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Before a hotel room booking, do perceptions vary by gender? The case of Spain

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ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is implemented unevenly in the Spanish tourism industry. The hotel infrastructure of the country is not an exception. This study analyses the environmental, social and economic dimensions of initiatives with respect to the hotel offer which consumers living in Spain appreciate and value more based on their gender. Empirical analysis is approached using a model of structural equations in which the intensity and sign of differences between men and women can be seen. The main results show that aspects related to the environment are the most important for both genders. The dimensions in which differences are defined are the economic, more valued by men; and social, more valued by women. The document provides relevant information, filling a knowledge gap in this field.

1. Introduction

Companies are trying to boost their legitimacy in the eyes of their stakeholders by including CSR in their business, a move that also helps to enhance their corporate image and reputation or customer loyalty (Forehand & Grier, 2003; Gupta & Pirsch, 2008; Gutierrez-Rodriguez, Cuesta-Valino, & Vazquez-Burguete, 2017; Moisescu, 2018). Consumers play an important role in supporting the various CSR initiatives that companies adopt (Arredondo Trapero, Maldonado De Lozada, De la, & Garcia, 2011). Ellen, Webb, and Mohr (2006) found that consumers respond positively to an organisation's CSR efforts only when they have been truly integrated in its offer. Gonzalez, Korchia, Menuet, and Urbain (2009) distinguished between four types of consumers: socially responsible consumers, local consumers, good causers, and indifferent consumers. The results of their buying behaviour can encourage two types of actions (Paek & Nelson, 2009): boycotting and buycotting.

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A company's overall image plays an important role in buying behaviour (Baloglu, & McCleary, 1999; Bloemer & de Ruyter, 1998; Chen & Tsai, 2007; Han, Hsu, & Lee, 2009; Lin, Morais, Kerstetter, & Hou, 2007; Ryu, Han, & Kim, 2007). Consumers value CSR but are nevertheless highly sensitive to price (Arredondo Trapero, Maldonado De Lozada, De la, & Garcia, 2010); although there have been studies which have indicated that consumers are willing to pay a premium for the inclusion of CSR in a company's business strategy (Arredondo Trapero et al., 2011; Garcia-Pozo, Sanchez-Ollero, & Marchante-Mera, 2013).

Demographic factors have become a cornerstone of marketing segmentation. How gender influences consumer attitudes towards CSR and perception of it has generated considerable interest (Arredondo Trapero et al., 2011; Dietz, Kalof, & Stern, 2002).

Men and women process information differently and use different types of information to process the stimuli they receive from companies (Darley & Smith, 1995); however, the influence of gender, age and the measures consumers are willing to take to demand that companies implement CSR initiatives have hardly been addressed (Arredondo Trapero et al., 2011). Numerous studies have analysed gender-based differences in buying behaviour (Arredondo Trapero et al., 2011; Atakan, Burnaz, & Topcu, 2008; Bae & Lee, 2011; Hsu & Burns, 2012; Jucan & Jucan, 2013; Kahreh, Babania, Tive, & Mirmehdi, 2014; Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001; Perez & Rodriguez del Bosque, 2013) and with regard to organisational governance, especially in the hotel industry (Adib & Guerrier, 2003; Byun & Youn, 2012; Choi, 2013; Peiro-Signes, Segarra-Oña, Verma, Mondejar-Jimenez, & Vargas-Vargas, 2014) or service orientation and job satisfaction (Petrovic, Jovanovic, Markovic, Armenski, & Markovic, 2014; Santero-Sanchez, Segovia-Perez, Castro-Nunez, Figueroa-Domecq, & Talon-Ballestero, 2015).

The theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) and the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) have been widely used to examine and explain consumers' attitudes toward environmental activities and other corporate socially responsible actions. However, a review of the literature suggests that consumers' attitudes toward environmental issues do not always lead to behaviours that support those beliefs (Jones, Reilly, Cox, & Cole, 2017).

Studies such as those of Choi and Park (2017), Akturan and Tezcan (2014), Chang, Burns, and Francis (2004) argue that men and women are different beings with differentiation in shopping activities, and gender plays an important role in the study of consumer behaviour.

In the area of tourism and hospitality, however, earlier studies tend to focus on the impact of behavioural variables (e.g., purchase frequency or loyalty) mainly in reference to price, and no attempt has been made to examine individual-level factors such as gender (Choi, Joe, & Mattila, 2018). Despite gender differences, research on how certain CSR initiatives are perceived with respect to the purchase of accommodation services is unexplored. To bridge that gap, the current paper examined how genders differ. Given the lack of empirical evidence on how men and women perceive some of the CSR activities pursued by the hotel industry, this study sought to analyse the importance that men and women give to certain economic, social and environmental CSR practices. The global results confirm the influence of the environmental

dimension for both genders, when considering economic dimension men pay more attention and interest, in contrast, measures related to social dimension are more and better valued by women.

2. Preliminary research

This study is part of a larger investigation of the relationships between CSR and consumer perception in the hotel industry. The previous stage of this research (Mondejar-Jimenez, Sevilla-Sevilla, & Garcia-Pozo, 2016) consisted of analysing, from a consumer perspective, the influence of certain actions often undertaken by the hotel industry under the umbrella of CSR.

The first research stage was carried out with the purpose of giving an explanation for the effects certain CSR actions have on demand on the basis of the amount of importance that the demand attaches to it. The questionnaire enabled a breakdown of four latent factors identified which have a bearing on consumers' perception. A total of 23 items were used to explain each of the latent factors identified: social (CSR-S), economic (CSR-Ec), environmental (CSR-En) and hotel services (CPH) from 5-star to 2-star hotels, hostels and rural accommodation. The aim of the first study was to test three basic hypotheses about the relations between the four latent factors. As a general result, a model was confirmed that allows the user to establish the effects of CSR on consumer perception, considering different factors. Intervention in relation to the factors should improve perception of the social, economic and environmental dimensions. All the relationships found between the different factors were highlighted, except in the first hypothesis (the one with least intensity) related to the influence of the social dimension on hotel services, which is not only significant but also served to validate the model definitively (Mondejar-Jimenez et al., 2016).

3. Theoretical background and development of hypotheses

Most of the literature dealing with CSR defines it as a multidimensional construction consisting of three pillars: economy, society and the environment (Martinez & Rodriguez Del Bosque, 2013). Measurement and perception of CSR by consumers remains problematic, despite the literature provided and the variety of methods for measuring consumer perceptions. Virtually all studies suffer from numerous limitations (Turker, 2009); a variety of measurement tools can be found (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Marin & Ruiz, 2007, Matute-Vallejo, Bravo, & Pina, 2010; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) and, at times, the results are clearly inconsistent, due to discrepancies in how conceptual aspects such as the image of CSR itself are defined (Peloza & Shang, 2011).

The present research seeks to analyse the causal relationship (direction and intensity thereof) of men and women's perceptions, identifying potential differences between genders in how they perceive the various economic, social and environmental initiatives the hotel industry pursues. The same working hypotheses have been maintained for all the foregoing, but analysing the results from the men's and women's samples separately.

3.1. Perception by gender

Although some authors maintain that the purchase-decision process differs between genders (Choi & Park, 2017; Okazaki & Hirose, 2009), others argue that there is no significant evidence that this is the case (Akman & Rehan, 2014), although they have shown that women pay slightly more attention to certain dimensions of CSR (social and environmental) and that, of the two, the social dimension is the least important for consumers of both genders (Kahreh et al., 2014). Women are more likely to be environmentally conscious and eco-friendly than men when dealing with purchasing decisions (Laroche et al., 2001). According to the OECD (2008), women are more concerned about the environment and sustainable development, so from a strategic marketing point of view it would be desirable for products and services to be created tailored to women's needs and desires (Jucan & Jucan, 2013). Han et al. (2009) found that female customers are more willing to visit an eco-friendly hotel and more likely to engage in word-of-mouth recommendations, and that older women are more willing to pay more at a green hotel. Although the impact of gender and age on decision-taking has been widely demonstrated in various studies on marketing and green consumption (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Im, Bayus, & Mason, 2003; Laroche et al., 2001; Mittal & Kamakura, 2001; Vining & Ebreo, 1990), few attempts have been made to determine whether these demographic characteristics affect the intention to purchase in the context of hotels.

3.2. Social dimension

There are few studies related with what sustainability means to consumers, and which aspects of companies' patterns of behaviour they most appreciate and which they would most like to change (Jones, Hillier, & Comfort, 2014). The positive influence of the insertion of certain messages related with hypothetical CSR accreditation and information intended to highlight companies' social and ethical behaviour on perceived quality of tourism products has been analysed (Marchoo & Butcher, 2012). In the case of Spain, specifically Andalusia, case studies show that certain standards like ISO 14001 EMS not only help to improve a hotel's productivity and performance, but also improve clients' perception of the hotel. It has been confirmed that from the point of view of consumers, only two dimensions are appreciated: society and the environment (Martinez, Perez, & Rodríguez Del Bosque, 2014). The authors highlight the need for analysis of the consequences of clients' responsible behaviour, because there is still little empirical evidence. The importance given to the social dimension by consumers identified in the preliminary research led us to include it as a study variable and the object of the first hypothesis for analysing the differences between women (H1-W) and men (H1-M):

> **H1-W** and **H1-M**. The Social Dimension (CSR-S) of CSR has a direct influence upon the hotel services (CPH)

3.3. Environmental dimension

Optimistic analyses confirm consumers' increased sensitivity towards environmental matters (Chan & Hawkins, 2010). Some case studies have examined how

environmental values and awareness have a significant positive effect on tourists' environmental behaviour intentions (Rodriguez-Oromendia, Reina-Paz, & Sevilla-Sevilla, 2013). Environmental concerns dominate sustainability literature, and more stress needs to be given to how economic and social objectives can be effectively combined with environmental objectives (Chasin, 2014) to prevent the term itself becoming a source of uncertainty. The number of sustainability terms continues to rise as awareness of the importance of the field increases, but they all make an interconnected system between protection of the environment, economic performance and social welfare (Glavic & Lukman, 2007). On this basis, the second hypothesis and sub-hypotheses for women (H2-W) and men (H2-M) are formulated as follows:

H2-W and **H2-M**: The Environmental Dimension (CSR-En) has an influence on the Social Dimension (CSR-S) and on the Economic Dimension (CSR-Ec)

- **Sub-Hypothesis 2.1-W** and **2.1-M**: the Environmental Dimension (CSR-En) has a direct influence upon the Social Dimension (CSR-S);
- **Sub-Hypothesis 2.2-W** and **2.2-M**: the Environmental Dimension (CSR-En) has a direct influence upon the Economic Dimension (CSR-Ec).

3.4. Economic dimension

The concept of sustainability and sustainable development has often been devalued by a slight redefinition which is adapted to a wide range of interests and insists on classic economic development being the motor (Johnston, Everard, Santillo, & Robert, 2007). Different stakeholder perspectives and interests are involved in the discussion (Souza, Rosenhead, Salhofer, Valle, & Lins, 2015). There is no doubt that the hotel industry has a significant impact at the social, economic and environmental levels (Chung & Parker, 2010; Melissen, 2013). Studies have been carried out about how holiday hotels, which are generally on the coast or in natural areas where the environment is an essential tourist attraction resource, feel obliged to implement specific environmental management measures. However, in hotels where their main customers are business tourists, there is more concern about human resources management and occupational health than about environmental management. These hotels are usually located in urban areas (towns or industrial areas), and the impact of environmental management may be less, there being more interest in topics which can produce increased productivity and cost reduction (Rodriguez-Anton, Alonso, Celemin, & Rubio, 2012). These arguments led us to include the economic dimension as a factor of analysis in consumers' perception of hotel services, and the third gender differentiation hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3-W and **H3-M**: the Economic Dimension (CSR-Ec) has a direct influence upon the hotel services (CPH).

4. Research methodology

Internet users in Spain have been used as the study sample for preparing this work. According to the Observatorio Nacional de las Telecomunicaciones y de la Sociedad

de la Información (ONTSI) (2013), the number of internet user purchasers in Spain amounts to more than 15.200.000 individuals, and the two leading products in that market belong to the tourism sector: purchasing transport tickets and booking accommodation.

A questionnaire was prepared with 50 questions. The questionnaire was elaborated on the basis of industry reports, interviews with hotel managers and the work carried out by the authors with more than 20 years of experience in the hotel industry and academic research. In 37 questions, the Likert seven-point ascending scale ('not at all important' to 'very important') was used to measure the importance given to certain variables related to actions the hotel industry implements (water-saving devices, sustainability reports, facilities for people with disabilities, supplementary services, quality of food and drinks, etc.). A pre-test of the questionnaire was carried out among 21 professionals (academic researchers and tourism consultants) to refine possible errors in the design of the questionnaire and/or in the transcription of the data that were to be collected, in order to ensure the quality of the information obtained, analyse the absence of data and observe the coherence in the answers given.

A sample of 409 people (56% women and 44% men) belonging to a cross-section of the Spanish population was used for the empirical analysis; in both cases, the sample was collected in 2015. From the size of the sample, a maximum error of 4.8% is obtained for a confidence level of 95%. The descriptive results of the sample can be summarised briefly. Sixty-seven per cent (67.7%) of the population is between 26 and 45 years old, the rest are in age bands of 16–25 (10%), 46–55 (17.6%), 56–65 (3.7%) and over 65 years (1%). Seventy-four per cent (74%) of respondents have been to university, 7% have only primary education and the rest have secondary education. In terms of work, most respondents are employees (64.1%), students, retired and unemployed account for 24.4% of the sample, and the rest are self-employed. With regard to the number of trips they made in the previous twelve months for professional or leisure reasons, the largest group (32%) made between 1 and 2 trips, followed by individuals who made between 3 and 4 trips (31%), the rest claims to have made between 5 and 6 trips (12%) or more than 6 (25%). Most respondents live in family units of 3 to 4 members (53.5%), followed by those who live in family units of 1 or 2 members (40.6%), 5–6 members (5.6%) and more than 6 (0.3%). The sample shows results from the 19 autonomous communities of Spain (except Ceuta and Melilla in the north of Africa). Ninety-three per cent (93%) of the study population states that they usually buy tourism products (airline tickets, train tickets, hotel bookings, etc.) online. The type of accommodation used by 78.4% is 2, 3, 4 and 5-star hotels. Only 5.6% preferably use rural accommodation, 3.7% hostels and 12.3% go to other types of accommodation (family homes, friends, camp sites, apartments, etc.).

In order to interpret the results obtained from the sample, and the possible interdependence between the variables, a factorial analysis was carried out. The method that was used to extract the factors is the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a dimension-reduction tool. PCA analyzes the total variance of the set of observed variables and try to know the main components that define the set of observed variables. The four latent factors and items extracted from the sample are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Latent factors and items.

Latent factor	Item
Environment (CSR-En)	EN-1 The hotel suggests a system to the customers for establishing when they think it is necessary to change the towels and sheets instead of changing them on a daily basis.
	EN-2 The hotel is equipped with water-saving devices such as: gauges and water timers, high-pressure and low-flow shower heads, mixer taps, dual flush cisterns, etc.
	EN-3 The hotel equips the communal zones such as toilets, corridors or exteriors with light gauges and timers.
	EN-4 The hotel equips the rooms with automatic systems for disconnecting the air-conditioning when doors and windows are opened.
	EN-5 The hotel makes the customers aware of its commitment to the environment, and asks for collaboration while they are staying in the hotel, by making small gestures that the customers themselves can carry out.
	EN-6 The hotel provides information in the rooms about good codes of practice aimed at the customers, e.g., take a shower instead of a bath, keep the air-conditioning system at the recommended temperature, not throwing waste down into lavatory, etc.
Social (CSR-S)	S1 The hotel has an ethical code of company conduct and declares that it respects human rights.
	S2 The hotel endeavours to treat its employees fairly because it has a non-discriminatory contracting policy, equal pay policy, reconciles the employees professional and family lives, etc.
	S3 The hotel has procedures for contracting only suppliers who implement environmental and sustainability measures and policies.
	S4 The hotel publishes annual sustainability reports.
	S5 The hotel is equipped with facilities for the disabled (menus in braille, round tables in restaurants, etc.).
	S6 The hotel sponsors educational, cultural and public health activities.
	S7 The hotel makes economic donations to good causes.
	S8 The hotel tries to improve the quality of life of the local communities where it operates.
	S9 The hotel supports world initiatives such as the Global Compact, the Ethical Tourism Code, Global Reporting Initiative or EMAS.
Economic (CSR-Ec)	EC1 The hotel endeavours to obtain as much economic profit as possible to guarantee its continuity
	EC2 The hotel tries to guarantee its own economic success in the long term.
	EC3 The hotel tries to control its production costs.
Hotel services (CPH)	CPH1 Quality of the facilities (comfort, cleanliness, design, etc.).
	CPH2 Quality of the food & drink (breakfast, dinner, lunch)
	CPH3 Perceived image of the establishment's website.
	CPH4 Free Wifi service
	CPH5 Supplementary services: swimming pool, gymnasium, spa, meeting rooms, etc.

Source: Prepared by the authors.

To confirm the hypotheses, we started with a reflexive model and used the partial least squares (PLS) technique. The absence of normality and the predictive orientation of the proposed model make estimation of this model of structural equations using the partial least squares (PLS) methodology (Becker & Rosnita, 2016; Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003) recommendable. It is one of the most used methodologies when cause-effect relationships need to be analysed (Cordente-Rodriguez, Mondejar-Jimenez, Meseguer-Santamaría, Mondejar-Jimenez, & Vargas-Vargas, 2010; Fritzsche & Oz, 2007; Mondejar-Jimenez & Vargas-Vargas, 2010; Mondejar-Jimenez, Mondejar-Jimenez, Vargas-Vargas, & Gazquez-Abad, 2012; Mondejar-Jimenez, Vargas-Vargas, & Saez-Martinez, 2018; Villanueva-Alvaro, Mondejar-Jimenez, & Saez-Martinez, 2017) because it tells us the sign and intensity of these relationships. For the structural submodel, in keeping with the theoretical framework outlined above, the Hotel Services (CPH)
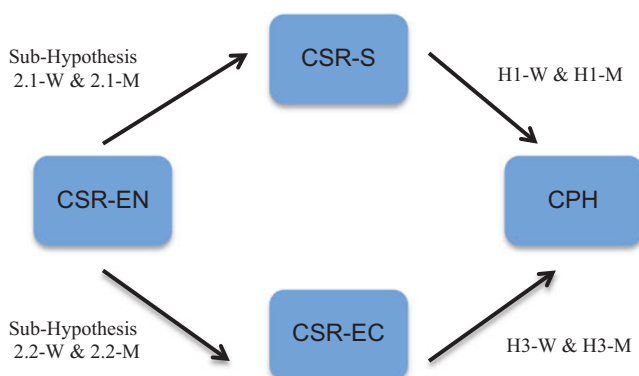
Figure 1. Conceptual model.

variable was considered exogenous. The estimation was performed with the PLS technique, using the SmartPLS 2.0.M3 software package. The conceptual model to test hypotheses is presented in Figure 1.

5. Results

The results obtained for men and women were as shown below (Figures 2 and 3).

The results obtained for the submodel bear out the choice of indicators. This outcome also constitutes a measure of the validity of the questionnaire used to capture the four latent dimensions. The usual goodness of fit measure, proposed in Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, and Lauro (2005), is the geometric mean of the average communality (outer model) and the average R^2 (inner model). As regards the reliability of the instrument of measurement, the Cronbach's alpha value for each of the latent variables was greater, as shown in Tables 2 and 3. The composite reliability indices were also greater than 0.5 in all cases. Thus, the convergent validity criteria recommended in the literature were met.

With regard to convergent validity (AVE), the values of the four constructs were near to or greater than 0.5, as recommended in Fornell and Larcker (1981) and the cross-loads were always greater for the latent variables on which the respective items were loaded; the discriminant validity criterion is also met, as for the four latent variables, the corresponding AVE is greater than the square of the estimated correlation between them.

With regard to the structural submodel, as shown in Tables 2 and 3, the R^2 coefficients associated with the latent variable regressions were significant, with values greater than 0.1 in all cases (Falk & Miller, 1992). An analysis of direct and overall effects (Table 4) showed the dependence between the latent variables and tended to confirm the initial hypotheses for the model.

All the causal relationships were statistically significant. The global results confirm the influence of the environmental dimension for both genders, so we can say that it is beginning to increase environmental awareness in the Spanish consumer. The main differences between the behaviour of men and women reside in two other factors linked to CSR. If we rank the values obtained, women show greater awareness for
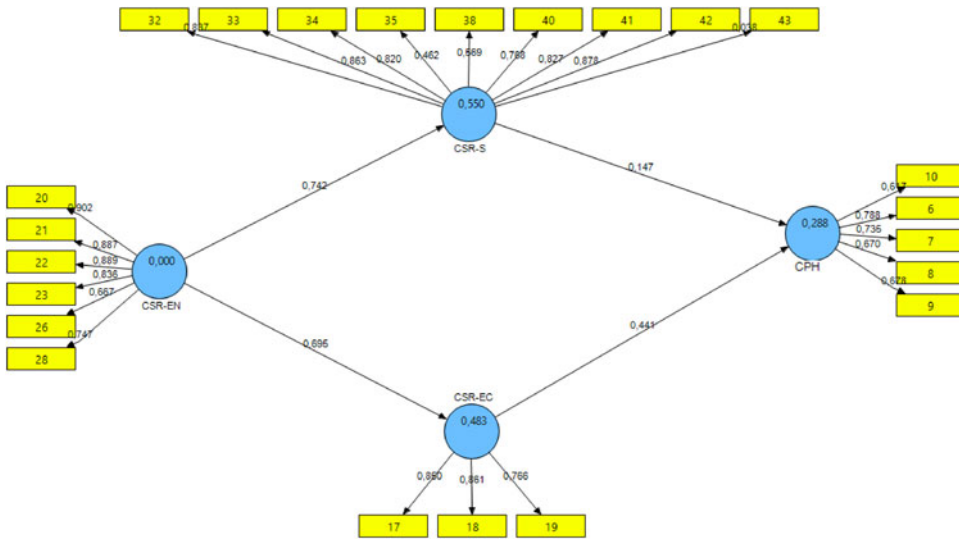
Figure 2. Structural sub-model: Men. Source: Prepared by the authors.
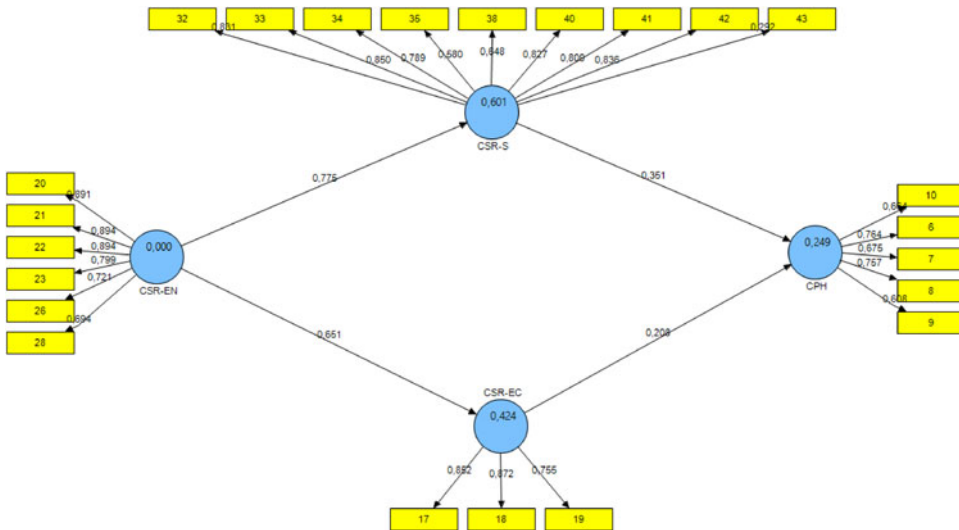
Figure 3. Structural sub-model: Women. Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 2. Reliability measurements: Men.

	AVE	Composite reliability	R Square	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
CPH	0.490074	0.826742	0.287553	0.743821	0.490074	0.126004
CSR-EC	0.684019	0.866259	0.482512	0.770101	0.684019	0.300781
CSR-EN	0.682056	0.927167		0.904073	0.682056	
CSR-S	0.522331	0.895261	0.549995	0.856733	0.522331	0.285361

Source: Prepared by the authors.

environmental issues, followed by social issues and lastly by economic issues. In the case of men, the sequence is economic, environmental, and then social issues (although the difference between economy and environment is not significant).

Table 3. Reliability measurements: Women.

	AVE	Composite reliability	R Square	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
CPH	0.484407	0.823433	0.249431	0.736686	0.484406	0.060752
CSR-Ec	0.685580	0.866958	0.424123	0.770261	0.685579	0.274610
CSR-En	0.672134	0.924082		0.899807	0.672134	
CSR-S	0.546056	0.910873	0.600922	0.884980	0.546056	0.325628

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 4. Overall effects between latent variables.

	Overall effects: Men					Overall effects: Women			
	CPH	CSR-Ec	CSR-En	CSR-S		CPH	CSR-Ec	CSR-En	CSR-S
CPH					CPH				
CSR-Ec	0.440528				CSR-Ec	0.207925			
CSR-En	0.415056	0.694631		0.741616	CSR-En	0.407131	0.651247		0.775192
CSR-S	0.147046				CSR-S	0.350520			

Source: Prepared by the authors.

6. Conclusions

6.1. Empirical findings and contribution

Tourism is a highly competitive sector. In the era of big data, the challenge in the sector is not to have information, but rather the ability to interpret that information in a way that minimises risks in decision making and rationalise marketing strategies that are aimed at one of the main stakeholders: customers.

In this work, we took the multidimensional nature of CSR as starting point to then analyse whether actions aimed at the final consumer related with economic, social or environmental aspects are perceived and valued with greater or lesser intensity by men and women.

The results obtained allow us to affirm that when choosing a specific hotel, issues related to the environmental dimension have the same importance for both genders, which indicates a society increasingly aware of issues related to sustainability. This result should not, a priori, be surprising, since the survey has been carried out among Spaniards and/or residents in Spain, one of the main tourist destinations in the world and the European country with the greatest biodiversity. It should also be noted that, among the different segments of the Spanish population, the youngest are those who attach most importance to environmental issues.

The differences, although not being extremely significant, appear when considering price, promotions, production costs, etc., which are directly related to the economic dimension; in the latter case, men pay more attention and interest than women. In contrast, measures related to healthy living habits, marketing actions of social causes, commitments of the organisation with other interest groups (social dimension) are more and better valued by women; these differences are probably directly related to the nature of Spanish society and culture, although this should be the subject of a future line of research.

CSR in the hotel industry has the ability to continuously innovate and provide solutions to environmental challenges, and sustainability is one of them. Taking into

account the growing environmental awareness of society in general, and hotels being one of the main infrastructures for tourist destination development, it is important that hotel companies should not only strengthen their strategies in environmental matters, but also communicate them through their marketing actions, so increasing their chances of success. Integrating the interests of demand into the offer will give companies greater legitimacy in the eyes of this key player, the customer.

The results confirm, as Choi and Park (2017) and Okazaki and Hirose (2009) maintain, that the purchase-decision process differs between genders but there are no significant differences. Women are more likely to be environmentally conscious than men when dealing with purchasing decisions (Laroche et al., 2001).

There are implications that should be noted: this research has contributed to an understanding of the decision-making process with respect to the intent to make a hotel booking, this perspective had not been studied previously. Second, as in the work of Choi and Park (2017) regarding behaviour intention, a strategy is required that places a priority on customer preferences, and if diverse brands and promotions are also provided to targeted consumers, a positive image will be created on an on-going basis, and will contribute to the reinforcement of behavioural intention by attracting the attention. Ultimately, it is possible to apply this to the market segmentation of the hotel industry in Spain and identify target markets by understanding the purchase preferences between men and women, and emphasising those aspects that are most attractive to the client. Hotel managers should establish marketing strategies that focus on user diversification and personalisation. Women make decisions by looking closely at products and services before purchasing them (Choi & Park, 2017) and, while they consider themselves rational consumers, their subsequent desire is greater than that of men, who make decisions simply directed towards a goal. Marketing managers could present alternatives to encourage that desire.

6.2. Research limitations and directions for further research

Mention must be made of this study's limitations, chief among them the fact that its results cannot be generalised, as the analysis was conducted exclusively amongst Spanish consumers. This limitation opens the door to a future line of research on the behaviour of other groups in the European Community with different sociodemographic and cultural backgrounds. The current results could be partially explained by country-specific factors; for instance, legislative changes could be influential in how certain initiatives are perceived, as has been noted elsewhere.

Future work to be carried out will be to analyse, first, differences between different sociodemographic groups of the European Union in order to establish comparisons by country or region, and then analyse behaviour based on gender. Another possible line of research would be to examine the reasons why men and women value the economic and social dimensions with greater or lesser intensity.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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