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## **Perceived CSR and Micro-level Outcomes: Moderating role of demographics**

### **Abstract**

*This study aims at investigating the micro-level outcomes of perceived CSR. Specifically, this study provides a better understanding that how perceived CSR affect the employees' micro-level outcomes (i.e. organizational citizenship behavior, OCB) through the mediating role of organizational identification (OI) and moderating role of personal factors. The study collected data from 436 employees working in the hotels of Pakistan. The study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and hierarchical regression techniques to test the hypotheses. The study found personal factors performing the role of moderator on CSR-organizational identification relationship, and mediating role of organizational identification between CSR and citizenship behavior. The study contributes to the micro-level outcomes of CSR and has implications for the organizations.*

**Key Words:** *corporate social responsibility; personal factors; service industry; affective commitment; organizational citizenship behavior.*

### **Introduction**

The holding of the society's resources enables organizations to think of doing something for the welfare of the society i.e. corporate social responsibility (CSR). Organizations, in this regard, try to engage with the society beyond the legal, technical and ethical requirements (Islam et al. 2016). CSR is the "corporate philanthropy and any discretionary corporate activity that reflects a company's ethical stance towards consumers and other external stakeholders" (Carroll, 1979). The concept of CSR is a macro-level business practice and produce the same level outcomes, however, if such issues are linked to the employees' interpretations and perceptions, becomes micro-level issues to affect their outcomes.

Employees' perceptions of their firm's involvement in CSR related activities have influenced their organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), deviance behaviors, job satisfaction, job performance and organizational commitment

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(Islam et al., 2016). Amongst these, OCB is argued to be heavily affected by CSR, perhaps because of, both the concepts are parallel, and are not applied at the same level. According to Aguilera et al. (2007), at macro-level, CSR encompasses those welfare related activities that go beyond the legal, economical and technical firm's interest, whereas, OCB is the employee's discretionary behaviors that go beyond their formal job descriptions.

Evans et al. (2011) are of the view that employees' perception of their firm's involvement in socially responsible practices may affect their involvement in OCB. In this regard, many recent studies have empirically investigated the same (e.g. Newman et al. 2015, Fu et al. 2014). However, the prime purpose of such studies has been examining the direct impact of perceived CSR activities on OCB. While others have suggested examining the impact of CSR on employee outcomes using mediating variables as this may have ramifications for them (e.g. Pivato et al. 2008). This study, therefore, argues that mediating variables may help in understanding the linkage between macro-level (i.e. CSR) and micro-level (i.e. OCB) outcomes.

A suitable bridge to link macro-level (i.e. CSR) and micro-level (i.e. OCB) aspects is organizational identification (OI), which is "the degree to which employees identify themselves as organizational members and believe that they and the organization are inseparable". It is organizational identification process (OIP) through which, an employee's organizational related self-identity is linked to their organization. Organizational identification, once developed, binds organizational employees with it and never let them disperse. The OIP is a transitional process from micro (i.e. self-identity) to macro level (i.e. organizational-identity), and vice versa. According to social identity theory (SIT) of Tajfel (1974), employees identification consequent a positive change in their behaviors and attitudes. More specifically, employees' perception about their organization's involvement in CSR related activities positively contribute towards their sense-making towards their organization (i.e. OI) as well as organizational members through the process of organizational identification, and this may enhance their OCB. Therefore, the first aim of this study is to empirically examine the mediating role of OI between employees' perceived CSR and OCB.

In addition, this study also aims at highlighting the un-examined area of personal factors (e.g. age, gender, and work experience) in the process of association between CSR and OI. Studies in the past have suggested the importance of personal factors in explaining the extent to which employee change their attitude and behavior in response to their perception about their organization (Maignan and Ferrell 2001). More specifically, this study aims at investigating the moderating role of personal factors (e.g. work experience, age and gender) on the association between CSR and OI and the mediating role of OI between the association of CSR and OCB, perhaps for the first time.

This study contributes to the existing literature on OCB, CSR and service marketing. The main contribution of this study is not to perceive that CSR is a macro-level concept and only produce employees' macro-level outcomes. In addition, as the study is conducted on the employees of service industry i.e. hospitality, therefore, it also contributes to the existing literature on service

marketing that how employees could overcome the issues of customer handling at rush hours by performing beyond their formal job descriptions i.e. OCB, a less focused debate (Fu et al. 2014).

### **Theory and Hypotheses Building**

#### ***CSR and OI***

A firm can create its positive image and promote its identity through CSR engagement within an organization. Similarly, CSR activates positively relate to the constructed external image (CEI), that is outsider's believe on the organization reputation. Therefore, internal employee perception of the organization is largely dependent on the external parties' evaluation of their organization. Hence, CEI is the medium through which employees develop their perception about their organization (Dutton et al. 1994).

SIT states that firm's CSR activities have a direct relation to employees' organizational identification. The identification of employees can maintain if employees attempt to provide their services among various groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Individuals gauged their self-worth using their social reputation because they like to identify themselves only with those organizations that have a prestigious image. This choice of employees enhances their self-worth (Tajfel and Turner 1985). Drawing from the same arguments, previous studies have found a positive relationship between CSR and OI (Kim et al., 2010). A Firm engaged in CSR activities possess lucrative and distinctive position among other firms that result in fostering employees' identity, as they feel proud of their firm. Thus, employees' belief on their firm's involvement in philanthropy or other socially responsible activities feel them proud, and they identify themselves with their organization (Bhattacharya et al. 2009). Based on these arguments, this study hypothesized that:

*H1: Perceived CSR positively relates to OI.*

#### ***OI and OCB***

The employees' sense of oneness with their organization (that enables them to make enduring relationship) is developed through OI (Bhattacharya et al., 2009). Such employees become cognitive and emotionally attached to their organization i.e. organizational commitment (Bhattacharya et al. 2009), which further contribute in developing their job related outcomes like OCB (Van Dick et al., 2006). Further, OI is believed to be closely related to OCB. Van Knippenberg (2000) argued that feeling of oneness is developed through a strong sense of organizational identification. When sense is inculcated in the mind of employees, they acknowledge every task as their own and resultantly their performance at workplace improved sharply. Rioux and Penner (2001) suggest that OI is a key weapon for motivation as "appear to have two interrelated components: a desire to help the organization because one identifies with and takes pride in the organization . . . (p. 1312)." The strong sense of organizational identification of employees' motive them to create a friendly environment with others like subordinates, coworkers, and seniors and subsequently sense of ownership is promoted in all workers (Van Dick et al. 2006). Since they spend their all energies

to facilitate other organizational members in shape of extra-roles i.e. OCB. The above literature-based discussion guides on developing following hypothesis:

*H2: OI positively relates to OCB.*

***Identification as mediator***

Drawing from SIT, this study attempts to understand the effect of perceived CSR on OCB through the mediating role of OI. It is the employees' feelings of oneness to their organization, because of which macro-level CSR affect micro-level OCB through identification. It is further argued by Van Knippenberg et al. (2000) that when employees stalwartly identify themselves with their organization, they virtually introduce themselves as the part of that organization and evaluate and be evaluated as the agent of the organization, thereby like to be recognized in general public as its part. Employees with the experience of their organization's involvement in CSR related activities develop a positive image of their organizations (i.e. organizational identification), in turn, becomes ready to perform beyond their formal job descriptions (i.e. OCB) (Van Knippenberg et al. 2004). Specifically, it is organizational identification that explains employees extra-role behaviors as a result of their perceptions about their organization's CSR related tasks. Based on these arguments, this study hypothesized that:

*H3: OI mediates the positive relationship between CSR and OCB.*

Employees' identification towards their organization develop a sense of fulfillment, in turn, employees show a greater level of emotional attachment towards their organization (Fu et al. 2014). Emotionally attached employees tend to perform beyond their formal job descriptions for their organization. Therefore, this study argues that affective commitment may mediate OI-OCB relationship. This can further be supported with the help of SIT, that OI imitates the self-definitional facet of organizational membership, which enhances their emotional attachment, and this ultimately affects their extra-role behaviors. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

*H4: AC mediates the association between OI and OCB.*

***Personal factors as moderator***

The suggested model of this study assumes personal factors such as age, work experience and gender as a moderator between CSR-OI association. As person-organization fit theory suggests that difference in personal factors affect their choice of organization selection for employment (Kristof 1996). Therefore, the present study hypothesized difference in personal factors has a predominant influence on organization's CSR activities; however, the degree of employees' organization identification may be increased or decreased. For example, the employees who prefer pro-social behavior are interested in serving to those organizations that are actively engaged in CSR activities and leads towards their strong identification with their organization.

Empirical studies in the past postulated that differences in personal factors have a preeminent influence on individual's values and attitudes (Tajfel and Turner 1985). It is pertinent to mention that gender's perceptions about CSR activities are not similar. For example, females have more concern with the

discretionary behavior of firms, whereas males are closely concerned with economic and instrumental issues (Ibrahim and Angelidis 1994). According to Peterson (2004), the association between organizational commitment and OCB is stronger among females in comparison to male employees. Roberts (1993) suggested that females are more concerned with firm's CSR activities than males. Accordingly, some of the studies have demonstrated the moderating role of gender in understanding the mechanism between independent and dependent variables. For instance, Russ and McNeilly (1995) reported that gender moderates relationship between organizational commitment and turnover intention.

Further, females are more concerned with the environmental issues and like more friendly environments at workplaces comparing males (Davidson and Freudenburg, 1996). This means that there is a clear difference between male and female perceptions in respect of their firm's social activities (Panwar et al. 2010). However, females are more focused on ethical obligations than males (Smith et al. 2001). In the light of previous literature, gender differs in their perception. Based on the literature, the current study assumes that CSR activities of a firm are differently perceived by males and females and participation in CSR activities influence at the different degree to organization identity due to moderating role of genders. Therefore, the current study assumes the role of gender as moderator to determine the degree of association between employees' perception about CSR activities and OI.

H5: The association between CSR and OI may be moderated by gender.

This study also used work experience and age as moderator to explain the relationship between CSR and OI. According to Ricketta's (2005) job tenure and age are related to OI. That is the reason, a number of studies on OI have considered tenure and age as the control variables. (Evans et al. 2010). Therefore, this study considers it important to understand the moderating effect of tenure and age on the association between CSR and OI as these are major indicators of side-bets (Becker 1960). As it is assumed that perceived employees investments accumulation will be lost in case of leaving organization. Employees who feel a more spirit of OI, they likely to stay longer in their organization because they think that to leave organization will cost more than stay (Becker 1960). Long job tenure and age of employees are very deep-rooted factors of employees stay in any organization because they feel that they have invested a considerable time effort for the organization (Meyer and Allen 1984). It may be said that age and tenure are the factors for an employee to stay longer if they feel proud to be identified with that organization. In addition, age and work experience positively correlates to each other as both are considered different constructs. Therefore, "age is described as the chronological age of an individual and used as a proxy for age-related processes i.e., 'organizational age' whereas work experience denotes time invested by an individual in any job and it is used as job tenure." However, age is not considered as proportional to chronological age in all cases. Therefore, both constructs have a distinctive influence on attitudes and behaviors of employees at workplaces. For example, a study by Cleveland and Shore (1992) suggested that different classification of employees' age such as chronological age, Social age, subjective age and employees' relative age are compared with different

employee's work groups and impact variably on job satisfaction, job involvement and organizational commitment.

Empirical research disclosed that emotional attachment of an employee is enhanced with lengthier work experience that leads to long-run stay in an organization. It implies that employees with long tenure have a strong emotional attachment to coworkers and proudly identify themselves with their organization (Mitchell et al. 2001). Review of studies indicates that CSR influences OI by age and work experience and their influence depend on employee's degree of perceived CSR. Hence, based on these arguments it is hypothesized that:

*H6: The association between CSR and OI may be moderated by age.*

*H7: The association between CSR and OI may be moderated by work-experience.*

## **Method**

### ***Participants and data collection***

This study collected data from 436 front-line employees working in the four and five-star hotels in Pakistan. First, the study ensured the hotel's involvement in CSR activities such as energy efficiency, greening, charity to the community, climate change awareness and water conservation. The main reason for selecting only four and five-star hotels was that two or three-star hotels do not have enough resources to contribute in CSR related activities.

Based on personal factors, the majority of the respondents were between the age of 30-34 years (i.e. 72%), male (i.e. 80%) with the work experience of more than five years (100%). The main reason to select front-line employees with the tenure of more than five years was their experience in understanding the hotel's involvement in CSR activities. Based on qualification, the majority of the hotel employees were holding a professional vocational diploma (76%) along with their masters' degree (83%).

### ***Measures***

The study adapted the scales from the previous studies as they have already examined regarding their validity, and respondents were asked on five points Likert scale. Hur et al.'s (2016) three-item scale was used to measure employees' perceptions of their organization's CSR activities. This scale has widely been used by Vlachos et al. (2014), Brammer et al. (2015) and Ko et al. (2017) to ensure its internal consistency. Organizational identification and OCB were examined using five and four items scale of Mael and Ashforth (1992), and King and Grace (2010) respectively.

## **Results**

The study, first examined data regarding missing values, normality, outliers and multicollinearity as these may have an effect on the model fitness and results of the study (Byrne, 2010). The presence of missing values is normal issue in case of primary data collection, however in the study 5 responses with missing values were found and were treated against mean, because the pattern of missing values

was random and less than five percent (Sekeran, 2003). The internal consistency of the data was examined using the Cronbach's alpha values (see table 1).

The study, then conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The values of the model fit generated through CFA were found to be good (i.e.  $\chi^2/df = 2.47$ , RMSEA=0.042, SRMR=0.04, CFI=0.95). In addition, the loading of all the items was found to be well above 0.50 with the t-value of greater than 2.58 (which show the level of significance was  $P < 0.01$ ).

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics with mediation analysis**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	Mean	SD
1.Gender	1						---	---
2.Age	.24**	1					---	---
3.Work-experience	.34**	.18*	1				---	---
4.CSR	-.06	-.05	-.02	1			3.48	0.72
5.OI	.02	-.04	-.04	.47**	1		3.62	0.62
6.OCB	-.08	-.01	-.03	.52**	.43**	1	3.42	0.58
7.AC	-.09	-.03	-.07	.39**	.29**	.21**	3.51	0.49
Models	Direct effect		Indirect effect		Total effect			
CSR-OI-OCB	.35**		.24**		0.59			
OI-AC-OCB	.29**		.25**		0.54			

Note: \*\*  $P < 0.01$ , \*  $P < 0.05$

The values of the table 1 identify that, perceived CSR is positively associated to OI ( $r = .47$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), OCB ( $r = .52$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and AC ( $r = .39$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ), whereas, OI was found to be positively associated to OCB ( $r = .43$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) and AC ( $r = .29$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ). However, none of the personal factors of the respondents found to have significantly associated with observed variables; so, there is no need to treat them for control variables in the measurement model. In addition, the mean scores of the variables ranges between 3.42-3.62.

### Hypotheses Testing

The study examined path coefficients of the structural model and the values of the model fit were found to be reasonably good (i.e.  $\chi^2/df = 2.82$ , RMSEA=0.051, SRMR=0.09, CFI=0.93). The hypothesized structural model was found to explain the variance as  $R^2(\text{OCB}) = 41.23\%$ ,  $R^2(\text{OI}) = 34.81\%$  and  $R^2(\text{AC}) = 21.33\%$ . The values of the path coefficients (PC) identify a positive association of CSR with OI (PC=.33, CR=.07,  $P < 0.01$ ) and OCB (PC=.37, CR=.31,  $P < 0.01$ ). These results are in line with the suggested hypothesis H1. In addition, OI was found to have a significant association with AC (PC=.27, CR=.13,  $P < 0.01$ ) and OCB (PC=.41, CR=.09,  $P < 0.01$ ).

The mediating analyses were performed using the method of direct and indirect paths (Hayes, 2013). The study applied bootstrapping at N=2000 and identify that the direct-effect of CSR on OCB (i.e. .35\*\*) was greater comparing indirect-effect via OI (i.e. .24\*\*, variance= 21%), but still significant (see table 1). Thus, OI found to have partially mediating effect between CSR and OCB. This result support suggested hypothesis H3. In a similar way, the direct-effect of OI on OCB was found to be greater (i.e. .29\*\*) comparing indirect-effect via AC (i.e. .25\*\*, variance=19%) but still significant. Therefore, AC found partially mediate the association between OI and OCB, which supports suggested hypothesis H4.

The study also examined the moderating effects of age, work experience and gender on the association between CSR and OI. Before the analysis, following the instructions of Aiken and West (1991), all the continuous variables were mean centered. The study hypothesized that gender might moderate the positive association between CSR and OI and the association would be stronger in case of female employees comparing male. The values of table 2 show that the interactional term (i.e. CSR\*Gender) bring an increase in the variance to explain OI ( =.38,  $t > 2.58$ ).

**Table 2: Moderating effects to predict organizational identification & Values of conditional effects**

Variables	Age		work experience			Gender			
	SE		<i>t</i>	SE	<i>t</i>	SE	<i>t</i>		
Age	0.03	0.08	2.64**	0.05	0.32	0.92	0.05	0.04	1.21
Work experience	0.04	0.05	1.21	0.04	0.05	1.01	0.03	0.21	1.09
Gender	-0.09	0.02	1.02	0.00	0.09	0.05	-1.07	0.45	3.14**
CSR	-0.07	0.34	0.56	0.29	0.12	3.38**	0.31	0.12	4.31**
CSR*Age	0.05	0.08	1.85*						
CSR*WE				0.09	0.04	1.38*			
CSR*Gender							0.38	0.18	3.98*
R <sup>2</sup>	0.31		0.29				0.28		

Moderator	Values	Effects	<i>t</i>	CI <sub>95%</sub>	
				low	high
Age	24.51 (-1 SD)	0.29	7.31**	0.24	0.57
	43.91 (+1 SD)	0.59	5.29**	0.46	0.82
	32.33 (Mean)	0.44	4.99**	0.43	0.66
Gender	Male	0.58	6.38**	0.49	0.79
	Female	0.41	5.42**	0.13	0.48
Work	4.47 (-1 SD)	0.39	4.58**	0.28	0.61



experience	14.53 (+1 SD)	0.69	6.47**	0.51	0.87
	9.24 (Mean)	0.54	8.75**	0.39	0.64

Note: \*\*P<0.01, \*P<0.05

The results presented in table 2 only identify the moderating effect, however, this is not consistent with the suggested hypothesis. Therefore, the study applied simple slope analysis to identify the difference in the slopes of interactions (see Figure 2). The study found a significant effect for CSR and OI, which means that the two slopes were different from zero. The values of the table 2 identify a high association of perceived CSR with OI. However the relationship was weak with women ( =.41,  $t > 2.58$ ) comparing male ( =.58,  $t > 2.58$ ). Thus, suggested hypothesis H5 is rejected.

The values of table 2 also represent the moderating effect of work experience and age on the association between CSR and OI. However, the significant strength of the interactional term was found to be different regarding work experience ( =.09,  $t < 2.58$ ) and age ( =.05,  $t < 2.58$ ). In addition, the association between CSR and OI for the employees with more work experience ( =.69,  $t < 2.58$ ) and greater age ( =.59,  $t < 2.58$ ) was stronger comparing employees with the less work experience and less age (see table 2, figure 3&4). These results support suggested hypotheses H6 & H7.

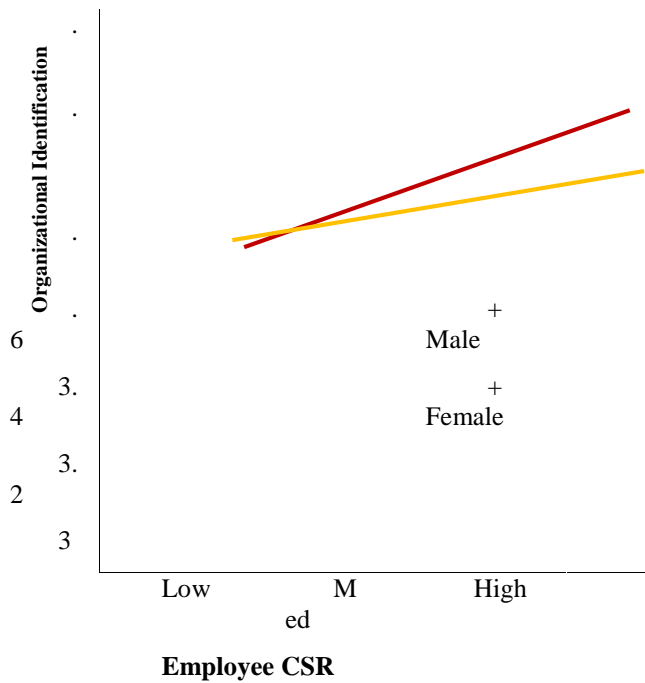


Figure 2: Moderating effect of gender between CSR and OI

### Discussion and implications

The main aim of this study was to explore the mechanism between macro concept (i.e. perceived CSR) and micro concept (i.e. OCB) among hospitality industry using SIT. The study attempted to contribute to the existing literature on CSR-OCB relationship by incorporating OI as a mediating variable, whereas, affective commitment as a mediating variable between OI-OCB relationships. In addition, to understand the association between CSR and OI, the study examined gender, work experience and age as the moderating variables.

The study found employees' perception of firm's involvement in CSR related activities enhances their level of OI, which further enhances their OCB. In addition, the association between CSR-OCB may further be explained via OI, where OI perform the role of a partial mediation. On the other side, the association between OI-OCB may further be enhanced with the affective commitment. As far as a concern with the moderating variables, all three personal factors (i.e. gender, work experience and age) were noted to moderate the positive CSR-OI association.

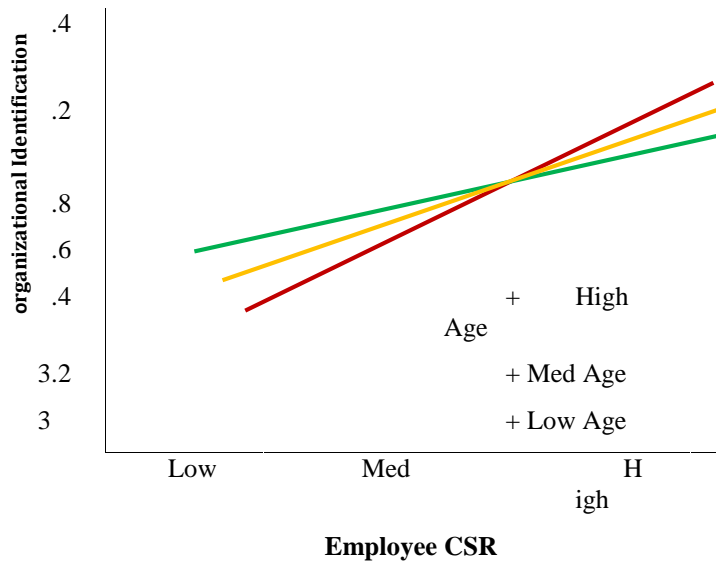


Figure 3: Moderating effect of Age between CSR and OI

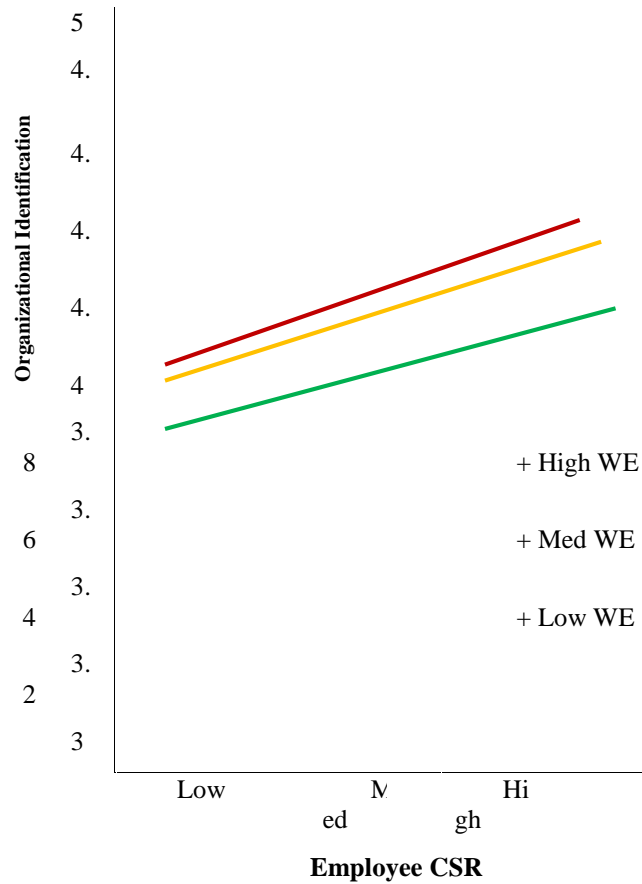


Figure 4: Moderating effect of work-experience between CSR and OI

Though gender was found to strengthen the CSR-OI association. However, this result was against the suggested hypothesis that women strongly moderate the association between CSR and OI comparing male employees. In reality, the study found that male employees strongly strengthen this association than female employees. Although, this finding contradicts previous studies (e.g. Smith et al. 2001; Peterson 2004), however, these results were not exceptional as Ford and Richardson (1994) argued that the results of employees' perception of CSR, based on gender, may be conflicting. For instance, male employees are more sensitive towards their organizational unethical or ethical behaviors comparing female employees. Supporting the same, Hur et al. (2016) also noted that consumers perceived CSR and brand equity is weaker among females and stronger among males. The selectivity model of Meyers-Levy's (1989) also suggests that, male

employees are more selective and sensitive regarding their evaluations of their firm's products, practices and strategies, while female employees are less concerned regarding their evaluations. Therefore, female employees may be less likely to respond to their firm's involvement in CSR related activities comparing males.

In theoretical contributions, one of the golden contributions of this study is organization's involvement in CSR activities promotes customer oriented OCB, which is the need of the hour for the hotels. Whereas, most of the past researchers of OCB has focused organizational justice, leadership behavior, task characteristics, personality traits and job satisfaction as its antecedents. In addition, this study also attempted to identify OI as a mechanism through which employees perceived CSR influence their citizenship behavior. The study found that employees identification towards their organization increased when they perceive their organization is involved in CSR related activities and this ultimately encourage them to perform beyond their job descriptions (i.e. OCB).

Practically, considering the need of hotel industry of having performance oriented employees, this study contributed in many ways. Hotel operators must let their employees know about hotel's involvement in CSR related activities. This may be done through staff meetings, seminars, internet, workshops, team briefing, or employees' contribution in philanthropic related activities. Employees' belief of their hotel's involvement in CSR related activities develop a positive image of their organization and this further develop a sense of virtue, compassion, social justice and equity towards society. Second, we suggests to the policymakers to embed such an environment where HR work (e.g. recruitment, compensation, training, appraisals), as well as other aspects, demonstrate CSR to bring employees behaviors and attitudes and positive reactions of customers. Finally, we suggest hotel industry to focus the personal factors of their hired employees on strengthening the CSR-OI relationship.

Considering limitations, we collected data on independent and dependent variables from a single source, which may raise a question on common method variance (though this was treated well in the analysis portion). Therefore, future researchers should use different sources to collect data.

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