



## Corporate Responsibility under the ECSI model: An application in the hotel sector



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### ABSTRACT

This article deals with the study of Corporate Responsibility (CR) under the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI). The methodology of this empirical study, conducted among 629 customers staying at hotels in the city of Seville, is based on structural equation modeling (PLS). The results obtained demonstrate the applicability of the European model to the hotel sector, although not all the relationships from the original model have been proven. The main contributions are derived from a better understanding of the model's components, a variable not studied before having been incorporated: the importance of Corporate Responsibility (CR). Moreover, it means to contribute to the field of research on CR as, despite the growing interest in the subject, the effects of this construct are still poorly understood.

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### 1. Introduction

All organizations are faced with the need to appropriately respond to the expectations of their stakeholders. These expectations translate increasingly more into the consideration of social criteria in decision making, concern about environmental deterioration, transparency in business activities and a preference for buying products which contribute to helping groups in need. Guided by this social trend, organizations are incorporating diverse social practices to attract and retain customers. Hence, a dynamic oriented toward fostering Corporate Responsibility (CR) is being generated as one of the critical elements to contribute value to the customer and to society, and thus differentiate firms from their competitors (Palacios-Florencio, Revilla-Camacho, & Cossío-Silva, 2015).

Once CR has been implemented, it is crucial to analyze the reaction of the different stakeholders to these practices. In the case of customers, the population which is the aim of this research, it seems that recognizing CR practices can have a positive influence on their attitudes toward the firm (Haski-Leventhal, 2014), its image and loyalty (Martínez, Pérez, & Del Bosque, 2014). It has also recently been noted that CR can influence the consumer's

satisfaction (Arikan, Kantur, Maden, & Telci, 2016) through different variables. In a highly competitive market, the customer's satisfaction is of vital interest for organizations, due to practically all the firm's activities being able to be evaluated in terms of their contribution to their customers' satisfaction (Wu & Tseng, 2015). This is why this work partly examines these relations through the use of the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI).

Based on the arguments described, we mean to attain a double aim. Firstly, to determine if perceived quality, corporate image, perceived value, satisfaction, expectations, communication, loyalty, complaints, trust and CR are appropriate conceptual variables for a satisfaction index of the customers of hotels in Seville. Secondly, via applying and broadening the ECSI model, to propose a CR-based satisfaction index of the tourists staying in hotels.

To respond to these objectives, we propose an empirical study centered on the hotel sector. This framework has been chosen due to the current situation of the hotel industry. This is under constant pressure, has customers who are increasingly more demanding and is experiencing continuous technological changes. On the other hand, hotel activity falls within a context of maximum personal interaction in which these contacts are fundamental for the service provision. Finally, within the framework of carrying out CR at both an administrative and an institutional level, it is worth emphasizing that the nature of the sector entails a greater interaction and involvement between the different stakeholders.

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**Table 1**  
Theoretical background about the ECSI model.

Authors	Constructs
Kristensen, Martensen, and Gronholdt (1999)	Image, expectations, perceived quality (hardware), perceived quality (human ware), perceived value, customer satisfaction and loyalty
Kristensen, Martensen, and Gronholdt (2000)	Image, expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, consumer satisfaction and loyalty
Gronholdt, Martensen, and Kristensen (2000)	Image, expectations, perceived quality (hardware), perceived quality (humanware), perceived value, customer satisfaction and loyalty
Martensen, Gronholdt, and Kristensen (2000)	Image, expectations, perceived quality (hardware), perceived quality (humanware), perceived value, customer satisfaction and loyalty
Bayol et al. (2000)	Expectations, image, loyalty, perceived value, perceived quality, satisfaction and complaints
Vilares and Coelho (2003)	Satisfaction, loyalty, commitment, perceived quality of products, perceived quality of services, expectations, image and perceived value
Ball et al. (2004)	Image, loyalty, expectations, perceived value, perceived quality, satisfaction, complaints and communication
Aydin and Gökhan (2005)	Expectations, perceived quality, complaint management, customer satisfaction, trust, loyalty, corporate image and costs
Ryglóvá and Vajcnerová (2005)	Image, expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction, loyalty and complaints
Ball, Coelho, and Vilares (2006)	Image, loyalty, expectations, perceived value, perceived quality, satisfaction, communication and complaints
Chitty, Ward, and Chua (2007)	Image, technical dimension, functional dimension, price, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty
Türkyilmaz and Özkan (2007)	Image, expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty
Kaveh et al. (2012)	Image, perceived value (technical dimension, functional dimension), price, satisfaction, trust and purchase intention
Türkyilmaz, Oztekin, Zaim, and Omer (2013)	Image, expectations, perceived value, perceived quality, satisfaction and loyalty
Askariyazad and Babakhani (2015)	Image, expectations, perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction, loyalty, complaints and trust

## 2. Conceptual framework

### 2.1. The European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI model)

Customer satisfaction models are methods to evaluate the quality of the services provided by organizations in the public and private sectors (Johnson, Gustafsson, Andreassen, Lervik, & Cha, 2001). There are many indexes used by these studies (SCBS, ACSI, NCSB and ECSI, among others).<sup>1</sup>

The ECSI methodology has been developed by European experts based on a set of requirements (ECSI Technical Committee, 1998). This model studies the relations of seven constructs: image, expectations, the product's perceived quality, the service's perceived quality, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty.

Setting out from this model (ECSI), researchers have made changes to adapt it to their studies. Bayol, De la Foye, Tellier, and Tenenhaus (2000) research stands out. Their model has seven interrelated variables: (a) a core model: perceived quality, expectations, perceived value, satisfaction, loyalty and image, and (b) the same model but with the inclusion of complaints. Another investigation worth highlighting is Ball, Coelho, and Machas (2004). Loyalty is explained in their model by customer satisfaction, the firm's image, the handling of complaints, communication and the customers' trust (including these last two constructs in the model). Other constructs in the model (expectations, perceived value and perceived quality) are used to explain satisfaction. These authors explicate loyalty by including communication and trust, adding the communication-trust, loyalty-satisfaction, trust-loyalty, image-trust and complaints-trust relations to Bayol et al.'s (2000) model. Other authors who have used the full model or have employed it with some modifications are Kaveh, Mosavi, and Ghaedi (2012), and Askariyazad and Babakhani (2015), among others.

In line with this, a review of previous studies is carried out. Our main goal is to know how the different researchers have improved the model and thus demonstrate that the ECSI index has been a very popular topic in both the academic and empirical literature (Table 1).

<sup>1</sup> SCBS (Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer), NCSB (Norwegian Customer Satisfaction Barometer), ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) and ECSI (European Customer Satisfaction Index).

The ECSI model's most important conclusions are that it offers a good structure to explain satisfaction and that including the two previously explained elements of quality can have different influences, depending on the area of application. Nevertheless, our study is the first that has analyzed the effect that customers' perceptions of companies' CR strategies have on the ECSI model.

### 2.2. Conceptual model

The theoretical review enables the proposing of the conceptual model shown in Fig. 1. This is based on incorporating the CR construct into the evolved ECSI model and it is formulated at an exclusively theoretical level by Yanqiu and Xing (2009).

**Perceived value:** The perceived value-satisfaction relation is, a priori, quite complex due to the difficulty of distinguishing them, as both are formed from evaluative judgments. However, while perceived value occurs at different stages of the shopping process, satisfaction is universally recognized as a post-use or post-purchase evaluation. It seems clear that this statement enables satisfaction to be understood as the result of value perception (Gil, Sánchez, Berenguer, & Gallarda, 2005). In the context of tourism there are numerous studies which show a direct relation between perceived value and satisfaction (Moliner, Sánchez, Rodríguez, & Callarisa, 2007; Yang, Liu, Jing, & Li, 2014). Based on this, we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H1.** There is a positive and significant relation between perceived value and satisfaction.

**Satisfaction:** Studies show that satisfaction influences customers' behavior patterns, their repurchase intentions (Ranjbarian, Sanayei, Rashid, & Hadadian, 2012) and their positive word of mouth communication (Markovic, Raspor, & Segaric, 2010). These antecedents lead to the proposal of the following hypothesis:

**H2a.** Satisfaction has a direct and positive influence on loyalty.

In the consumer satisfaction literature, Moliner and Fuentes (2011) investigate complaints behavior as a study area which emerges from an unsatisfactory shopping and/or consumption experience. The customers' dissatisfaction diminishes their repurchase intention and their brand loyalty, and their negative word of mouth increases (Moliner & Fuentes, 2011; Oh, 2006), while a rise in satisfaction lowers the occurrence of complaints (Johnson et al., 2001). Due to this, we propose the following hypothesis:

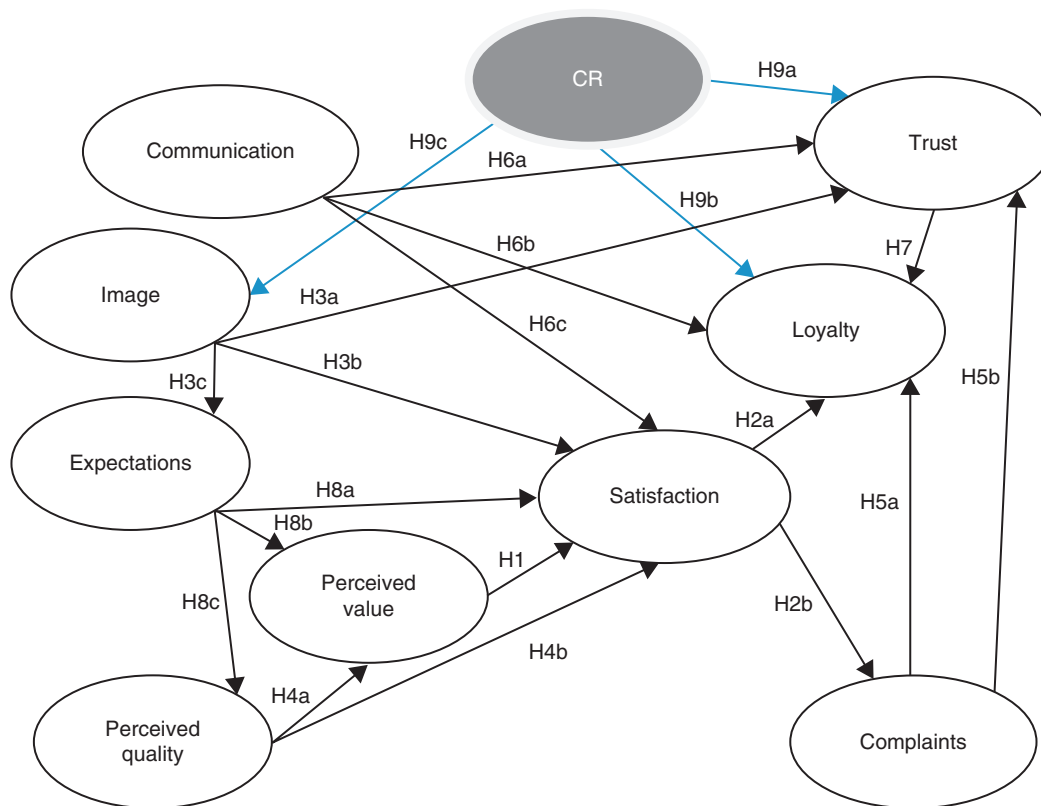


Fig. 1. Model proposed.

**H2b.** Satisfaction has a negative influence on complaints.

**Corporate image:** Research is normally centered on the influence of image on consumers' purchase intentions. Nevertheless, few studies have investigated the influence of the firm's image on the customers' trust, confirming the direct and significant relation between them (Fianto, Hadiwidjojo, Aisjah, & Solimun, 2014; Hoq, Sultana, & Amin, 2010). Given the preceding argument, we formulate the following hypothesis:

**H3a.** Image has a direct and positive influence on trust.

Various studies have proved the positive effect that image has on customers' satisfaction and on their retention (Ball et al., 2004; Hsu, Yen, Chiu, & Chang, 2006). Nonetheless, as some contradictory results have been reached, the influence of image on satisfaction requires a more complete validation. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

**H3b.** Image has a direct and positive influence on satisfaction.

Various investigations defend that the consumers who have a positive image of a firm will in turn have favorable expectations of its products and services. For their part, works such as those of Devlin, Gwynne, and Ennew (2002) and Rodríguez, San Martín, Collado, and De los Salmones (2009) demonstrate the significant contribution of image to the forming of the consumers' expectations. Due to all this we posit:

**H3c.** Image has a direct and positive influence on expectations.

**Perceived quality:** Numerous studies consider that this quality of the service has a significant and direct influence on the value perceived by customers (Howat & Assaker, 2013). Within tourist services, the studies of Kashyap and Bojanic (2000) and Petrick (2002), stand out. They reach the same results: the perceived quality of services positively and directly influences value. On the basis of the above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**H4a.** Perceived quality has a direct and positive influence on perceived value.

Researchers in service quality have distinguished between service quality and satisfaction on the basis of the level at which they are measured: customer satisfaction is a specific valuation of a transaction, while service quality is a global valuation. In this line, authors such as Alén and Fraiz (2006) and Howat and Assaker (2013), among others, show that it is service quality which has a significant effect on the consumer. Therefore, the following is posited:

**H4b.** Perceived quality has a direct and positive influence on satisfaction.

**Complaints:** Within the hotel sector, there is very little research which has studied complaints (Karatepe & Ekiz, 2004). However, it is conceivable to think that customers who complain do so because they have had an unsatisfactory experience and are negatively predisposed toward maintaining their relation with the firm. This leads to the following hypothesis:

**H5a.** Complaints have a negative influence on loyalty.

In spite of the importance of complaints management and service recuperation, and their impact on customers and other stakeholders, many customers seem to be dissatisfied with the way in which organizations handle their complaints. This complaints management deficiency can damage the customer's trust in the firm, as this is strengthened when reliable solutions are offered (Astuti, Nusantara, & Dharmmesta, 2011). All this gives rise to the following hypothesis:

**H5b.** Complaints have a negative influence on loyalty.

**Communication:** Communication is a predictive factor of interpersonal trust and the relation between the two variables

– communication and trust – goes one way (Zeffane, Tipu, & Ryan, 2011). Many of the investigations which posit the effects of communication on trust establish that communication is an antecedent to trust at both the individual and the organizational level (Ball et al., 2004; Zeffane et al., 2011). Following this research line, the following hypothesis is put forward:

**H6a.** Communication has a direct and positive influence on trust.

It is possible to positively influence satisfaction and loyalty through the use of marketing communication (Spreng & Mackoy, 1996). In this sense, one-to-one communication actions, such as telephone calls, correspondence and face-to-face marketing enable the strengthening of the customers' future behavior intentions (Erickson, 1991). Studies carried out among consumers identify service activities and communication initiatives as the main factors which determine loyalty (Dabija & Babut, 2014; Piron, 2001). The following two relations are therefore proposed:

**H6b.** Communication has a direct and positive influence on loyalty.

**H6c.** Communication has a direct and positive influence on satisfaction.

**Trust:** There have been different contributions to the literature concerning the relation between trust and loyalty which have coincided in pointing out that it is significant, and that trust positively affects loyalty (Yieh, Chiao, & Chiu, 2007). The importance of trust in explaining loyalty is also upheld by authors such as Singh and Sirdeshmukh (2000) and Sirdeshmukh, Singh, and Sabol (2002). In short, consumers prefer to remain loyal toward an establishment

which they have trusted in the past than heighten their perceived risk with new alternatives (Assael, 1992). Hence, the following hypothesis:

**H7.** Trust has a direct and positive influence on loyalty.

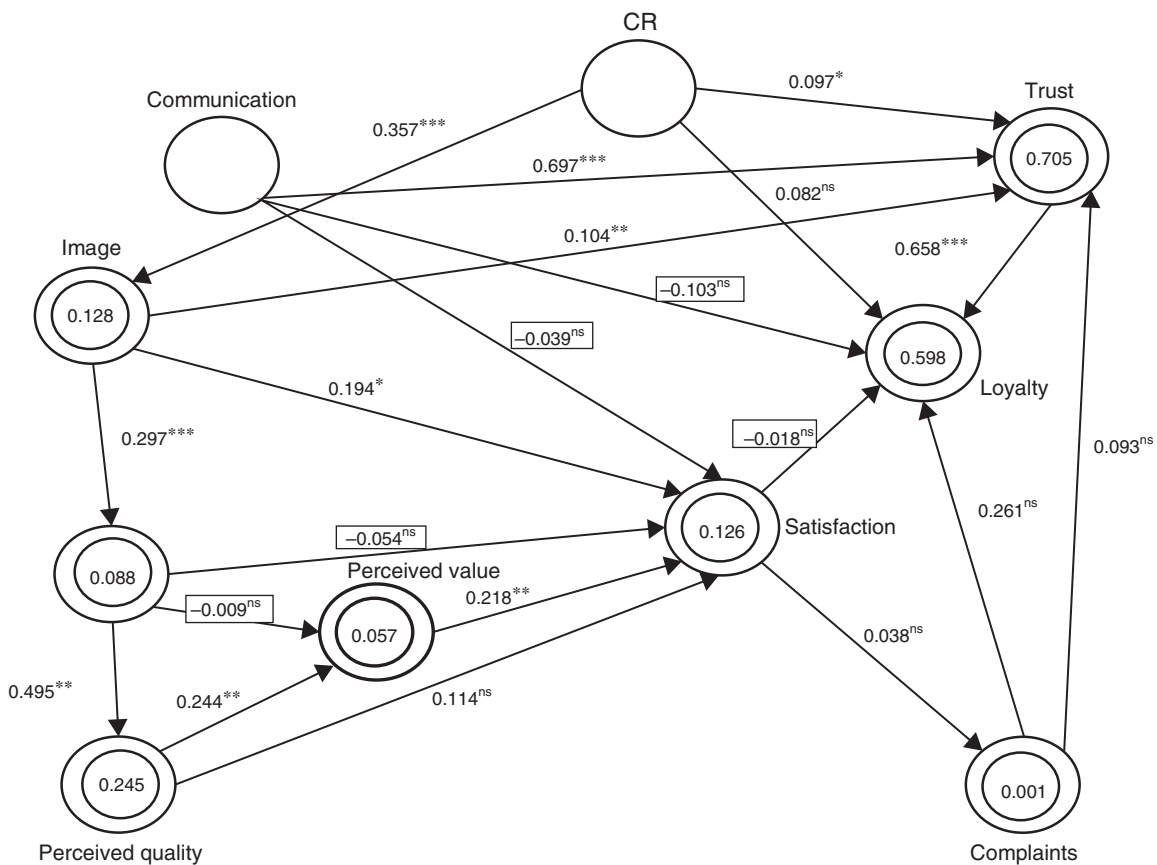
**Expectations:** There is a direct relation between expectations and the consumer's judgment of satisfaction when the conceptualization of the customer's expectations as a phenomenon of anticipating a future result is taken as a reference (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). This research thus proposes the following hypothesis:

**H8a.** Expectations have a direct and positive influence on satisfaction.

As has been mentioned before, the creating and delivery of higher value for the customer has become a key aspect in order to achieve a competitive advantage. This higher value means, as Weinstein and Johnson (1999) state, a continuous creation of business experiences which exceed the customer's expectations. In the ACSI and ECSI satisfaction indexes, it is assumed that the customer's expectations have a direct effect on perceived value. This leads to the following proposal:

**H8b.** Expectations have a direct and positive influence on perceived value.

The most complete analysis of forming expectations in a service quality context is Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1996). Expectations play an important role in determining the consumers' post-evaluations. This is why it is important for the seller of the service to understand these expectations through the intangibility



**Fig. 2.** Causal relations (with suppressor effects).

\*\*\*  $t(0.001;4999) = 3.106644601$ .

\*\*  $t(0.01;4999) = 2.333843952$ .

\*  $t(0.05;4999) = 1.64791345$ .

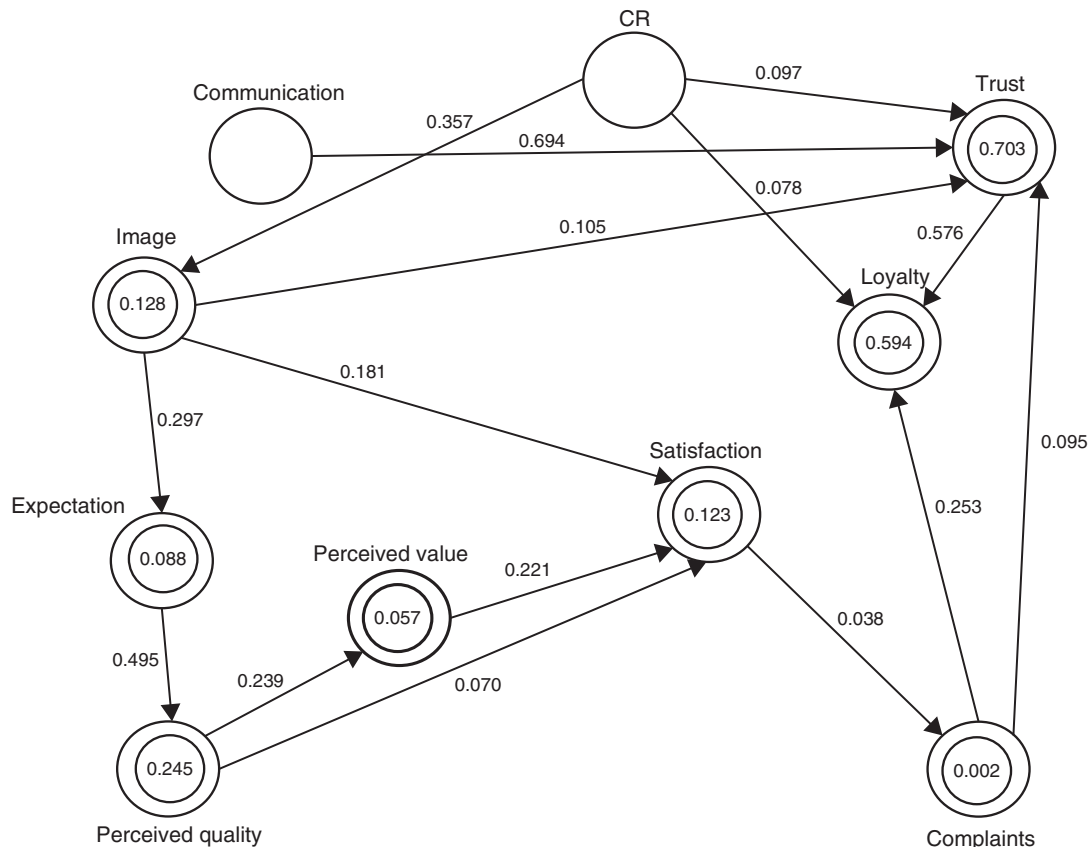


Fig. 3. Causal relations (without suppressor effects).

continuum. When businesses know the consumers' expectations concerning quality, they will be able to develop marketing strategies for their services provision. Due to all this, the next hypothesis is formulated:

**H8c.** Expectations have a direct and positive influence on service quality.

**Corporate Responsibility:** A firm being attributed with CR practices is one of the most immediate consequences of its social performance and significantly affects its customers' attitudes, such as trust (Tian, Wang, & Yang, 2011). Many investigations have studied the effect of trust on CR, but few have centered on the opposite effect – that of CR on customers' trust (Lacey & Kennett-hensel, 2010; Martínez & Del Bosque, 2013; Swaen & Chumpitaz, 2008). Vlachos, Tsamakos, Vrechopoulos, and Avramidis (2009) show that trust is fundamental for the efficacy of CR, as customers have high levels of trust in firms which are socially responsible. Adding up all the theoretical and empirical arguments mentioned above justifies the following hypothesis:

**H9a.** CR has a direct and positive influence on trust.

CR can also directly influence loyalty. Marín, Ruiz, and Rubio (2009) proposed two complementary alternatives in which CR and customers' loyalty were linked. Firstly, on the basis of the relation between business associations and brand value, the influence of CR initiatives on loyalty is measured by the evaluation of the firm (Mohr & Webb, 2005). Secondly, through CR actions customers identify the firm based on the perception between their own identity and the firm's (Lichtenstein, Drumwright, & Braig, 2004). This all leads to the proposal of the following hypothesis:

**H9b.** CR has a direct and positive influence on loyalty.

CR activities can positively affect the firm's image. Indeed, many have noted that a good social action influences their image (Wu & Wang, 2014). CR is one of the most effective tools a firm has to strengthen its corporate image (Becker-Olsen, Cudmore, & Hill, 2006) and is an important part of current marketing strategies in firms (Marín & Ruiz, 2007). This research therefore posits that:

**H9c.** CR has a direct and positive influence on corporate image.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Sample

The study's population is made up of people staying in four-star international hotels located in the city of Seville. These establishments are those which have the greatest number of overnight stays (INE, 2014), as well as the ones that show a stronger commitment to CR. The SPSS 22 and SMART-PLS 2.0 statistical programs have been used for the data analysis. For the data collection we chose personal interviews based on a structured questionnaire carried out by interviewers who were especially trained for the job. The fieldwork finished with a total of 629 duly filled out questionnaires.

Regarding the sample's socio-demographic variables, the respondent's profile was: a woman (more than half were women), aged between 35 and 44, Spanish, employed, having a family unit of a minimum of two members.

#### 3.2. Measurement scales

The first column of Table 1 and of Table 3 shows the measurement scales for the model's ten constructs and their items, as well as their source and their dimensions. All the variables were measured

**Table 2**  
Individual reliability, construct reliability and convergent validity.

Construct	Factor loading ( $\lambda$ )	Composite reliability	Ave
<b>CR (Swaen &amp; Chumpitaz, 2008)</b>		0.964	0.708
<i>Philanthropy</i>			
G1: Which helps developing countries	0.8855		
G2: Which supports social and cultural activities (art, culture, sport) in the regions it operates in	0.8823		
G3: Which supports humanitarian causes	0.8594		
G4: Which reduces its consumption of natural resources	0.7861		
<i>Environment</i>			
G5: Which makes its production process more environment-friendly	0.8450		
G6: Which makes its products as ecologically as possible	0.8651		
<i>Consumer</i>			
G7: Which takes care of clients rights (in terms of guarantees, information, etc.)	0.8128		
G8: Which provides clients with a fair deal	0.7072		
G9: Which treats its staff with no bias with respect to their gender, race, religion	0.8616		
<i>Employees</i>			
G10: Which creates jobs	0.8678		
G11: Which guarantees the health and security of its staff	0.8693		
<b>Perceived value (Martín, Barroso, &amp; Martín, 2004)</b>		0.809	0.514
B2: Compared with other hotels, the value of the services of this hotel is good	0.7000		
B3: I positively rate the services of this hotel (snack-bar, cleanliness, contact, etc.)	0.7724		
B5: Taking into account the quality of the services I have received as well as what I have done to obtain them, my rating of this hotel is good	0.6937		
B6: The information obtained previously complies with this hotel's services	0.6999		
<b>Satisfaction (Maloles, 1997)</b>		0.837	0.507
C1: I was right to choose to stay in this hotel	0.7348		
C2: I am satisfied with this hotel	0.7678		
C3: This hotel is consistent with its promises	0.6981		
C4: This hotel offers an excellent service	0.7113		
C5: My experience in this hotel has been positive in general	0.6437		
<b>Complaints (Blodgett, Granbois, &amp; Walters, 1993; Camarero, Gutiérrez, &amp; Rodríguez, 1996; Singh, 1990; Singh &amp; Wilkes, 1996)</b>		0.906	0.660
F1: When I have a problem with the service, even though it is inexpensive, I tend to complain, ask for my money back or an improvement in the service	0.6658		
F2: I'm concerned about knowing my rights (as a citizen, as a client, as a consumer, etc.)	0.8630		
F3: I know about the procedure of making a complaint	0.8260		
F4: I'm interested in knowing the existing alternatives of products and services	0.8399		
F5: When facing a problem with a hotel, I will make a claim to external organizations (Consumers' Association)	0.8501		
<b>Communication (Arenas &amp; García, 2007; Ball et al., 2004)</b>		0.961	0.806
H1: My relationship with the hotel is fluid and satisfactory	0.7856		
H2: The hotel keeps me constantly informed about the offers that might interest me	0.8640		
H3: The communication exchanged is exact	0.9384		
H4: The communication exchanged is complete	0.9574		
H5: The communication exchanged is credible	0.9395		
H6: The hotel informs about the occurrences and changes that may affect the client	0.8883		
<b>Trust (Ball et al., 2004; Swaen &amp; Chumpitaz, 2008)</b>		0.944	0.770
<i>Credibility/Trustworthiness</i>			
I1: The service received from this hotel makes me feel safe	0.8776		
I2: This hotel's services are a guarantee of quality	0.9132		
<i>Integrity</i>			
I3: This hotel is interested in its clients	0.8950		
<i>Goodwill</i>			
I4: When the hotel suggests an offer, it is because it means an improvement for me	0.8267		
<i>Honesty</i>			
I5: The hotel treats me honestly in every arrangement	0.8739		
<b>Loyalty (Zeithaml et al., 1996)</b>		0.930	0.770
<i>Loyalty</i>			
J1: I will continue contracting this hotel's services in the coming years	0.8758		
J2: I will recommend this hotel to anyone who asks my advice	0.8819		
<i>External response</i>			
J3: You will change hotel if you have a problem	0.8951		
J4: In the case of having a bad experience, you will tell other clients what has happened	0.8566		
<b>Expectations (Díaz-Martín, Iglesias, Vázquez, &amp; Ruíz, 2000)</b>		0.970	0.801
K1: I expected the manner of the staff to be positive	0.8915		
K2: I expected the hotel to be quiet and restful	0.9112		
K3: I expected parking facilities on the arrival at and departure from the hotel	0.8019		
K4: I expected the hotel's services to be carried out without mistakes	0.9313		
K5: I expected completely up-to-date equipment	0.8903		
K6: I expected to receive quality food and beverages	0.9187		
K7: I expected the staff to give you an individualized attention	0.9057		
K8: I expected to find complementary installations	0.9016		

**Table 3**  
Discriminant validity.

	CR	Communication	Trust	Image	Expectations	Perceived quality	Complaints	Perceived value	Loyalty	Satisfaction
CR	(0.804)									
Communication	0.393	(0.897)								
Trust	0.439	0.820	(0.877)							
Image	0.357	0.403	0.447	n.a.						
Expectations	0.327	0.611	0.708	0.297	(0.894)					
Perceived quality	0.388	0.587	0.586	0.409	0.495	n.a.				
Complaints	0.331	0.464	0.480	0.305	0.446	0.635	(0.812)			
Perceived value	0.161	0.164	0.155	0.242	0.112	0.239	0.185	(0.717)		
Loyalty	0.414	0.587	0.732	0.291	0.683	0.552	0.556	0.148	(0.877)	
Satisfaction	0.114	0.109	0.141	0.262	0.061	0.196	0.038	0.279	0.082	(0.713)

n.a. = not applicable.

**Table 4**  
Formative constructs.

	Weights	Collinearity statistic
<i>Image</i> (Lee, 2003; Rust, Zeithaml, & Lemmon, 2000; Ryglová & Vajcnerová, 2005)		
D1: The interior of the hotel is in accordance with its category	0.1225	1.267
D2: The location of the hotel is suitable	0.3163	1.210
D3: I distinguish the establishments of this hotel chain perfectly	0.2343	3.232
D4: I tend to pay attention to this hotel's advertising	0.1355	2.927
D5: I tend to pay attention to the information they send me	-0.1150	1.933
D6: This hotel is renowned for its good social behavior	0.5709	1.849
D7: This hotel's image fits my personality	0.3062	1.486
<i>Perceived quality</i> (Martín et al., 2004; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988)		
E1: The hotel has up-to-date equipment	0.2904	1.726
E2: This hotel's staff are well-dressed and have a good appearance	-0.0242	1.905
E3: When this hotel commits itself to doing something, it does it	0.3408	1.867
E4: This hotel's staff are always ready to help their clients	0.0693	2.345
E5: The hours of this hotel (snack-bar, restaurant, swimming-pool, etc.) are suitable for me	0.2518	1.752
E6: I consider that the global assessment of the quality received is positive	0.0567	2.229
E7: Compared with other hotels of the same category, this hotel offers me more activities	0.0225	1.790
E8: This hotel's staff in general wish to offer the service in the appropriate time and are capable of doing so	0.1780	2.131
E9: This hotel's staff are in general competent	-0.1347	3.050
E10: This hotel's staff in general listen to me and speak to me in a manner that I can understand	0.0630	2.208
E11: This hotel's establishments have a pleasant atmosphere in general	0.5010	2.348
E12: This hotel makes an effort to understand my needs	-0.2048	2.367

**Table 5**  
Verification of the hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Suggested effect	Coefficient path ( $\beta$ )	T value (bootstrap)	Verified
H1: Perceived value $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	(+)	0.221**	2.6540	Yes
H2b: Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Complaints	(-)	0.038 <sup>ns</sup>	0.9691	No
H3a: Image $\rightarrow$ Trust	(+)	0.105**	2.5576	Yes
H3b: Image $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	(+)	0.101**	2.7076	Yes
H3c: Image $\rightarrow$ Expectations	(+)	0.297***	4.4060	Yes
H4a: Perceived quality $\rightarrow$ Perceived value	(+)	0.239**	2.8084	Yes
H4b: Perceived quality $\rightarrow$ Satisfaction	(+)	0.070 <sup>ns</sup>	0.9397	No
H5a: Complaints $\rightarrow$ Loyalty	(-)	0.253 <sup>ns</sup>	3.5263	No
H5b: Quejas $\rightarrow$ Confianza	(-)	0.095 <sup>ns</sup>	1.6927	No
H6a: Communication $\rightarrow$ Trust	(+)	0.694***	12.7110	Yes
H7: Trust $\rightarrow$ Loyalty	(+)	0.576***	7.5929	Yes
H8c: Expectations $\rightarrow$ Perceived quality	(+)	0.495***	6.1662	Yes
H9a: CR $\rightarrow$ Trust	(+)	0.097*	2.0422	Yes
H9b: CR $\rightarrow$ Loyalty	(+)	0.078 <sup>ns</sup>	1.0502	No
H9c: CR $\rightarrow$ Image	(+)	0.357***	5.4958	Yes

\*\*\*  $t(0.001;4999) = 3.106644601$ .\*\*  $t(0.01;4999) = 2.333843952$ .\*  $t(0.05;4999) = 1.64791345$ .

with a 5-point Likert scale, 1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree", where 3 is interpreted as a point of indifference.

### 3.3. Data analysis

We tackle this section clarifying that, after checking the hypotheses of the conceptual model initially proposed (Fig. 2), as there are five suppressor effects (when the sign of the coefficient path and the correlation between the latent constructs – direct effect – do not coincide), in line with Falk and Miller (1992), it was

decided to remove these relations. This is why the analysis of the data connected with the modified model is then shown (Fig. 3).

We begin by examining the individual reliability of the reflective indicators ( $\lambda$ ). In this study, all the indicators with ( $\lambda$ ) below 0.6 were removed (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995) (see Table 2). Regarding composite reliability, all the constructs with reflective indicators are reliable as their indexes are above the acceptance threshold of 0.7. The study of the variance extracted also indicates that there is convergent validity, as all the constructs are above the required value of 0.5 (Table 2).

As regards discriminant validity, a way of determining this is to show that the correlations between the constructs are lower than the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE). This condition is met for all the constructs with reflective indicators, as can be noted in Table 3.

The multicollinearity, value and statistical significance of the weights must be studied for the formative indicators (Image and Quality). As the data for the first are below the cut-off threshold of 3.3 (Roberts & Thatcher, 2009), there is no problem of multicollinearity (see Table 4). The weights are all statistically significant and are presented in the same table.

Next we carry out the checking of the hypotheses presented in the conceptual model section.

Accordingly, and taking Table 5 into account, ten of the fifteen hypotheses proposed in this model were upheld.

#### 4. Conclusions and implications

This research work tackles a topic of interest for marketing by incorporating CR into the general models of loyalty and satisfaction.

The data obtained enables satisfaction to be understood as a result of the perception of value. This confirms the positive impact of perceived value on tourists' satisfaction. From a practical point of view, this means that how intelligently value is added from the hotel guests' perspective can, in the long term, lead to their greater satisfaction. The effect that satisfaction has on the attitude toward making complaints (H2b) is also relevant, due to its implication for the firm's management. In this research, the opposite is suggested, leading to the idea that there is not always a significant relation between dissatisfaction with the service provision and an inclination to lodge a complaint. This may be due to the cost in time involved in making a complaint.

The results also show that one of the main advantages of creating a good image is the trust that this generates in the tourist (H3a). This finding implies that a good image is an important aspect for hotels as it helps them to maintain their position in the market and contributes to creating a long term relation with their customers. This is supported by authors such as Kim, Ferrin, and Rao (2008). The same can be said about the tourist's satisfaction (H3b) and expectations (H3c), as there are studies which prove the positive influence of image on these constructs. Hsu et al.'s (2006) is an example of this.

Through the results obtained it is confirmed that the quality perceived by the customers has a positive impact on the perceived value of the service (H4a), but not on satisfaction (H4b). Achieving the preference of customers involves their perceiving that their relation with the organization generates value for them. This is translated into personal satisfaction. Therefore, to attain satisfaction through quality – a relation that has not been confirmed in this study – it will be necessary to analyze the attributes which customer satisfaction is based on when they make their assessment.

Hypotheses H5a and H5b were not able to be confirmed. Hence, it seems that the inclination to make complaints does not generate effects of trusting the organization or being loyal to it. Perhaps the effect between these variables is the opposite and, in line with the current trends in joint value co-creation, it is trust in the firm and the intention of remaining loyal to it which encourages the customer to make complaints that improve the service received.

As to the communication-trust relation (H6a), which is upheld, the guest will partly trust the firm for what it transmits through its communications and its way of expressing itself. The respondents have given a higher score to the information exchanged being believable. Regarding the intangible nature of the services, this makes the customers' trust increase and, as a result of this, fosters re-purchasing. As Assael (1992) commented, customers prefer

to remain loyal to an establishment which they have trusted in the past. Our study verifies this relation (H7). We may also say that managers can influence perceived quality through expectations (H8c). Customers form their expectations based on the dimensions of quality, and these vary according to the supplier and the consumer. To finish, we state that the results obtained confirm the decisive role that CR plays in trust and corporate image (Rosa-Díaz, Castellanos, & Palacios, 2013). Nevertheless, the study reveals that there is not an influence of CR on the tourist's loyalty (H9b). Reichheld and Schefter (2000) have said that to obtain the loyalty of customers, their trust must first be gained.

All the aforementioned enables us to conclude that CR, perceived quality, corporate image, perceived value, satisfaction, expectations, communication, loyalty, complaints and trust are appropriate conceptual variables for a satisfaction index of the customers of hotels in Seville, in spite of some of these variables having a low level of variance explained.

Regarding the second aim proposed, the literature review shows the scarcity of articles centered on the relation between CR and loyalty, trust and corporate image in the hotel sector. In this sense, the work's main outstanding contribution is integrating CR into the ECSI model. This is a very relevant contribution because of the increasing importance that different stakeholders attribute to the consideration of social criteria in decision making. As we have shown in this research, many variables have been included in the ECSI model since European experts developed it and these constructs have improved the model. Yet none of them has taken into account the importance of social practices in attracting and retaining customers. In this way, a dynamic oriented toward fostering Corporate Responsibility (CR) is being generated as one of the critical elements to contribute value to the customer and to society, and thus differentiate firms from their competitors. This conclusion allows us, in fact, to postulate that the ECSI index is not complete without the CR construct. Furthermore, its application to the hotel sector enables it to be demonstrated that developing CR means an opportunity for hotel chains. This is because it can allow them to increase the trust of society, to improve their relations with stakeholders while strengthening their loyalty and to meet their customers' social needs.

The conclusions obtained lead us to propose a set of interesting implications for hotel management. It must continue backing the reduction of the consumption of natural resources and supplying its customers with a fair deal in the transactions carried out (above what is legally established). To do so will contribute economic advantages to the relation. In this line, hotels should be also concerned about all the impressions that they produce, chiefly those related with business aspects, and enact a strategy of relational marketing which helps to create switching costs. It is evidently crucial in this endeavor for hotel establishments to periodically implement and develop training programs for their internal customers (employees) if they wish to transmit value and quality through CR practices. On the other hand, managers must communicate the CR practices which they carry out. An intelligent communication of CR will affirm the hotel's credibility and honesty. This will mean that their customers have a greater trust in the establishment. This communication should not only be through websites and CR reports, but also via other means of communication which reach different age segments. In this sense, it appears that the information offered by hotel firms is not consistent, as each one publishes what it believes to be the most relevant for different stakeholders. Nevertheless, they would be well advised to homogenize the information which they provide, and strengthen objective and transparent communication with their customers and with society. The use of marketing 2.0 could help them to do so.

This work has a series of limitations which, far from detracting from its value, can be future research lines. Firstly, the study



is transversal and is only proposed from the customer's point of view. It would be desirable to carry out longitudinal research and not just study the customers' perceptions. The questionnaire could be replicated in other areas to be able to validate it externally. In this way, we would find out its prospective usefulness to measure perceptions which other groups of stakeholders have concerning CR. On the other hand, the data collected refer to a single geographical area (Seville), sector (hotel) and category (4 stars). Carrying out multi-sectoral studies could favor the generalization of the results obtained. In this sense, and noting that two of the sample's three chains (AC and Meliá) have hotels outside Spain, it would be interesting to carry out a cross-cultural study to see if the same chain's hotels abroad transmit identical impressions to those in Spain. Finally, proposing new hypotheses which analyze the differences in the perceptions of different segments which the hotel is interested in would create relevant consumer profiles based on the variables included in the model.

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