Original article

Customer perspective on corporate social responsibility of restaurants. Validation of a scale

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Perspectiva de clientes sobre la responsabilidad social empresarial de restaurantes. Validación de una escala

Perspectiva do cliente sobre a responsabilidade social corporativa em restaurantes. Validação de uma escala

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ABSTRACT

Currently, socially responsible practice and the monitoring of the degree to which it is carried out is a condition for the sustainability of restaurants as enterprises. The contextual validation of research instruments and their theoretical and cultural bases is a prerequisite for the successful development of socially responsible management approaches in restaurants. The aim of the study was to verify the validity and reliability, in the field of restaurant companies, of a scale for the evaluation of corporate social responsibility from the customers' perspective. The research was quantitative and developed under a cross-sectional approach. A survey validated by other authors was used to evaluate Corporate Social Responsibility. The sample consisted of 420 customers of restaurants in an area of high tourist attraction in Lima, Peru. Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to process the results. The results showed an adequate goodness of fit of the model and acceptable indexes of

convergent validity, discriminant validity and reliability. The analysis also revealed the need to continue perfecting the wording of the instrument's *items* to meet the requirements for the evaluation of corporate social responsibility in the context of the restaurant industry.

Keywords: restaurants; corporate social responsibility; rating scale; confirmatory factor analysis.

RESUMEN

En la actualidad, la práctica socialmente responsable y el monitoreo del grado en que se lleva a cabo constituyen una condición de sostenibilidad de los restaurantes como empresas. La validación contextual de instrumentos de investigación, de sus bases teóricas y culturales, constituye un requisito indispensable para el éxito en el desarrollo de enfoques de gestión socialmente responsables en restaurantes. El estudio tuvo como objetivo verificar la validez y fiabilidad, en el ámbito de las empresas de restaurantes, de una escala para la evaluación de la responsabilidad social empresarial desde la perspectiva de los clientes. La investigación posee un carácter cuantitativo y se desarrolló bajo un enfoque transversal. Se empleó una encuesta validada por otros autores para evaluar la Responsabilidad Social Empresarial. La muestra estuvo integrada por 420 clientes de restaurantes en una zona de alta atracción turística en Lima, Perú. Para el procesamiento de los resultados, se empleó el Análisis Factorial Confirmatorio. Los resultados mostraron una adecuada bondad de ajuste del modelo e índices aceptables de validez convergente, validez discriminante y fiabilidad. El análisis también reveló la necesidad de continuar perfeccionando la redacción de los *ítems* del instrumento con ajuste a los requerimientos de evaluación de la responsabilidad social empresarial en el contexto de la restauración.

Palabras clave: restaurantes; responsabilidad social empresarial; escala de evaluación; análisis factorial confirmatorio.

RESUMO

Hoje em dia, a prática socialmente responsável e o monitoramento do grau em que ela é realizada é uma condição para a sustentabilidade dos restaurantes como empresas. A validação contextual de instrumentos de pesquisa, suas bases teóricas e culturais, é um pré-requisito para o desenvolvimento bem-sucedido de abordagens de gestão socialmente responsável em restaurantes. O objetivo do

estudo foi verificar a validade e a confiabilidade de uma escala para a avaliação da responsabilidade social corporativa da perspectiva dos clientes no campo das empresas de restaurantes. A pesquisa é de natureza quantitativa e foi realizada por meio de uma abordagem de corte transversal. Uma pesquisa validada por outros autores foi usada para avaliar a responsabilidade social corporativa. A amostra foi composta por 420 clientes de restaurantes em uma área de grande atração turística em Lima, Peru. A análise fatorial confirmatória foi usada para processar os resultados. Os resultados mostraram uma adequação adequada do modelo e índices aceitáveis de validade convergente, validade discriminante e confiabilidade. A análise também revelou a necessidade de um maior refinamento da redação dos itens do instrumento, de acordo com as exigências da avaliação da responsabilidade social corporativa no contexto dos restaurantes.

Palavras-chave: restaurantes; responsabilidade social corporativa; escala de avaliação; análise fatorial confirmatória.

INTRODUCTION

The restaurant industry in Peru has experienced significant growth in recent years. In February of this year, Peru's National Institute of Statistics and Informatics reported a growth of 2.68 % in the country's domestic product in 2022. The sector that recorded the greatest expansion was accommodation and catering, whose growth accounted for 23.17 % of the total increase (Inei, 2023).

In Peru, government actions in function of giving a socially responsible orientation to the activity of restaurants are shown in regulations such as Supreme Decree No. 011-2019 that approves the Regulation for the categorization and tourist qualification of restaurants (Mincetur, 2019). The elements included as requirements for the categorization of restaurants as tourist imply behaviors in favor of sustainability in economic, social and environmental terms.

Despite government incentives and efforts by civil organizations such as Peru 2021 (Canessa Illich & Garcia Vega, 2021), socially responsible approaches in restoration are incipient in business practice and are beginning to gain space in academia (Altamirano Girao et al., 2021; Horna Bances et al., 2018; Matta & De Suremain, 2019; Tello, 2019).

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a particularly relevant concept that is closely linked to the concept of sustainable development, and has evolved more rapidly since the 1960s (Horna Bances et al., 2018; Susano García et al., 2021). During this period, the definition of the concept has undergone changes and, although some aspects are becoming better delineated, it is difficult to have a single appropriate definition.

In general terms, Horna Bances et al. (2018), Susano García et al. (2021), Tello (2019), Matta and De Suremain (2019), Canessa Illich and García Vega (2021), Lara Manjarrez and Sánchez Gutiérrez (2021), Altamirano Girao et al. (2021) and Calderón Quijije et al. (2023) consider CSR as a decision that organizations make voluntarily to contribute to sustainable development. CSR is integrated into all the activities of the organization. It involves decision making, considering the economic, social and environmental impacts that can be generated, and also the willingness to be ethical and transparent in accounting for the consequences of their actions on stakeholders and on the sustainable development of society.

Responsible corporate behavior can provide numerous competitive advantages of a quantitative and qualitative nature (Calderón Quijije et al., 2023; Canessa Illich & García Vega, 2021; Horna Bances et al., 2018; Lara Manjarrez & Sánchez Gutiérrez, 2021; Susano García et al., 2021). From a qualitative perspective, it is asserted that CSR has a positive impact on aspects such as increased customer loyalty, brand image and company reputation; motivation and commitment on the part of workers, improved quality of life and organizational climate, as well as greater collaboration with the company on the part of the workers' families, investors, shareholders, government and customers.

From a quantitative perspective, the adoption of a CSR approach brings competitive advantages, including the promotion of savings, recycling and the reuse of resources, improves the company's financial situation, reduces operating costs, generates new products and services and new business opportunities, and increases productivity and efficiency.

In Peru, CSR studies became relevant in the 1990s. The Peruvian government and non-governmental institutions such as the Civil Society Organization Peru 2021 work to achieve the disclosure and commitment of companies to the development of socially responsible behavior (Canessa Illich & García Vega, 2021; Horna Bances et al., 2018).

Theoretical models of CSR

For the study of CSR and socially responsible management, different models are used in the practical and theoretical context. Research is carried out using techniques based on such models, the validity of which has not been sufficiently corroborated in the Peruvian national context.

The literature reviewed reports several theoretical models that support CSR studies. One of them associates the dimensions of CSR with the dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental (Canessa Illich & García Vega, 2021; Rodríguez Fonseca et al., 2021).

The economic dimension refers to the willingness to take into account in the management processes, the economic impact of the company's activities on the company's own finances and the economic contribution to society through issues such as wages, productivity, job creation, among others. The environmental dimension considers the impact of the company's activities on the conservation, recovery and development of environmental conditions for human health, biodiversity, air, land and water. Meanwhile, the social dimension considers the impact of the organization on the quality of life of society, workers, respect for human and labor rights, among other aspects.

The Civil Society Organization Peru 2021 has developed the well-known CSR Model, which is simple and of practical value. The model defines seven stakeholders with which a company relates: shareholders/investors, employees and their families, clients, suppliers, the government, the community and the environment. For each stakeholder group, CSR actions that can be developed with them and the benefits they generate are included (Canessa Illich & García Vega, 2021; Horna Bances et al., 2018).

The two models referred have the limitation that they define components that are not clearly interrelated in theory. This condition can lead to fragmented and unsystematic approaches to CSR.

Horna Bances et al. (2018), Canessa Illich and García Vega (2021) and Rodríguez Fonseca et al. (2021) do not report validation studies of the models used in their research. García de los Salmones et al. (2005), for their part, carried out the practical validation of Carroll's model (1991), which has had a high impact on CSR studies at the international level, as can be seen from the 17 424 citations to the article reported by Google Scholar. The validation of this model constitutes an important precedent for CSR studies.

The model is called the Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid Theory. According to this theory, CSR is made up of four factors that are organized hierarchically: 1) economic responsibilities, 2) legal responsibilities, 3) ethical responsibilities and 4) philanthropic responsibilities.

Each hierarchical level constitutes the foundation on which subsequent levels are built. The degree of generalization of the definition of the components of the model and the explanatory value of the way in which they are related have been the key to the success of this theory in academia. The four levels that make up Carroll's (1991) theoretical conception are as follows:

- Level 1. Economic responsibilities: these have to do with producing goods and services that consumers need, while maximizing the company's profits, maintaining a strong competitive position, operating efficiently and with consistent profitability.
- Level 2. Legal responsibilities: these relate to compliance with international, state, federal and local laws and regulations, as well as observance of the rules on the basis of which businesses operate. The assumption of responsibilities implies the consideration that adherence to legality is a criterion of business success and that the benefits and services offered must comply, at least, with the minimum legal requirements.
- Level 3. Ethical responsibilities: refers to the fact that corporate performance must be consistent with social customs and the ethical and moral standards adopted by society. The good citizenship of companies is judged by their adherence to these standards, which go beyond mere compliance with laws and obligations.
- Level 4. Philanthropic responsibilities: refers to performance consistent with social expectations, that the company finances artistic presentations, promotes and voluntarily participates in charitable activities within the community, provides assistance to public and private education and projects that increase the quality of life in the locality.

Something common to all the models mentioned to explain CSR is that they take into account the perspective of the various stakeholders in relation to the factors and variables that make up this construct.

Techniques for the study of CSR

The techniques for the study of CSR are specified in accordance with the theoretical model from which the authors start and the research objectives they pursue, which in some cases combine

several theoretical considerations. The literature consulted revealed a shortage of sufficiently validated techniques for obtaining and processing information for the study of CSR.

García de los Salmones et al. (2005) developed a survey based on Carroll's (1991) Corporate Social Responsibility Pyramid Theory, which defines four levels of CSR: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. The objective was to examine how customers evaluate the socially responsible behavior of service companies.

To validate the instrument, the survey was applied to a sample of customers of mobile telephony companies. A stratified random sampling method was used, considering the market share proportions of the companies, as well as the gender and age distribution among consumers. A total of 689 valid responses were obtained, with a sampling error of 3.7% for a confidence level of 95%.

After applying Confirmatory Factor Analysis (a statistical technique to validate the structure of the measurement and adjust the models), the authors concluded that consumers perceive three levels of corporate behavior: economic, ethical-legal and philanthropic, instead of four. Furthermore, according to the results presented, the resulting scale proved to be reliable, valid, concise and useful.

There is consensus among restaurant companies on the need to promote socially responsible behavior in this sector, which has a significant impact on tourism and has repercussions on the sustainability of the industry. As a result, the development of CSR by restaurants is encouraged, but there are few instruments for measuring the degree of success achieved in this regard.

Rodríguez Fonseca et al. (2021) reported the use of a qualitative and quantitative methodology to determine the expectations of stakeholders in relation to the economic, environmental and social dimensions of CSR of restaurant associations in the department of Bocayá, Colombia. They evaluated the economic, social and environmental dimensions of CSR and designed policies in relation to these same dimensions for the implementation of CSR in restaurants. The research instruments were not made explicit in the article, nor was the size of the sample used specified.

Horna Bances et al. (2018) employed a survey with 58 *items* to administrators or managers of restaurants in the district of Miraflores in Lima, Peru, with the objective of determining strengths and weaknesses of the company for planning its development taking into account CSR indicators. The survey *items* were grouped into the following factors: quality of working life, commitment to the community, commitment to the environment and commitment to stakeholders. The survey designed

by the authors made it possible to fulfill its objectives, but it has not been validated. On the other hand, the length of the survey (58 *items)* makes the process of its application and evaluation in large samples costly.

The validation of scales that allow extensive studies to be carried out effectively and efficiently is particularly necessary to verify the evaluation made by customers of the CSR of restaurants. Customers are a company's raison d'être and its main stakeholder group, so it is important to know to what extent they distinguish and value the socially responsible behaviors to which restaurant companies are committed. However, no validated scales have been found that allow these studies to be carried out.

The scale developed by García de los Salmones et al. (2005), although it has not been validated in the context of restaurant customers, presents a sufficient level of generality in the wording of its *items* to be considered adequate for this context.

The research results presented here are based on the need to systematize research instruments that offer reliable results on the current state of generalization of socially responsible practices in Peruvian restaurant companies. In this sense, the study is oriented towards the verification of the validity and reliability of a scale for the evaluation of corporate social responsibility from the customers' perspective in the field of restaurant companies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the city of Lima, Peru, was quantitative and developed under a cross-sectional approach. Twenty restaurants located in areas of high tourist attraction were selected.

The survey designed and validated by the authors García de los Salmones et al. (2005) was used. The survey *items* are evaluated through a Likert scale and were specified as shown below:

1. Economic level of CSR
    - (E1): Tries to obtain the maximum benefit from its activity
    - (E2): Aims for maximum long-term success
    - (E3): It always tries to improve its economic performance
2. Ethical-legal level of CSR
    - (EtL1): Always respects the rules defined in the law when carrying out its activities

- (EtL2): Is concerned with fulfilling its obligations to its shareholders, suppliers, distributors and other agents with whom it deals
- (EtL3): Behaves ethically and honestly with its consumers
- (EtL4): Gives priority to its ethical principles in its relationships over the achievement of superior economic performance

3. Philanthropic level of CSR
    - (F1): Concerned about respecting and protecting the natural environment
    - (F2): Sponsors or actively finances social events (sports, music, ...)
    - (F3): Allocates part of its budget to donations and social work in favor of the disadvantaged
    - (F4): Concerned about improving the welfare of society

The sample size was calculated considering an infinite population using the formula proposed by Illowsky and Dean (2022):

$$n = z^2 \times p \times \frac{(1-p)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n is the sample size

z is the critical value of the standard normal distribution corresponding to the desired confidence level.

p is the proportion of the population between 18 and 60 years of age.

e is the desired margin of error

Once the surveys had been collected, a database was created using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26 software. The main technique used for the analysis of the results was Confirmatory Factor Analysis. The calculations were performed using R 4.3.2 software, with RStudio-2023.09.1 as the programming interface.

The process followed for the analysis of the results involved two stages: verification of the quality of the data and evaluation of the goodness of fit of the model.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The sample selection was made considering the formula proposed by Illowsky and Dean (2022) for infinite populations due to the impossibility of calculating the number of people attending restaurants in the high tourist attraction area of Lima where the study was conducted. It was considered a proportion of people between 18 and 60 years old in Lima with a value of 64.9 %, taking into consideration the counts of the National Institute of Statistics and Informatics of Peru (Inei, 2023), a confidence level of 95 % and a margin of error of 0.05. With these data, the sample size was n = 350.

Finally, a random sample n = 425 was selected. The subjects were invited to participate in the survey at the exit of the restaurants. The researchers carried a letter of presentation that endorsed the legitimacy of the study by the rector of the university in charge.

As a first step in the analysis of the results, data validation was performed to determine entry failures. Due to omissions in the entries and repetitions, five cases were eliminated. Finally, the sample consisted of 420 subjects.

In the specification of the model, the factors and observed variables considered were those defined by García de los Salmones et al. (2005) in the scale validated by them, which was described in the introduction to this report.

The WLSMV estimator was used to perform the Confirmatory Factor Analysis, taking into account the ordinal nature of the variables and their non-normal distribution. WLSMV is a robust estimator and several authors qualify it as one of the most accurate for the analysis of categorical and ordinal data (Brown, 2015; Li, 2016).

The observed variables were grouped into three factors that coincide with those expected in the model. Table 1 shows the values of the standardized factor loadings (std.lv) and the total standardized factor loadings (std.all).

Table 1. Standardized factor loadings

Latent variables	std.lv	std.all
Eco_lat		
E1	0.552	0.731
E2	0.471	0.631
E3	0.539	0.742
EtL_lat		
EL1	0.422	0.573
EL2	0.340	0.453
EL3	0.492	0.676
EL4	0.400	0.613
Fil_lat		
F1	0.486	0.645
F2	0.453	0.550
F3	0.493	0.609
F4	0.504	0.652

Source: Own elaboration

Authors such as Morata Ramírez et al. (2015) refer that factor loadings can be considered acceptable when their minimum values range between 0.2 and 0.4. They also point out that the most common factorial loading value is 0.4.

As can be seen in table 1, the values of the standardized factor loadings show an adequate factor structure of the model. Likewise, the total standardized factor loadings (std.lv) show an adequate relationship between the observed variables and the latent variables.

The degree of model fit was also confirmed by values of X^2, the degrees of freedom (*df*), the values of the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), the root mean square error of approximation

(RMSEA) and the unnormalized fit index (NNFI). The values of these calculated fit indicators are shown in table 2.

Table 2. Measures of fit of the CSR model

Chi-square	Df	SRMR	RMSEA	NNFI
62.094	41.000	0.058	0.035	0.974

Source: Own elaboration

According to Brown (2015), to interpret the values of X^2 in table 2 it is necessary to relate them to the degrees of freedom, by means of a relative fit index (X^2/df). When the value of X^2/df is less than 3 it is considered that there is a good model fit. Substituting the values in the formula and making the calculation, a relative fit index of 1.51 was obtained, which can be considered very good.

To determine whether the fit is considered adequate based on these measures, it was taken into account the criteria of Kline (2016), who refers to researchers who set the upper threshold of poor fit of RMSEA and SRMR at 0.08 and corroborate it based on their own research. As for NNFI, most of the authors consulted agree that values above 0.90 indicate a good model fit.

In summary, according to the results shown in tables 1 and 2, the fit of the model to the observed data can be considered acceptable.

To assess convergent validity, i.e. the model's capacity to accurately measure the factors, criteria related to composite reliability (the result of the division between the variance of the factor and the residual variance of the observed variables) and average reliability or average variance extracted (ratio between the variance explained by the latent construct and the total variance of the observed variables) were taken into account. Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. Convergent and discriminant validity indicators of the model

CSR Factors		Factorial loading	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Economic	E1	1	0.529	0.893
	E2	0.852		
	E3	0.976		
Ethical-legal	EL1	1	0.537	0.978
	EL2	0.805		
	EL3	1.167		
	EL4	0.949		
Philanthropic	F1	1	0.551	0.994
	F2	0.933		
	F3	1.015		
	F4	1.038		

Source: Own elaboration

The composite reliability values do not exceed in any case the minimum thresholds commonly accepted as acceptable (0.70) (Peñaherrera Zambrano et al., 2020). However, the values of the mean variance extracted indicate convergent and discriminant validity of the model, since they are higher than 0.50. This could indicate that, although the constructs seem to be well defined, the observed variables do not have good internal consistency, which may be conditioned by noise or measurement errors.

In the specific case of the evaluation of the corporate social responsibility of restaurants in tourist areas of Lima, Peru, the way in which the *items* are worded may be contributing to the increase in measurement errors. It should be borne in mind that the *items* were taken directly from the original scale, which was not validated in restaurants.

Finally, the total omega coefficient was calculated. The obtained value of 0.92 provides new information about the reliability of the instrument. In this case, it can be asserted that the latent

construct in the entire scale evaluated, which is CSR, is reliable (Batista Foguet et al., 2004), and that the observed variables are measuring it consistently.

In summary, the results show that the data collected fit the theoretical model, which informs on its viability in the Peruvian context. It is also evident that it is necessary to continue perfecting the measurement instrument in order to have a tool that evaluates, with the greatest possible rigor, quality and parsimony, the perception of clients with respect to corporate social responsibility in the restaurant sector, which makes significant contributions to the Peruvian economy and should continue to adjust to the requirements of the CSR approach. The magnitude of the errors observed seems to be linked, fundamentally, to inadequacies in the wording of *the items*, probably due to their preparation in contexts not directly linked to restaurants.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contribution

Manuel Enrique Chenet Zuta and Jorge Luis Carbajal Arroyo carried out the initial diagnosis and design of the study, selected the research instruments, analyzed the data and prepared the draft.

Milagros del Pilar Panta Monteza was involved in data collection, analysis techniques and data interpretation.

Amyrsa Salgado Rodríguez worked on the conceptualization and drafting of the manuscript.

All the authors reviewed the writing of the manuscript and approve the version finally submitted.

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