from this study make several contributions to the CSR and GHRM domains. Regarding **CSR literature**, it helps to overcome some of the ambiguity surrounding the relationship between CSR and firm performance, and extends CSR knowledge by providing a framework which makes it easier to explain how CSR might be linked to firm performance with the inclusion of GHRM and environmental outcomes as mediating variables. Furthermore, CSR is shown as an antecedent factor in GRHM—or expressed differently, GHRM supports CSR activities through green skills development, green motivation, and green involvement—providing empirical evidence of the way in which

both variables are connected (Voegtlin and Greenwood, 2016). The positive effect of GHRM on environmental outcomes was verified as well, covering a traditional gap in the literature dedicated to examining the impact of GHRM implementation on environmental performance (Kim et al., 2019). Finally, our research work also contributes to the current research because it further extends the GHRM literature research stream by seeking empirical evidence for the relationship between GHRM and environmental outcomes in the Spanish hospitality industry. This is important, since the aforesaid research stream has tended to focus on manufacturing industries (Paillé & Raineri, 2015) or service industries other than hospitality (Zientara & Zamojska, 2018).

From a practical point of view, the findings enhance the knowledge of hotel firms' executives about the important role that CSR plays in directly and indirectly promoting firm performance through improved GHRM and environmental outcomes. Therefore, it becomes essential for hotel organizations to carry out pertinent GHRM as it helps employees to feel proud of their firms' role in environmental protection. This not only reinforces these employees' commitment to their organizations but also allows the latter to obtain successful environmental outcomes. In other words, if hotels want to enhance environmental performance, they should implement environmental training and educational programs focused on encouraging their employees to take pride in belonging to a green hotel and to increase their level of commitment, thereby enabling employees to engage in eco-friendly behaviors, it all additionally supported by a CSR linked to stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984; Barnett, 2007).

## 6. References

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## Appendix 1. Measurement of Variables

### **CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY** (1=I totally disagree; 7=I totally agree)

#### **CSR towards society**

Our hotel implements special programs to minimize its negative impact on the natural environment.  
Our hotel participates in activities aimed to protect and improve natural environment quality.  
Our hotel targets sustainable growth which considers future generations.  
Our hotel emphasizes the importance of its social responsibilities before society.

#### **CSR towards customers**

Our hotel provides full and accurate information to our customers.  
Our hotel respects consumers' rights beyond legal requirements.  
Customer satisfaction is a priority for our hotel.

#### **CSR towards employees**

Our hotel supports employees who want to acquire additional training.  
Our hotel policies encourage employees to develop their skills and careers.  
Our hotel implements flexible policies to provide a good work & life balance for its employees.  
The management of our hotel is primarily concerned with employees' needs and wants.

### **GREEN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT** (1=I totally disagree; 7=I totally agree)

#### **Green Skills Development**

We use green employer branding to attract green employees.  
Our hotel recruits employees who have a green awareness.  
We develop training programs in environment management to increase employees' environmental awareness, skills and expertise.  
We have green knowledge management (linking environmental education and knowledge to behaviors with the aim of developing preventative solutions).

#### **Green Motivation**

Our hotel sets green targets, goals, and responsibilities for managers and employees.  
In our hotel, managers are set objectives on achieving green outcomes included in appraisals  
We make green benefits (transport/travel) available rather than giving out pre-paid cards to purchase green products.  
Our hotel has recognition-based rewards in environment management for staff (public recognition, awards, paid vacations, time off, gift certificates)

#### **Green Involvement**

Our hotel has a clear developmental vision to guide employees' actions in environmental management.  
A number of formal or informal communication channels serve to spread green culture in our hotel.  
We offer practical activities for employees to participate in environment management, such as newsletters, suggestion schemes, problem-solving groups, low-carbon champions and green action teams.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES.** The actions developed in our hotel to look after the environment have had an impact on: (1=I totally disagree; 7=I totally agree)

Reduction of total direct and indirect toxic emissions  
Increased volume of recycled materials  
Increased renewable energy consumption rate  
Increased number of eco-friendly products/services developed  
Reduction of total direct and indirect energy consumption

### **PERFORMANCE** (1=I totally disagree; 7=I totally agree)

The growth in our firm's market share relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
Our firm's brand recognition relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
Our firm's image relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
The average growth in our firm's sales relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
Our hotel's average occupancy rate relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
Customers' satisfaction level relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
Employees' satisfaction level relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...  
Revenues per room in our hotel relative to competitors during the last three years has been ...





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