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# The Employees' Viewpoint of Corporate Responsibility in the Turkish Maritime Management Organization

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## ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an emerging strategy for organizations to secure their status in the market that they serve. It is thought that the increase in CSR activities within and outside the organization, especially for maritime organizations, will positively affect the image of the institution. The current research aims to reveal the relationship between CSR perceptions of the employees in the maritime industry and corporate image (CI), employee satisfaction (ES), employee loyalty (EL) and word of mouth (WOM). The data obtained through a questionnaire from 284 office workers in a Turkish ship-owner company were tested with the Structural Equation Model using SPSS 24.0 AMOS 21.0 statistical package program. As a result, it was found that there is a positive relationship among CSR and ES, CI, WOM and EL. In addition, it has been concluded that CSR has a very high effect on CI, also CI has a very high effect on WOM communication.

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## 1 Introduction

The term of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) emerged in the 1950s and began to be widely used in the 1980s. During recent years, CSR has been broadly discussed in academia and the business world. It has been argued that the purpose of its emergence is that it is necessary to take action regarding social responsibility in harmony with the objectives and values of the company, in addition to the commercial activities of businessmen and companies, as well as on issues that can contribute to the society in which they live [10]. The World Business Council on Sustainable Development (1998) explains CSR as "the ongoing belongingness by organizations to contribute to economic growth while developing the living standards of the employees and their loved ones such as their families, as well as the community and society at large." The rising interest in the idea of CSR has of late years in some cases emerged as a reaction to social, natural, or financial problems, including debates, such as, whether an organization may benefit from CSR exercises. Yet, the discussion has generally been driven by a rising

social familiarity with what business activities have to do with the climate and what that means for influencing the general population [23]. INGO's have recently set upon new demands on organizations, customers, investors, regulators, and NGOs in terms of energy efficiency, climate change, pollution, hazards, spills, waste and sustainable supply chain management. These living requests are thus changing economic situations by creating new difficulties for maritime organizations. Although there is an overwhelming spotlight on ecological problems, the shareholders of the market have also taken other significant ventures [35].

On this occasion, organizations in the maritime sector, where competition is intense, are required to look warmly to investments and strategies that bring their services and image to the fore and show themselves in social responsibility projects for the public interest. According to the founding purpose of the Global Compact non-governmental organization, which was established by the United Nations in 2000, businesses should support, not violate and respect internationally proclaimed human rights, support precautionary approaches to environ-

mental challenges, promote women's employment and rise, and promote greater environmental responsibility [62]. The maritime industry has a unique structure in many senses. Shipping is a global minded business and strictly controlled industry in the world [20]. Ship owners, while delivering their vessels on the high seas, need to follow new regulations (e.g., environmental pollution issues) imposed by the International Maritime Organization with the UN's 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Therefore, thanks to CSR implementations, maritime business stakeholders are able to share their sensitivity towards natural sources, environmental pollution, gender gaps, marine pollution with the rest of the world. Within the scope of this research, a holding that operates in the maritime field, which provides employment to more than 5,000 people all over the world and operates with 50 companies, has been examined. To our best knowledge, there is a limited amount of research that reveals CSR, ES & loyalty, organizational image and WOM in the maritime industry in Turkey. The objective of this study is to plan to process CSR, ES, word of mouth (WOM), organizational image and perceptions of organization employees structurally.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility & Employee Satisfaction & Corporate Image

Human resources and good relations with workforce are very important notions for organizations [58]. Matzler & Renzl [40] have found in their study that there is a powerful connection between satisfaction of employees and employee loyalty. As regards Yavuz [65], if we interpret the concept of sustainability for commercial enterprises; it is the use of the policies and treatments that the enterprises have realized to resolve the damages they incline to the ambiance in the process of production, for the continuousness of the business over the long haul. In recent years, organizations have needed to take actions or take part of CSR activities as the causal component of progress to reach sustainability [9, 33]. The operation of reconstructing the value chain helps to recognize subjects like environmental & marine pollution, talent management, health of employees and safety at work, water and energy use [47]. Current studies show that CSR activities have constructive impacts on attitudes about the organization and workplace behavior, ES, performance, and commitment including turnover intentions [11, 18, 19, 34, 38, 49, 52, 63]. Another study by Bauman and Skitka [8] gives an example of the recruitment of cleaners. They are all employed to serve the same purpose, however those who find meaning in it are generally happier with their occupation and they are selected to take on additional duties. Bauman and Skitka propose that CSR can also have a correlative impact by giving individuals chances to describe their values, benefiting society in

general. By fulfilling their requirement for a significant presence, employees should appreciate more noteworthy life-fulfillment and deeper emotional wellbeing. Likewise, when employees take part in programs that make a difference to them, it might reinforce their relationship with the organization and assist them with rededicating themselves to their own work [26, 27]. Ellemers et al. [19] reveal in their study that CSR applications contribute to the CI of the organization's perceived morality; therefore, they positively affect employee commitment and satisfaction, hence organizational performance. Another important connection is between CSR & CI. Organizations require a corporate identity in order to access resources through their rational structures. Thus, the first step in developing a corporate identity is to generate a CI [42]. The CI shows who the organization is, how they operate, and what they do. The corporate philosophy provides a clue [46]. On the other hand, the previously discussed theoretical concepts – three elements that contribute to CI such as consumer demographics, marketing communications and social responsibility for corporations – are discussed in depth. The structural model is based on the models of LeBlanc & Nguyen [37], van Riel & Balmer [51], and Chattananon & Lawley [15]. For a long time, scholars and professionals of marketing have emphasized the significance of CSR in decision-making of consumers. Because CSR is becoming further significant on the agenda, CSR is considered as critical in composing an appealing corporate image (CI), to obtain a competitive advantage and differentiation, and ultimately leading to organization achievement by underlining the authenticity of the topic's authenticity. According to Moir [44], Green & Peloza [28], Spitzbeck [55], Lindgreen & Swaen [39], Chattananon et al. [15], Flavian, Guinaliu & Torres [22], LeBlanc & Nguyen [37], CSR is an important factor affecting CI. Based on the literature review and the latest empirical data, it has been discovered that CSR has a positive impact on CI.

### 2.2 Corporate Image & Employee Satisfaction & Employee Loyalty & WOM

It has been on the agenda for a long time that business strategies that encircle employee wellbeing, health and welfare, security, and self-improvement can maximize employee commitment and performance, subsequently further developing profits [43]. Many studies have revealed that organizations tend to use employees' talents and skills to be able to cope with wild business conditions of competition. Thus, they obtain sustainable competitive advantage [41, 59]. Another study by Stojanovic et al., [56] points out that employee loyalty is significantly influenced by CSR activities which shows maximization of employees' commitment to the company. Organizations may influence employees, customers, and public trust and loyalty by having a consolidated corporate culture and a plain-spoken commitment to CSR.

This could serve as a strong foundation for long-term sustainability [29]. On the other hand, it is observed that employee loyalty and overall organization success are positively impacted by employees' awareness of the socially responsible actions that businesses take, such as investments in environmental protection, better resource utilization, and the development of human resources [56]. Given that CSR applications have an immediate impact on employees' productivity as well as an indirect impact on the welfare of their families, it is reasonable to anticipate an affirmative correlation amidst an organization's commitment to CSR and its workforce loyalty. The authors suggested that human resource development be used to accomplish CSR [21]. Managers, on the other hand, are motivated to improve the attractability of the institute to new workforces, moreover, developing the company's image and consumer loyalty [57, 60]. When relations of CI, ES, employee loyalty, WOM communication are examined, research in the field of tourism management, Matzler et al. [40] point out that satisfaction, loyalty, and WOM relationships are shown to become very important. According to the model that Ali et al. [3] developed, satisfaction has a considerable impact on loyalty, which has a significant effect on tourist WOM. Therefore, a strong relationship among these concepts has been found. On the other hand, in the marketing literature, Oppermann [48] indicates that positive WOM is the result of satisfied and loyal customers. WOM, besides, typically reveals when a trustiness customer/employee engages in a loyal behavior [3]. All this information supports the relationship between CSR, CI, ES, loyalty and WOM.

### 3 Methodology

The research was carried out for maritime business employees operating in the maritime field in Turkey. Among the scales created for employees within the scope of the research, corporate social responsibility Glavas and Kelley [25], Ji et al. [33] employee satisfaction Agho et al. [1], Glavas and Kelley [25], employee loyalty Matzler & Renzl [40] corporate image Barakat et al. [6] and word of mouth communication Choi and Choi [16]. The model of the research is presented in Figure 1.

The hypotheses created in line with the research model are as follows.

- H1: CSR activities for employees have a positive effect on ES.
- H2: CSR activities for employees have a positive effect on CI.
- H3: CI has a positive effect on ES.
- H4: CI has a positive effect on employee loyalty.
- H5: ES has a positive effect on employee loyalty.
- H6: ES has a positive effect on WOM communication.
- H7: Employee loyalty has a positive effect on WOM communication.
- H8: For employees, CI has a positive effect on WOM communication.

The research data were obtained as a result of the questionnaire applied to the employees of the relevant company between September 2 and September 28, 2021 (n=284) using the convenience sampling method. The first part of the

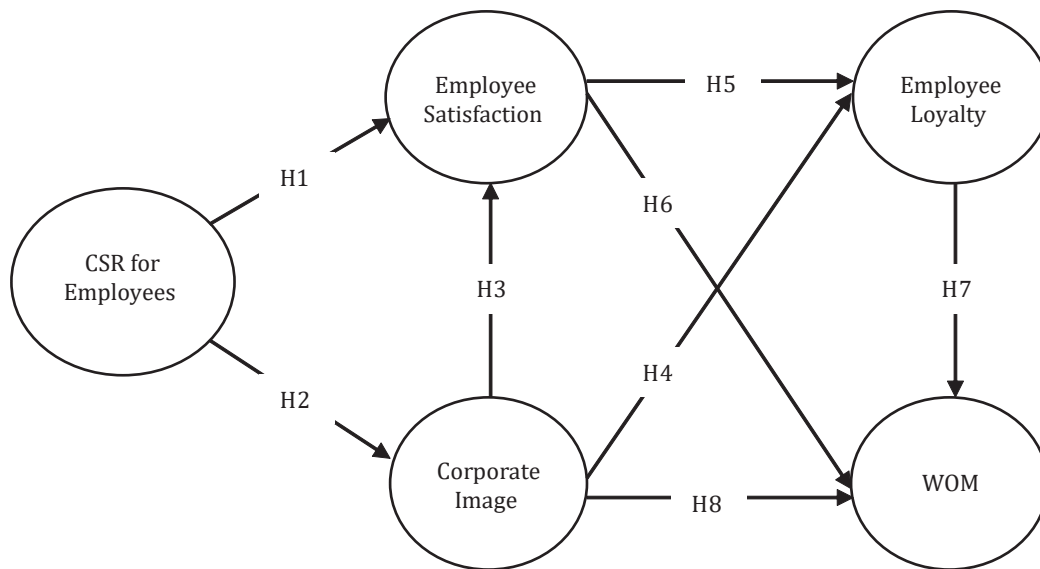


Figure 1 Structural Model of Research for Employees

questionnaire covers the factors of CSR, ES, CI, employee loyalty and WOM. These factors were also adapted for the employees and applied accordingly. In the questionnaire applied with the five-point Likert Scale, the participants were requested to answer each of the statements as 1: strongly disagree, 2: disagree, 3: neutral, 4: agree, 5: strongly agree, in accordance with their own situation. The questions in the second part of the study were aimed at determining the demographic characteristics of the participants, such as gender, age, educational status, and the years of work experience and department of the employees. It is stated that the Cronbach alpha coefficient is a widely used method to measure the reliability of Likert scale questions [45]. Validity is the degree to which can be measured, or that it can be measured without being confused with other things [7]. One of the methods used for validity analysis is factor analysis. As the scale items were adapted from previous research, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to validate them [2]. In this direction, the reliability of the scales used in the research was tested using the SPSS 24.0 statistical package program and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient method, and their validity was tested by CFA using the AMOS 21.0 statistical package program.

The Structural Equation Model (SEM), which clearly takes into account the measurement errors while analyzing the data statistically, differs from other statistical methods in that it can examine a large number of relationships as models [54]. SEM, which can explain the cause-effect relationship of the variables and allow the models to be tested as a whole, was used to develop, and test the theoretical model and the hypotheses determined in line with the research model in [Figure 1](#) were tested with SEM.

#### 4 Findings

Since the research was carried out for the maritime organizations' employees, the demographic findings of the employees of the institution participating in the research are given in Table 1.

According to Table 1, the majority of the study's participants are men. However, the distribution obtained in the study corresponds to the ratio of female and male employees in the sector. It is discovered that 54.6% of the maritime employees taking part in this study are married, and many of them have worked for the relevant organization for 1-10 years. The vast majority of participants (75.4%) are university graduates. In addition, 45.4% are 27-35 years old, 33.4% are 36-44, 12% are 18-26 and 9.2% are 45 and over. The majority of the employees work in the operations department of the company, followed by the management, marketing and logistics departments, respectively. In statistical studies, the data should be normal or close to normal. For this reason, descriptive analysis of normality was primarily applied to the data [31]. The research results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 1** Demographic Findings for Employees

	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	84	29.6
Male	200	70.4
<b>Age</b>		
18-26	34	12
27-35	129	45.4
36-44	95	33.4
45+	26	9.2
<b>Education</b>		
Primary School	1	0.3
High School	15	5.3
College	214	75.4
Postgraduate	54	19
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	155	54.6
Married	129	45.4
<b>Experience (Years)</b>		
Less than 5	76	26.8
5-10	96	33.8
11-15	45	15.8
16-20	42	14.8
20+	25	8.8
<b>Department</b>		
Management	45	15.8
Marketing	42	14.8
Accounting	13	4.6
Finance	4	1.4
Operations	128	45.1
Logistics	30	10.6
Other	22	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors

In Table 2, it is seen that the skewness and kurtosis values, which confirm the normality of the data, are between -2 and +2. Therefore, it is possible to say that the data show a normal distribution [12].

#### 4.1 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the questionnaire questions was assessed using reliability analysis. The reliability analysis first needed to be performed separately for each factor before analyzing the whole [64]. As a result, reliability analysis was performed on each factor generated using the Likert scale. Following that, all items were subjected to reliability analysis, and the general Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the data obtained for the employees was determined to be 0.967. CFA was used to ensure the scales' validity. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient and CFA results of each scale are presented in Table 3.

**Table 2** Results of Normality Test

	Skewness	Std. Error of Skewness	Kurtosis	Std. Error of Kurtosis
WOM1	-1.099	.145	.876	.288
WOM2	-1.137	.145	1.329	.288
WOM3	-1.374	.145	1.581	.288
WOM4	-1.184	.145	1.551	.288
CCSR1	-.811	.145	.103	.288
CCSR2	-.417	.145	-.375	.288
CCSR3	-.450	.145	-.531	.288
CCSR4	-1.447	.145	1.876	.288
ES1	-.835	.145	.497	.288
ES2	-.908	.145	.732	.288
ES3	-.933	.145	.172	.288
ES4	-.925	.145	.612	.288
EL1	-1.314	.145	1.790	.288
EL2	-1.086	.145	.714	.288
EL3	-1.004	.145	.824	.288
EL4	-.638	.145	-.390	.288
CI1	-1.321	.145	1.557	.288
CI2	-1.109	.145	.874	.288
CI3	-.642	.145	.083	.288
CI4	-.853	.145	.272	.288

Source: Authors

**Table 3** Reliability and Validity Analysis

Variable	Question	Factor Load	Cronbach Alpha	AVE	CR
Word of Mouth (WOM)	WOM1	0.854	0.929	0.880	0.932
	WOM2	0.882			
	WOM3	0.883			
	WOM4	0.901			
CSR for Employees (ECSR)	ECSR1	0.789	0.858	0.801	0.878
	ECSR2	0.764			
	ECSR3	0.851			
	ECSR4	0.801			
Employee Satisfaction (ES)	ES1	0.966	0.888	0.826	0.901
	ES2	0.938			
	ES3	0.786			
	ES4	0.613			
Employee Loyalty (EL)	EL1	0.915	0.934	0.889	0.938
	EL2	0.842			
	EL3	0.914			
	EL4	0.885			
Corporate Image (CI)	CI1	0.827	0.878	0.811	0.886
	CI2	0.876			
	CI3	0.833			
	CI4	0.709			

$\chi^2$ : 402.164; DF: 156; P: 0.000;  $\chi^2/df$ : 2.578; RMSA: 0.075; CFI: 0.955; TLI: 0.946; RFI: 0.914; NFI: 0.930

Source: Authors

In Table 3, it is observed that the Cronbach’s alpha values of the 5 variables examined according to the internal consistency analysis vary between approximately 0.86 and 0.93. The factor load of each question is above 0.70. In addition, Table 3 shows the composite reliability (CR: Composite Reliability) and the explained average variance (AVE: Average Variance Extracted). In the literature, it is expected that the CR value of 0.70 and the AVE value is above 0.50 [30]. It is seen that AVE and CR values of all variables in the research model are above 0.80.

**4.2 Hypothesis Test Results**

The most important aspect of structural equation modeling is that it enables the reconnaissance of relationships between variables in order to find the fault in the model. This method aids in higher-level structure modeling [30]. In this study, the general compatibility of SEM with the conceptual model and hypotheses was tested. The structural model and fit indices related to the employees within the scope of the research are shown in Figure 2 and Table 4.

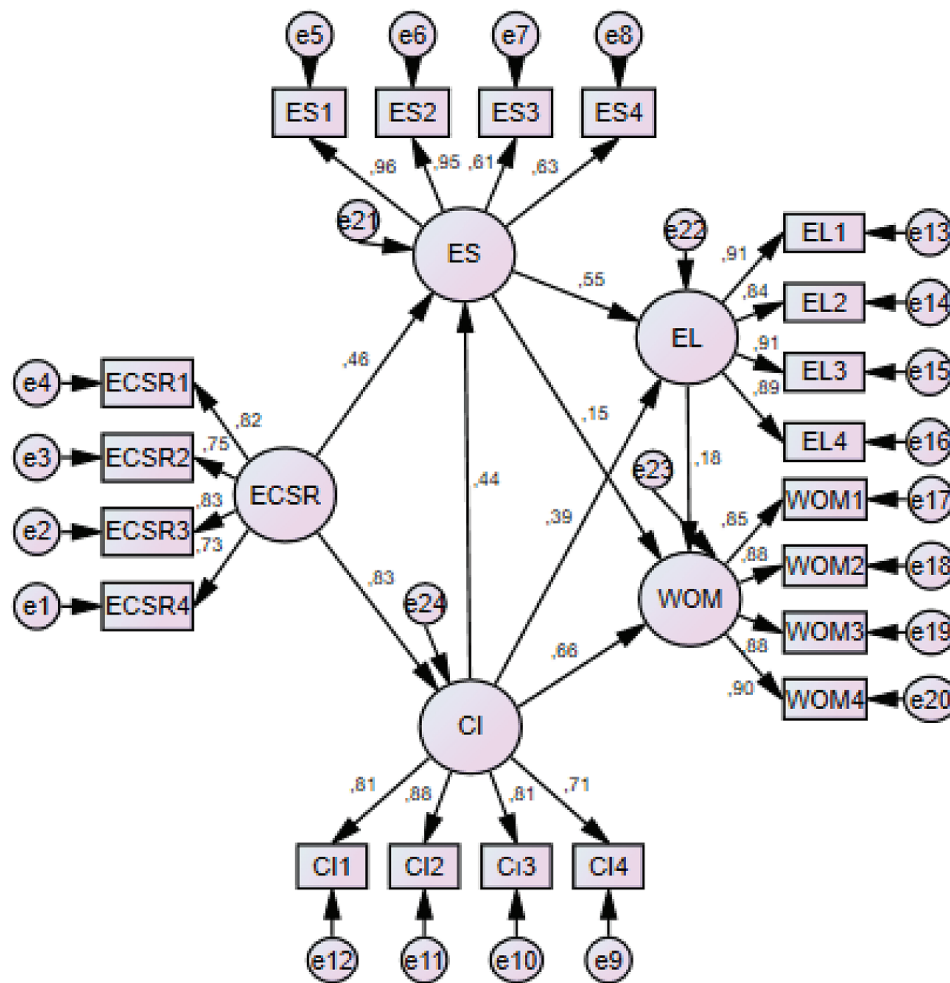


Figure 2 Structural Model of the Research

Source: Authors

Table 4 Goodness of Fit Values of the Research

P	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	RFI	TLI
0.000	561.852	3.468	0.093	0.928	0.902	0.885	0.915

Source: Authors

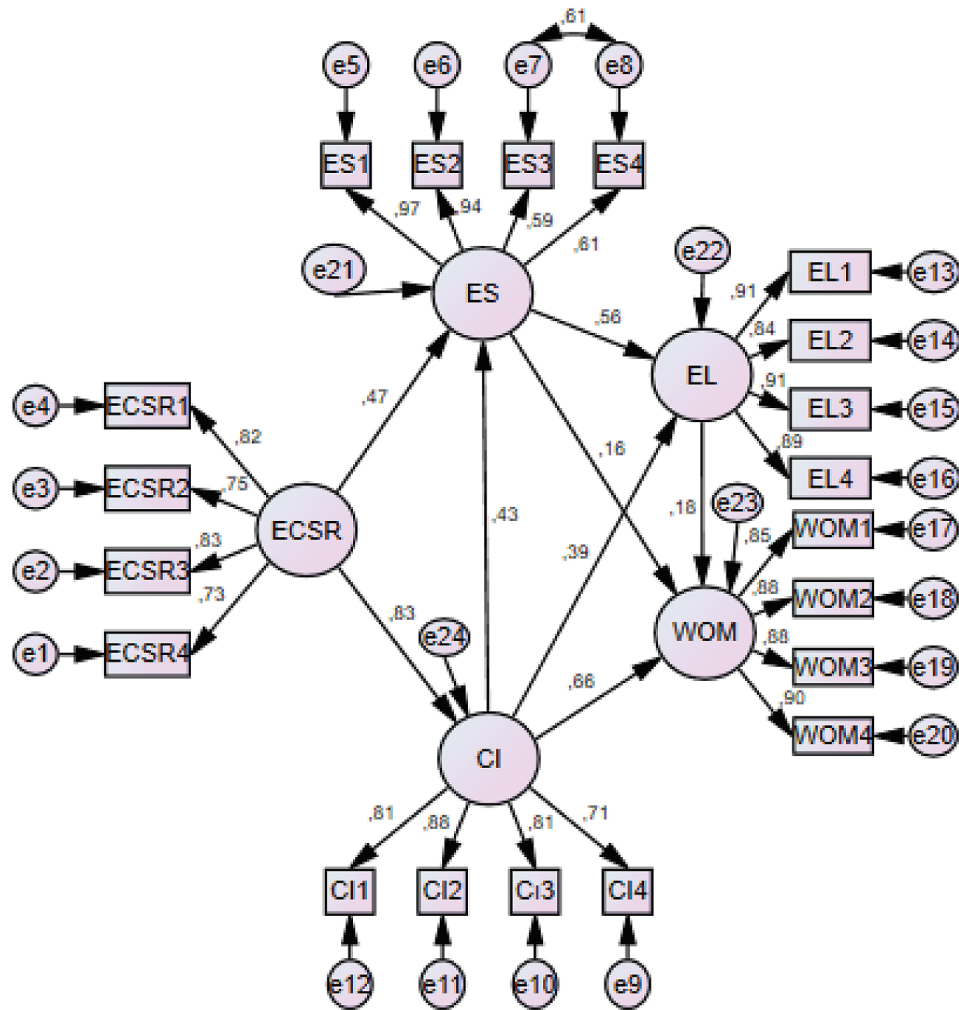


Figure 3 Structural Model after Modification

Source: Authors

Table 5 Goodness of Fit Values After Modification

P	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	CFI	NFI	RFI	TLI
0.000	435.850	2.707	0.078	0.950	0.924	0.910	0.941

Source: Authors

In Table 4, it is considered that the good fit values of the research model are at an acceptable level. However, the research model was modified to provide the best fit and the findings are introduced in Figure 3 and Table 5.

Goodness-of-fit tests are the stage at which the decision is made whether to accept the research model. There are many goodness-of-fit measures used to decide how well the research model explains the data. Therefore, in this study, goodness of fit criteria, which are widely exercised in the literature, were taken into account [32, 66]. The value of  $\chi^2$ , which gives information about the parts of the structural model and tests whether the original variable matrix is different from the assumed

matrix, is expected to be low.  $\chi^2/df$ , which is used to evaluate the fit between the data and the model, is 2.707, a value less than 5. Modifications have been made to achieve a better fit. In this direction, it is considered that the results have reached a better level. The hypothesis test findings of the research about the employees are found in Table 6.

Within the scope of the research, it has been determined that CSR activities have a very high effect on CI, according to the regression value showing the relationship between variables for employees. As a result, as seen in Table 6, all hypotheses regarding the structural model of the research were supported.

**Table 6** Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	Regression Direction			Standard Regression Coefficient	Standard Deviation	Significance Level
		←				
H1	Employee Satisfaction	←	CSR for Employees	0.468	0.121	0.000
H2	Corporate Image	←	CSR for Employees	0.833	0.082	0.000
H3	Employee Satisfaction	←	Corporate Image	0.429	0.104	0.000
H4	Employee Loyalty	←	Corporate Image	0.387	0.077	0.000
H5	Employee Loyalty	←	Employee Satisfaction	0.561	0.063	0.000
H6	Word of mouth Communication	←	Employee Satisfaction	0.158	0.069	0.030
H7	Word of mouth Communication	←	Employee Loyalty	0.176	0.082	0.031
H8	Word of mouth Communication	←	Corporate Image	0.657	0.089	0.000

Source: Authors

## 5 Discussion

In order to determine whether an organization adopts a CSR policy or not five dimensions established by Dahlsrud [17] human rights (promoting and respecting human rights), employee rights (Right to corporate bargaining, eradicating of discrepancy, employee satisfaction evaluation), social support (Working with non-governmental organizations, stand up for exposed and defenseless groups, support for research and development), environment (promote greater environmental responsibility, initiate precautionary approach), and anti-corruption (Actions against corruption in all forms including bribery and facilitation payment). On the other hand, Garriga and Mele [24] categorize the different CSR theories into four groups as following: instrumental theory, political theory, integrative theory and ethical theory. In consequence of the application made for onshore office employees of the organization it was concluded that CSR has a positive effect on ES and CI, CI on ES and Employee Loyalty, ES on employee loyalty and WOM communication, Employee loyalty and CI on WOM Communication. Bakan et al. [4] examined the relationship between CSR and CI and ES and observed that the social responsibility activities of the institution were effective on CI and ES perception. On the other hand, Sanrı and Kamanlı [53] concluded that CSR perception has a positive effect on ES in their study on the employees of companies providing shipping agency services in Turkey. In the same vein, Çalışkan and Ünüsan [13] measured the effect of hotel employees' perception of CSR on ES and intention to stay. Researchers found a significant effect of ethical and legal CSR dimensions on ES. In another application for the banking sector, it has been stated that there is a positive relationship between CSR and CI [5]. One of the most striking findings of the current

research is that CSR activities for employees have a strong effect on the CI of the enterprise. Another striking finding is that CI affects WOM communication of employees. It is observed that CSR activities carried out for the employees of the enterprise have a strong effect on the CI. It is seen that CI influences ES-loyalty both in this study and in the literature. On the other hand, the study of Uçkun et al., [61] shows that CSR activities directed exclusively at external stakeholders might make the workers question the literal objective behind those activities, especially for those with high ethical mindfulness. Establishing an open communication and earnestness may be the way to determine such ethical cacophonies. For example, it has been reported that the Levi's brand's social responsibility activities regarding employee well-being, the living standards of the Patagonia brand's employees, and the health of the Johnson & Johnson brand's employees have gained ground millions of dollars in the mid-term. This argument, which seeks to pacificate opposing viewpoints on materialistic (strategic, profit-making) versus moral ethical aspects of CSR, remains an emerging subject in the literature [36]. In the same vein, according to findings of the study of Ali et al. [3], 2021, the more satisfied the customer is, the more likely they are to demonstrate loyal behavior. Finally, their predictions revealed that loyalty toward significant on WOM. The findings indicated that the most important contributors to their model were satisfaction-loyalty and loyalty-WOM relationships. Finally, the results of the research that has been conducted among university students show that in the higher education sector, three dimensions of brand strength are significantly connected to important outcome variables, including student satisfaction, loyalty, and WOM [14]. Another study that has been conducted on banking sector in Indonesia shows that there is a strong tie among WOM, loyalty, trust, and CI [50].



## 6 Conclusion

Within the scope of this study, the hypotheses of this research determined in consequence of the application made for the employees of the relevant enterprise were supported. It is expected that the results obtained as a result of this research have both affected the perception of CSR activities and set an example for companies that want to boost CSR activities in the future, in line with the findings. The findings revealed the return of the organization's activities under the umbrella of CSR, ES and CI perceptions of the employees. Another finding of this paper is that there is a relationship between CI, ES and loyalty, WOM. A strong relation has been revealed between ES, loyalty, and CSR. More studies in academia and research centers are needed to be brought forth on CSR activities and their effect on the workplace and employees. As per the questions posed by C.W. Bauman and L.J. Skitka [8], Are organizations able to address the expectations of society and fulfill their financial interests simultaneously? Is this a commonplace strategy, a weird dream, or the dawn of a new business strategy? All these questions may be answered by empirical studies and much more work is necessary to define the answers to these questions. While the term of CSR in the maritime sector in Turkey is still a new phenomenon, the study projected that it would make a contribution to both the literature and the Turkish maritime community. It is thought that the study findings obtained within the scope of this study are expected to be beneficial to both academicians and practitioners.

## Recommendations for Further Research

The current research was carried out for onshore office-operating employees of the maritime organization. In general, it has been observed that the results of the research are supported by literature. However, different relationship analyses can be performed using different samples (e.g., seafarers, shipyard, and port employees). Therefore, it would be beneficial to carry out future studies for the employees of different maritime organizations. Hence, it is also suggested that future research be carried out for onshore employees of the group companies of this same maritime organization to see the perception of the rest of the employees.

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