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**RESEARCH ON THE COMPETITIVENESS OF
HOTELS IN KHANH HOA PROVINCE:
A CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY
APPROACH**

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

1. Research Background

Competitiveness is a widely discussed topic in various industries and fields, with competitiveness in the tourism industry emerging as a key research focus (Kim et al., 2022). Most previous studies have focused on business resource factors, such as human resources, pricing strategies, product quality, and marketing strategies (Madera et al., 2017; Estevão et al., 2018; Veiga et al., 2020; Mohammed & Nawal, 2024). However, studies addressing social, environmental, and quality-of-life factors affecting business competitiveness remain limited (Aguiar-Barbosa et al., 2021).

With the increasing severity of greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks, particularly in the hotel industry (Padilla-Lozano & Collazzo, 2021; Chan et al., 2014; Haldorai et al., 2022), the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) to achieve Environmental performance (EP) has become a crucial research topic (Ubeda-García et al., 2021; Haldorai et al., 2022). To improve EP, optimize business operations, and minimize costs and risks, hotels have begun implementing CSR and focusing on Green human resource management (GHRM), recruiting, and training a green workforce (Ubeda-García et al., 2021; Haldorai et al., 2022).

However, there are still some limitations in domestic and international studies. Firstly, there is a lack of comprehensive research on CSR aspects concerning stakeholders and their relationship with hotel competitiveness, including CSR towards the environment, society, employees, and customers.

Secondly, previous studies have primarily examined the direct impact of CSR or its components on competitiveness or integrated CSR with EP or GHRM to analyze hotel competitiveness (Madueno et al., 2016; Nguyen Quyet Thang et al., 2019; Ubeda-García et al., 2021; Haldorai et al., 2022; Sawar et al., 2023). However, no study has integrated all three factors - CSR, GHRM, and EP - into a single model analyzing their impact on hotel competitiveness while also considering both direct and indirect effects of CSR through GHRM and EP.

Thirdly, considering the hotel industry context, international hotel brands have been established in Khanh Hoa in recent years. Nevertheless, no study has analyzed whether the influence of CSR and

GHRM on competitiveness between hotels managed by international and domestic corporations.

Based on these points, the thesis "*Research on the Competitiveness of Hotels in Khanh Hoa Province: A Corporate Social Responsibility Approach*" was selected to address these research gaps.

2. Research Objectives

The primary objective of the thesis is to study the competitiveness and the impact of CSR on the competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa province. Based on the findings, the study proposes recommendations and management implications to enhance the competitiveness of these hotels. The specific objectives are:

- Develop a model and measurement scale to assess the impact of CSR on hotel competitiveness, considering the mediating role of GHRM and EP.

- Analyze and evaluate the competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa.

- Analyze the impact of various factors on the competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa, including the differences in influence between domestic and international corporate-managed hotels.

- Propose management implications to enhance the competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa.

3. Research Subjects

The competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa under the influence of CSR.

4. Research Scope

Content Scope:

The thesis focuses on analyzing the impact of three factors, CSR, GHRM, and EP, on hotel competitiveness using a cross-sectional approach based on perceived changes at the time of the survey. Data collection was conducted through a one-time interview and survey process.

Spatial Scope:

The study surveyed senior and mid-level managers at 83 four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa province.

Time Horizon:

The research was conducted from 2022 to 2024, with data collection and processing in 2023-2024.

5. Contributions of Research

Theoretical Contributions:

The thesis approaches hotel competitiveness from a green factor perspective, contributing to theoretical expansion on CSR in relation to stakeholders, GHRM, and EP in the hotel industry.

It is among the few studies to simultaneously examine all three factors (CSR, GHRM, and EP) and analyze their direct and indirect effects on hotel competitiveness.

The research demonstrates the moderating role of "Hotel Management Type" (domestic vs. international) in the relationship between CSR, GHRM, and competitiveness, and the controlling effect of "Hotel Employee Count" on the competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa.

Managerial Contributions:

The study provides valuable information and scientific evidence for policymakers and businesses regarding the impact of CSR and GHRM on EP and competitiveness in the hotel industry.

It offers hotel managers detailed measurement scales for each factor, guiding investment priorities, cost optimization, brand enhancement, and competitive differentiation.

It suggests practical recommendations for policymakers to create regulations, legal mechanisms, and incentives that encourage hotels and tourism businesses to implement CSR, promote green HR policies, adopt green practices, and improve environmental performance.

PART II. RESEARCH CONTENT
CHAPTER 1. LITERATURE REVIEW OF COMPETITIVENESS
AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF
HOTELS

1.1 Hotel Competitiveness

1.1.1 Hotel Competitiveness

The concept of hotel competitiveness is approached from the Resource-Based View (RBV), emphasizing the ability to enhance internal operational efficiency through environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices. Hotel competitiveness is regarded as the harmonious integration of operational effectiveness, continuous innovation, and the capacity to meet the expectations of customers and stakeholders, thereby establishing sustainable competitive advantage, enhancing reputation, strengthening brand positioning, and optimizing long-term business performance (Battaglia & cộng sự, 2014; Duric & Potočnik Topler, 2021; García-Madurga & Grilló-Méndez, 2023; Yu et al., 2024).

1.1.2 Approaches to Business Competitiveness

Within the scope of this dissertation, to assess the impact of CSR implementation on the competitiveness of hotels, while considering the roles of GHRM and EP, the author appropriately adopts the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. This theory emphasizes the core role of internal resources in creating sustainable competitive advantage. Resource characteristics such as value, rarity, inimitability, and non-substitutability, when executed through CSR strategies, not only strengthen competitive advantage but also contribute to enhancing the hotel's image and long-term value.

In the context of the hotel industry in Vietnam, these strategic resources may include: brand reputation associated with social responsibility, a workforce capable of implementing green policies, the ability to organize and execute effective GHRM programs, and a transparent and eco-friendly environmental management system. These are all distinctive internal factors, difficult to replicate, and play an essential role in improving competitive advantage in a sustainable manner.

Moreover, the extension of the RBV theory in recent studies (Hart & Dowell, 2011; Kraus et al., 2020; Veiga et al., 2020; Padilla-Lozano & Collazzo, 2021; Haldorai et al., 2022) has incorporated additional aspects related to climate change, resource scarcity, environmental protection, and

sustainable development, especially in today's challenging context. Accordingly, RBV is not only a framework for analyzing traditional competitive advantage but also explains how businesses can develop green capabilities - through investment in CSR, GHRM, and environmental strategies - to adapt to external pressures and turn risks into opportunities for innovation.

1.1.3 Competitiveness Measurement Criteria

- *Competitive Position of the Business:*

- + Market share and expansion potential;
- + Brand image and reputation;
- + Ability to attract and retain customers.

- *Competitiveness at the Market Mix Level:*

- + Product and service quality;
- + Revenue and profit growth;
- + Attractiveness to investors and business partners.

- *Competitiveness at the Resource Level:*

- + Differentiation capability;
- + Resources;
- + Capabilities;
- + Labor productivity and employee engagement.

1.1.4 Methods for Assessing Competitive Advantage

Several methods are commonly used to assess competitive advantage, including:

- SWOT Analysis
- Porter's Five Forces Model
- Balanced Scorecard (BSC)
- VRIO Framework
- Benchmarking
- Competitive Profile Matrix (CPM)

Among these, the Competitive Profile Matrix (CPM) emerges as the most appropriate tool for visually and quantitatively evaluating competitive advantage. In contrast to SWOT analysis and the VRIO framework, which are primarily qualitative, CPM enables businesses to gain a clearer and more structured understanding of their position relative to competitors. Compared to Benchmarking, CPM is more straightforward to implement and does not require extensive, detailed information about competitors, which is often difficult to obtain. Additionally, CPM offers greater simplicity and ease of use than the

Balanced Scorecard, which typically necessitates a complex and comprehensive measurement system.

Despite certain limitations, CPM remains an effective and practical tool for quickly analyzing the competitive landscape and identifying key areas for improvement. In this dissertation, CPM is employed to assess the current state of competitive advantage among hotels in Khanh Hoa. By constructing a Competitive Profile Matrix that compares Khanh Hoa hotels with those in other destinations of similar tourism potential, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the strengths, weaknesses, and overall competitive positioning of hotels in the region.

1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility

1.2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is approached as an integrated management strategy, in which enterprises not only engage in ethical and voluntary actions but also proactively embed environmental, social, and governance (ESG) commitments across the entire business value chain. Grounded in stakeholder theory and the triple bottom line (3P) framework, CSR is understood as the enterprise's systematic responsibility toward key stakeholders, including customers, employees, communities, shareholders, and the environment. The implementation of CSR goes beyond merely meeting legal requirements; it constitutes a core element in building sustainable competitive advantage for hospitality businesses. Accordingly, CSR plays a strategic role in enhancing internal operational efficiency, improving brand image, increasing customer engagement, and contributing to the sustainable development of the entire industry.

1.2.2 The Stakeholder Theory Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility

Approach to CSR Based on Implementation Levels

Approach to CSR Based on Stakeholder Theory

Approach to CSR Based on Cost-Benefit Perspective

1.2.3 Concept Corporate Social Responsibility

1.2.3.1 Aspects of Corporate Social Responsibility Under Stakeholder Theory

"CSR Towards the Environment": This aspect refers to specific strategies and actions that demonstrate a hotel's commitment to environmental protection. It ensures that hotel operations are eco-friendly, providing high-quality products that do not harm consumers'

health (Liu & Lin, 2020). It also includes compliance with environmental regulations, preventing pollution, using eco-friendly equipment and materials, and implementing wastewater treatment processes (Madueno et al., 2016).

“*CSR Towards Society*”: This dimension focuses on hotels' strategies and actions that prioritize community and societal welfare. It involves hotels actively participating in solving social issues, contributing to the overall well-being of society, and engaging in initiatives that improve social welfare (Madueno et al., 2016; Quyet et al., 2018; Liu & Lin, 2020).

“*CSR Towards Customers*”: This aspect highlights hotels' efforts to prioritize customer interests by striving to offer high-quality products and services that best meet customer needs. It also includes continuous improvement in service quality, addressing issues such as minimizing customer complaints and ensuring customer safety during product and service use (Madueno et al., 2016; Mastrangelo et al., 2020; Úbeda-García et al., 2021).

“*CSR Towards Employees*”: Hotels that uphold CSR towards employees focus on training and skill development, ensuring fair and timely performance evaluations, and providing competitive salaries, benefits, and welfare policies. This fosters a positive work environment and enhances employee satisfaction and retention (Madueno et al., 2016; Úbeda-García et al., 2021).

1.2.3.2 Green Human Resource Management (GHRM)

Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) is a human resource management approach that closely integrates resource optimization, environmental protection, and sustainable development (Ren et al., 2018). The content of GHRM includes several specific practices such as Green Recruitment, which aims to attract employees who are environmentally conscious and share the company's sustainability values; Green Training, which focuses on raising awareness and enhancing employees' skills in environmental protection; Green Performance Appraisal, which measures job performance in alignment with environmental goals; and Green Rewards, which encourage and recognize employees' efforts in implementing sustainable initiatives (Yusliza et al., 2017; Chaudhary, 2018; Úbeda-García et al., 2021; Haldorai et al., 2022).

1.2.3.3 Environmental Performance (EP)

Environmental Performance (EP) refers to "the commitment of businesses to protect the environment and demonstrate measurable operational parameters that comply with regulatory environmental protection limits" (Roscoe et al., 2019). The environmental performance of hotels is defined as "the environmental outcomes of hotel operations that contribute to reducing negative environmental impacts" (Kim et al., 2019).

1.2.3.4 Hotel Management Models

Hotel management models refer to the organizational and operational methods used in hotel administration, including human resource management and business strategy. The most common management models in the hospitality industry include Independent Management, Franchise Management, and Contract Management (Roberts, 1997; Park & Kim, 2014; Hsiao et al., 2018). Each of these models determines the level of managerial autonomy and directly influences the strategic direction and operational efficiency of the business (Roberts, 1997).

1.3 Proposed Hypotheses and Research Model

Table 1. Proposed Hypotheses

Code	Proposed Hypotheses	Expected relationship
H1	CSR has a positive impact on the competitiveness of hotels.	+
H2	CSR has a positive impact on GHRM.	+
H3	GHRM has a positive impact on the competitiveness of hotels.	+
H4	GHRM plays a mediating role between CSR and the competitiveness of hotels.	+
H5	CSR has a positive impact on EP.	+
H6	EP has a positive impact on the competitiveness of hotels.	+
H7	EP plays a mediating role between CSR and the competitiveness of hotels.	+
H8	GHRM has a positive impact on EP.	+
H9a	The impact of CSR on hotel competitiveness is stronger in hotels with an international management model compared to those with a domestic management model.	

H9b The impact of GHRM on hotel competitiveness is stronger in hotels with an international management model compared to those with a domestic management model.

Source: Author's Research, 2024

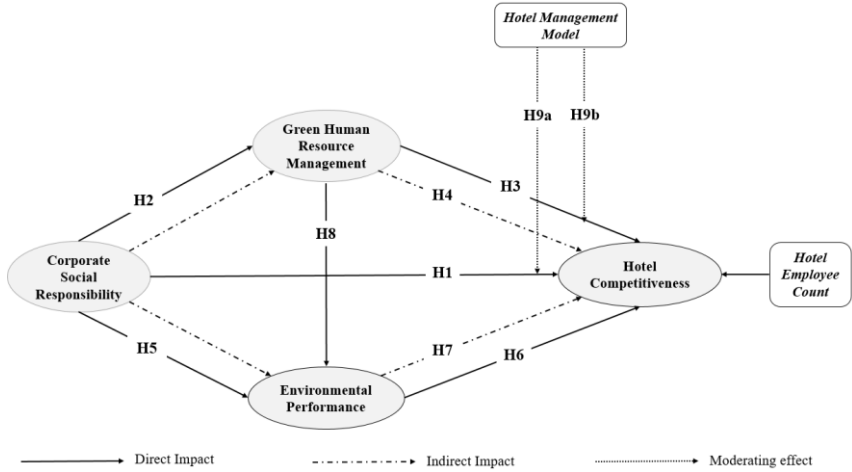


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

Source: Author's Research, 2024

CHAPTER 2. CHARACTERISTICS OF RESEARCH LOCATION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Characteristics of Research Location

Khanh Hoa, selected as the study location, is oriented towards developing tourism as a key economic sector. In 2023, four- and five-star hotels accounted for 40% of the total number of accommodation rooms and contributed 40% of the total revenue from the lodging sector in the province. Khanh Hoa's tourism development strategy aims that by 2030, 80% of tourist destinations and accommodation establishments in the province will be eco-certified, and 95% of lodging facilities will utilize renewable energy. This hotel segment is also actively implementing CSR and GHRM, achieving initial success in environmental performance improvements and business efficiency. It is increasingly strengthening its brand and international reputation, earning prestigious awards from the World Travel Awards (WTA).

2.2 Research Process

In Phase One, the study employs a qualitative research approach to develop a theoretical framework and establish appropriate research hypotheses. The study formulates hypotheses regarding the relationships between variables, including CSR, GHRM, EP, and Hotel Competitiveness through a literature review and theoretical framework analysis. Subsequently, focus group discussions and expert interviews are conducted to determine suitable measurement scales for the research variables.

In Phase Two, with the preliminary measurement scales and questionnaire designed, a pilot quantitative study is conducted to refine and finalize the measurement scales for the main quantitative research phase.

In Phase Three, the formal quantitative study is carried out. Data collection is conducted with 83 four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa to test the proposed research model and hypotheses.

2.3 Data collection method

The thesis aligns with the perspectives of Padilla-Lozano & Collazzo (2021), Úbeda-García et al. (2021), and Haldorai et al. (2022), asserting that survey participants should be senior and mid-level managers from hotels rated three stars or higher. Specifically, within the scope of this study, interviewees hold positions such as General Director, Director, General Manager, Manager, Human Resource

Manager, Owner, and other senior management roles across all 83 four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa Province.

According to Kline (2011), for a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, the sample size should be at least five times or, ideally, ten times the number of observed variables. In this study, there are 45 observed variables, meaning the minimum required sample size is $45 \times 5 = 225$.

Data was collected through direct and online surveys, distributed to three senior and mid-level managers from each of the 83 hotels. The total number of valid survey responses obtained was 249. This sample size is considered sufficient, as per the guidelines of Reinartz et al. (2009) and Hair et al. (2021), ensuring an acceptable level of statistical power when applying the PLS-SEM technique.

2.4 Data processing method

The thesis evaluates the structural model using PLS-SEM with SPSS 26.0 and SmartPLS v.3.2.9.

- Descriptive statistical methods;
- Estimating the measurement model;
- Evaluating the structural model.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

3.1 Overview of the Development of four- and five-star Hotels in Khanh Hoa

Khanh Hoa possesses a diverse system of hotels and resorts, with four- and five-star hotels accounting for approximately 40% of the total accommodation capacity in the province. The tourism industry in Khanh Hoa has experienced steady growth, marked by the presence of numerous internationally renowned hotel management and operation brands. The average room occupancy rate of the four- and five-star hotel segment consistently exceeds 50%.

Managed predominantly by international hotel groups, these hotels benefit from a stable customer base, strong financial capacity, and effective revenue and cost management systems. These factors constitute significant advantages, providing the four- and five-star hotel segment in Khanh Hoa with superior competitive capacity compared to other segments.

3.2 Assessing the Competitiveness of four- and five-star Hotels in Khánh Hòa Province

The four- and five-star hotels in Khánh Hòa exhibit higher competitive capacity across multiple dimensions, particularly in the categories of "Competitive Capacity at the Market Mix Level" and "Green Competitive Capacity." However, there are still some limitations that need improvement, specifically related to "Competitive Capacity at the Resource Level" and "Market Position."

3.3 Assessing the Current Status of Green Practices in four- and five-star Hotels in Khánh Hòa Province

A study conducted a survey assessing the green practices of 83 four- and five-star hotels in Khánh Hòa based on the ASEAN Green Hotel Standard. The findings from in-depth interviews with the management of these hotels reveal that over 90% of five-star hotels and 70% of four-star hotels have fully implemented and effectively adhered to all 11 ASEAN Green Hotel Standards.

3.4 The impact of corporate social responsibility on the competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels in Khánh Hòa

3.3.1 Research sample description

The study employs a total sampling method, collecting data from 83 four- and five-star hotels in Khánh Hòa. A total of 249 survey responses were collected and processed for data analysis. The descriptive statistics of the sampled hotels align with the Khánh Hòa

Department of Tourism's statistics, including 36 four-star hotels and 47 five-star hotels. Most of these hotels were constructed and began operations between 2010 and 2020, with the joint-stock company model being the most common business structure. In terms of management models, 29 hotels are managed by international hotel groups, while 54 hotels are managed by domestic hotel groups.

Among the 249 respondents, the gender distribution between male and female participants is relatively balanced. The most common age group of respondents is 36-45 years old, with 91% having between 5 to 10 years or more than 10 years of experience. Most respondents hold at least a bachelor's degree. The majority of participants occupy positions such as Manager, Human Resources Director, Supervisor, and Assistant Director.

3.3.2 Measurement model estimation

3.3.2.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity of Indicators and Measurement Scales

Since the measurement model includes higher-order constructs, the study adopts the two-stage disjoint approach (Sarstedt et al., 2018) to estimate the models.

In Step 1, all first-order construct measurement scales demonstrate acceptable reliability and convergent validity, with Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and factor loadings exceeding 0.7, and average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.5. The outer loadings of the observed variables range from 0.713 to 0.969. All observed variables are retained for the second-order structural analysis.

In Step 2, the study evaluates the second-order construct measurement model. The results confirm that the reliability and convergent validity of the two second-order constructs meet the required thresholds (Cronbach's alpha, CR, factor loadings > 0.7; AVEs > 0.5). The outer loadings of the observed variables range from 0.740 to 0.962. All observed variables are retained for the subsequent structural analysis.

3.3.2.2 Discriminant Validity of the Measurement Scale

The results of the discriminant validity analysis for both first-order and second-order constructs indicate that the diagonal values of all measurement scales, based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion, are greater than their corresponding row and column values. Additionally, the diagonal values are also greater than the corresponding average variance

extracted (AVE) values for each measurement scale. These findings confirm that the measurement model exhibits satisfactory discriminant validity, ensuring that each construct is distinct from the others in the research model.

3.3.3 Structural Model Evaluation

3.3.3.1 Multicollinearity Test

The study conducts a multicollinearity test for both first-order and second-order constructs. All Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values are less than 3, indicating that multicollinearity is not present in the structural model.

3.3.3.2 Moderating Role of Hotel Management Model

The results from the multi-group analysis (MGA) using SmartPLS indicate that there is a significant difference in the impact of GHRM on Hotel Competitiveness between hotels under the international management model ("*International*") and those under the domestic management model ("*Domestic*"), with a p-value of $0.033 < 0.05$. No significant differences are observed in other relationships. The standardized path coefficient difference from GHRM to Hotel Competitiveness is 0.216, suggesting that the implementation of GHRM has a stronger impact on hotel competitiveness in internationally managed hotels compared to domestically managed ones.

To further examine the standardized path coefficients (Path Coefficients Original) and significance values (p-Values) of the relationships within each group ("*International*" and "*Domestic*"), Bootstrapping analysis is applied. The results confirm that GHRM positively influences hotel competitiveness in both groups. However, the impact is stronger in the "*International*" group, with a standardized path coefficient of 0.565, compared to the "*Domestic*" group, where the coefficient is lower at 0.349.

Based on the multi-group analysis with the moderating variable "Hotel Management Model", the research rejects hypothesis H9a and supports hypothesis H9b.

3.3.3.3 Analysis of the Role of Control Variables

The results of the control variable analysis demonstrate that the control variable *Employee Count* has an impact on Hotel Competitiveness ($\beta = 0.182$; $t = 2.632$; $p = 0.009$). The effect size of the control variable *Employee Count* on Hotel Competitiveness is small, with $f^2 = 0.069$.

3.3.3.4 Hypothesis Testing

First, the study assesses the statistical significance of the estimated values. The results obtained from the Bootstrap procedure show that all estimated paths have confidence intervals that do not contain zero, confirming that the estimated paths are statistically reliable.

Next, the study evaluates the effect size (f^2) to determine the magnitude of the impact. The results show that the effects of CSR and EP on Hotel Competitiveness are small, with f^2 values of 0.046 and 0.030, respectively (<0.15). The effect of GHRM on EP is also small, with $f^2 = 0.096$. However, GHRM has a moderate impact on Hotel Competitiveness, with $f^2 = 0.371$ (<0.35). The effects of CSR on EP and CSR on GHRM are large, with f^2 values of 1.140 and 1.235, respectively (>0.35).

To assess the explanatory power of the model, the study uses the adjusted R^2 coefficient (Hock & Ringle, 2010). The analysis results indicate that CSR explains 56.1% of the variance in GHRM and 79.7% of the variance in EP. The research model explains up to 82.2% of the variance in Hotel Competitiveness among four- and five-star hotels, considering the influence of CSR, GHRM, and EP.

The hypothesis testing results confirm that all eight proposed hypotheses are supported. The findings reveal positive relationships between CSR and Hotel Competitiveness ($\beta = 0.664$; $t = 10.153$; $p = 0.000$), between EP and Hotel Competitiveness ($\beta = 0.169$; $t = 1.806$; $p = 0.048$), and between GHRM and Hotel Competitiveness ($\beta = 0.443$; $t = 10.063$; $p = 0.000$). The study also confirms a strong positive relationship between CSR and GHRM ($\beta = 0.750$; $t = 36.423$; $p = 0.000$) and between CSR and EP ($\beta = 0.883$; $t = 38.626$; $p = 0.000$). The mediating roles of GHRM and EP in the relationship between CSR and Hotel Competitiveness are also supported, with $\beta = 0.299$ and $\beta = 0.145$, respectively.

Finally, the study conducted an assessment of the model's predictive capability using the Q^2_{predict} coefficient. The results of the predictive analysis, performed through the PLS_{predict} algorithm, indicate that all Q^2_{predict} values exceeded 0.5, demonstrating a high level of predictive accuracy. Specifically, the predictive Q^2 value for the model of the GHRM variable was 0.561; for EP, it was 0.779; and for the Hotel Competitiveness of four- and five-star hotels, it reached 0.707. In addition, the values of RMSE and MAE were lower than the corresponding Q^2_{predict} values across all indicators, further confirming the strong predictive power of the model.

Table 2. Results of Structural Model Evaluation

Research Model										
Path	Hypothesis	Standardized Path Coefficients	Standard Deviation (SD)	T values	P Values	Bootstrap	R ²	f ²	Impact Size Evaluation	Conclusion
Direct Impact										
CSR → EP	H5	0,883	0,023	38,626	0,000	[0,832-0,921]	0,797	1,140	Large impact	Supported
CSR → GHRM	H2	0,750	0,021	36,423	0,000	[0,708-0,787]	0,561	1,235	Large impact	Supported
GHRM → EP	H8	0,210	0,059	3,548	0,000	[0,093-0,327]		0,096	Small impact	Supported
CSR → Competitiveness	H1	0,664	0,065	10,153	0,000	[0,533-0,785]		0,046	Small impact	Supported
EP → Competitiveness	H6	0,169	0,094	1,806	0,048	[0,004-0,182]	0,822	0,030	Small impact	Supported
GHRM → Competitiveness	H3	0,443	0,044	10,063	0,000	[0,354-0,530]		0,371	Moderate impact	Supported
Indirect Impact										
CSR → GHRM → Competitiveness	H4	0,299	0,030	9,863	0,000	[0,235-0,353]				Supported
CSR → EP → Competitiveness	H7	0,145	0,054	2,671	0,008	[0,030-0,238]				Supported
Impact of Control Variables										
Employee Count → Competitiveness		0,182	0,069	2,632	0,009	[0,047-0,316]		0,069	Small impact	

Source: Author's Research, 2024

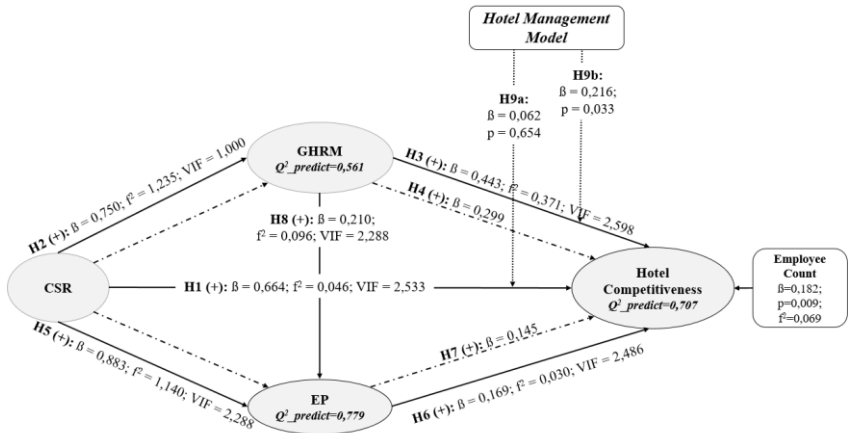


Figure 2. Research Model Results

Source: Author's Research, 2024

3.5 Discussion of Research Results

3.5.1 Direct Impacts of Corporate Social Responsibility on Green Human Resource Management, Environmental Performance, and Hotel Competitiveness

The research results confirm a positive relationship between CSR and GHRM, EP, and Hotel Competitiveness (corresponding to H1, H2, H5, and H6). These findings are consistent with previous studies. The implementation of CSR in four- and five-star hotels is fully addressed across all four stakeholder dimensions, where CSR towards employees (CSR_{nv}) is the most critical, followed by CSR towards the environment (CSR_{mt}), society (CSR_{xh}), and customers (CSR_{kh}). Implementing CSR helps hotels reduce costs, improve business performance, and enhance their competitiveness.

Additionally, hotels cannot fully achieve their desired CSR outcomes without encouraging GHRM initiatives. Strategic orientations in CSR implementation promote GHRM activities, fostering green employees who understand and align with the company's green values and comply with corporate CSR requirements.

The study also confirms a positive relationship between CSR and EP in four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa. Hotels that integrate CSR into their business operations, particularly in social and environmental aspects, and actively work to reduce negative environmental impacts enhance their environmental performance. As a result, environmental efficiency and business strategies provide potential benefits, such as

improving corporate image, attracting environmentally conscious consumers, receiving positive investment evaluations, saving costs through energy conservation, strengthening relationships with local communities, producing high-value green products, increasing stakeholder satisfaction, and ultimately improving hotel competitiveness.

3.5.2 Direct Impacts of Green Human Resource Management on Environmental Performance and Hotel Competitiveness

Implementing GHRM positively impacts business efficiency while minimizing costs and enhances Hotel Competitiveness (corresponding to H3 and H8). Four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa recognize that green skills training for employees is crucial in promoting operational efficiency, improving environmental performance, enhancing brand image, and strengthening hotel competitiveness.

Through green training, employees become more aware of environmental issues, gain knowledge and skills, and develop commitment and positive attitudes toward environmental management. This leads to appropriate actions in the workplace, ultimately improving hotels' environmental performance.

In addition to green skills training, motivational policies and recognition of employees' green contributions are essential GHRM tools. These strategies encourage employees to participate in green initiatives actively, helping hotels reduce costs, increase revenue, enhance brand image, and improve their overall competitiveness in the four- and five-star hotel segment.

3.5.3 Mediating Role of Green Human Resource Management and Environmental Performance in the Relationship Between Corporate Social Responsibility and Hotel Competitiveness

The study confirms the positive mediating roles of GHRM and EP in the relationship between CSR and Hotel Competitiveness in four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa. Effective GHRM practices provide hotels with more significant opportunities to increase revenue, manage costs efficiently, enhance operational effectiveness, and strengthen competitiveness by improving employee capabilities, motivation, and development opportunities (Úbeda-García et al., 2021; Obeng, Dogbe & Boahen, 2023).

A hotel's engagement in CSR activities significantly contributes to improving EP, with the most substantial impact coefficient. Additionally, CSR-driven strategies help hotels implement GHRM more

effectively, which has the second strongest impact coefficient. These factors collectively contribute to enhancing Hotel Competitiveness (Kim & Thapa, 2018; Franzoni et al., 2021; Mårtensson & Westerberg, 2016).

3.5.4 Moderating Role of Hotel Management Model and Controlling Role of Employee Count

Through multi-group structural analysis, the study confirms that the impact of GHRM on Hotel Competitiveness differs between hotels with international and domestic management models.

Regarding hotels under the international management model, GHRM is a mandatory practice implemented by the corporate group. The execution is comprehensive, starting from the green recruitment phase, where the hiring process focuses on attracting candidates with environmental knowledge and a strong eco-conscious attitude. Additionally, hotels provide green skills training, development programs, and opportunities for employees to apply and expand their sustainability expertise. A green workforce allows internationally managed hotels to implement CSR activities more effectively, achieve better environmental performance, and enhance sustainable competitiveness.

The study also confirms the controlling role of the Employee Count. The workforce size has a positive impact on hotel competitiveness in four- and five-star hotels. However, the effect of this control variable is not strong in determining the competitiveness of hotels in this segment in Khanh Hoa.

CHAPTER 4. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR ENHANCING HOTEL COMPETITIVENESS IN KHANH HOA PROVINCE

4.1 Activities associated with Hotel Corporate Social Responsibility

4.1.1 Corporate Social Responsibility towards Environment

- Invest in energy-efficient and environmentally friendly systems, implement strict fuel consumption management systems within hotels to prevent energy waste (electricity, water), and minimize fuel costs.

- Replace in-room amenities with reusable, repairable, or recyclable products.

- Upgrade hallway lighting systems to motion-sensor lights and replace hot water systems and public area lighting with solar energy systems.

- Organize environmental protection activities involving both employees and hotel guests.

- Promote environmental awareness among employees, tourists, and the local community.

- The government and relevant authorities should urgently establish regulatory criteria for green transformation in hotels, introduce incentive policies, rewards, and recognition programs for hotels that excel in environmental CSR practices.

4.1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility towards Employees

- Strengthen employee training programs, ensure fair and objective performance evaluations, and provide deserving salaries and benefits that align with employees' contributions.

- Develop policies that encourage employees to enhance their skills and career development, including support for employees to self-enroll in external training programs to improve their expertise.

- Establish work schedules and planning systems that help employees achieve a healthy work-life balance.

4.1.3 Corporate Social Responsibility towards Society

- Develop community-oriented growth strategies with a strong focus on social responsibility.

- Create employment opportunities and stable incomes for the local community.

- Organize charity and volunteer activities involving both employees and hotel guests.

- Arrange local tours, cultural experiences, and visits to traditional craft villages, promoting local businesses and products to hotel guests.

4.1.4 Corporate Social Responsibility towards Customers

- Develop effective marketing strategies that prioritize customer interests.

- Ensure complete and accurate information disclosure to customers as a mandatory responsibility of hotels.

- Establish multiple communication channels to engage and interact with customers effectively.

- Implement security and privacy measures to protect customer rights and data.

- Provide clear and efficient solutions for handling customer concerns and complaints.

4.2 Activities Associated with the Green Human Resource Management

- Focus on recruiting candidates who demonstrate an interest in green and sustainability issues.

- Prioritize the maintenance, development, and enhancement of employees' green skills and knowledge by regularly organizing green training programs.

- Provide opportunities for employees to apply their acquired knowledge in their daily tasks and continuously practice green skills.

- Develop a specific strategy for the GHRM system, including clear goals, objectives, and responsibilities, ensuring that green commitments are integrated at all levels, from entry-level employees to senior management.

- Establish appropriate evaluation criteria to assess and recognize employees' contributions to green initiatives.

4.3 Activities Associated with Hotel Management Model

- Develop and standardize GHRM strategies in a systematic manner, with sustainable development as the core strategic orientation.

- Domestically managed hotel chains should consider establishing dedicated GHRM task forces, with consultation from independent experts both within and outside the country.

- Hotels under domestic management model are encouraged to proactively initiate strategic partnerships or knowledge transfer arrangements with international hotel management corporations, such as through consultancy agreements, brand franchising, or outsourcing management operations.

4.4 Recommendations

- Regulatory authorities should consider developing and issuing a specialized set of CSR assessment criteria tailored for the hotel industry.

- Policy-makers should establish incentive mechanisms to encourage hotels to adopt international environmental standards such as ISO 14001 or equivalent frameworks.

- Regulatory authorities should enhance collaboration with educational institutions, research institutes, and international organizations to design and implement advanced training programs on GHRM and CSR within the tourism and hospitality sectors.

- Khanh Hoa province is advised to establish annual awards to recognize hotels that demonstrate excellence in CSR implementation and sustainable development practices.

- Khanh Hoa province should strengthen stakeholder engagement and consultation across the tourism - hospitality sector by organizing regular forums and policy dialogue workshops.

PART III. CONCLUSION

The study on Hotel Competitiveness from the perspective of CSR is a new research approach. Although there are some limitations, the study has made important contributions both in theoretical and practical aspects of hotel management.

The study confirms a positive relationship between CSR and Hotel Competitiveness among four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa, mediated by GHRM and EP. CSR was approached from stakeholder theory and measured across four key groups - employees, society, customers, and the environment - with environmental CSR showing the strongest impact. Multi-group analysis revealed that GHRM has a stronger effect on Hotel Competitiveness in internationally managed hotels due to more structured systems. The number of employees was also found to have a minor but positive control effect on Hotel Competitiveness.

From a theoretical perspective, the study has three key contributions. First, the thesis contributes to consolidating and expanding the theoretical foundation of CSR towards stakeholders, specifically CSR towards the environment, employees, society, and customers, by examining the relationship between CSR, GHRM, EP, and Hotel Competitiveness. Second, the study analyzes the comprehensive impact mechanism of CSR on Hotel Competitiveness, proving that in addition to the direct effects, GHRM and EP play significant mediating roles in the relationship between CSR and Hotel Competitiveness. Third, the study demonstrates the moderating role of The Hotel Management Model in the relationship between CSR and GHRM with Hotel Competitiveness, showing differences in the impact of GHRM on Hotel Competitiveness between international and domestic hotel management models. The study also identifies the controlling role of hotel Employee Count in Hotel Competitiveness. These are new contributions to domestic research on Hotel Competitiveness, serving as a valuable reference for future studies on Hotel Competitiveness.

Based on the theoretical findings, the thesis develops and proposes policy implications for hotel businesses, accommodation management authorities, and relevant government agencies to promote the implementation of CSR and GHRM in four- and five-star hotels in Khanh Hoa. These efforts aim to help hotels in this segment enhance their competitiveness and achieve sustainable development.

LIST OF RESEARCH WORKS

1. Report “*Hotel Competitiveness Research – A Case Study of Hotel in Khanh Hoa, Vietnam*”, Proceedings of the International Conference “The 4th International Joint Conference on Hospitality and Tourism - IJCHT 2024” with the theme “Transformative Trends Shaping the Future of Sustainable Tourism”, ISBN: 978-604-79-4564-1, September 4-6, 2024, pp. 283-293.
2. Report “*Assessing the status of Environmental Corporate Social Responsibility and Green Practice with Competitiveness of Hotel - The case of 4-5 star hotels in Khanh Hoa, VietNam*”, Proceedings of the International Conference “The 12th International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research (iCMR)” with the theme “Promoting multidisciplinary studies on emerging trends and innovations in education and sustainable development”, ISBN: 978-604-924-836-8, November 15, 2024, pp. 742-754.
3. Article “How does corporate social responsibility influence competitiveness of luxury hotels? The mediating role of environmental performance”, *Hue University Journal of Science: Economics and Development*, 134 (5D), 05-31. ISSN: 2588-1205.