



Has perceived corporate social responsibility attracted job seekers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

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The traditional corporate employment relationship in China has changed under the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, but how to attract core talent remains an urgent challenge for companies to address. Using the stereotype content model, we constructed a moderated mediation model to explore the mechanism and boundary conditions of the effect of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) on job seekers. We conducted two mock recruitment experiments with Chinese undergraduates and graduates who were seeking jobs, and found that perceived CSR significantly and positively affected organizational attractiveness, and that the relationship between perceptions of warmth and competence and CSR were mediated by corporate nature. These findings provide guidance and suggestions for managers to carry out CSR and for human resource recruitment practices in the postpandemic era.

Keywords

perceived corporate social responsibility, organizational attractiveness, warmth, competence, job seekers, employment relationship, recruitment

Article Highlights

- For job seekers, corporate social responsibility, salary, and position all had an impact on organizational attractiveness.
- The dimensions of warmth and competence in social perception mediated the effect of job seekers' perception of corporate social responsibility.
- Job seekers perceived enterprises engaging in corporate social responsibility as having greater warmth and competence than other enterprises had.
- Future research could focus on the negative reactions triggered by corporate social responsibility, such as hypocrisy.

According to a report by the most influential human resources website in China (www.51job.com), in 2022, 80% of private small enterprises and 30% of private medium-sized enterprises in China were unable to maintain their cash flow for more than 3 months, owing to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in 2020. Among the respondent private enterprises, 40.2% had laid off staff and every business was facing the double pressure of core talent shortage and employee redundancy. This raises the question of which organizational factors can help to better attract job seekers, especially those with core talent.

The focus in the existing literature exploring the influences of organizational attractiveness has been on job and organizational characteristics, such as salary, promotion opportunities, location, career plans, or organizational structure. However, these characteristics may do little to help organizations differentiate themselves from their competitors in the initial stages of recruitment (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). At the same time, corporate social responsibility is a human resource practice that does not rely on monetary incentives to attract and retain employees, and that offers an innovative and fresh way of thinking about solving today's shortage of suitable talent (Cable & Turban, 2003).

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to context-specific organizational actions and policies that take into account stakeholders' expectations and the triple bottom line of economic, social, and environmental performance (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). Research has shown that job seekers who have graduated from a prestigious school are gradually showing an increasing interest in companies' CSR practices (Flammer & Kacperczyk, 2019). Information in the existing literature is inadequate regarding whether perceived CSR enhances organizational attractiveness, and what the intrinsic mechanisms and boundary conditions are for CSR to have an impact on job seekers. Therefore, there is still much room for research in this area (Kervyn et al., 2012). Accordingly, we focused on the mediating role of perceived competence and warmth based on the stereotype content model, and we argued that CSR can enhance organizational attractiveness for job seekers through their perceptions of competence and warmth.

Corporate behavior is embedded in the firm, which is nested in the country, and one of the salient contextual features for CSR development in China is the government's leading role as a powerful actor (Yin & Quazi, 2018). In China's economic life there are two types of ownership of enterprises: state-owned enterprises and private enterprises. Therefore, in our research we further explored the structure of job seekers' perception of corporate nature and their attributions of CSR motivations in the Chinese context, basing this investigation on the dual-ownership structure.

Stereotype Content Model

Although it is generally accepted that extensive knowledge is required to form judgments about others, people often make trait inferences spontaneously (Fiske et al., 2007). Research findings show that most of the formation of quick judgments about others stems from stereotypes (Shea & Hawn, 2019). According to the stereotype content model (Fiske et al., 2007), people quickly assess two fundamental dimensions—warmth and competence—to guide their decisions about and interactions with other people and social groups. *Warmth* includes helpfulness, sincerity, friendliness, and trustworthiness, and *competence* includes efficiency, intelligence, conscientiousness, and skill (Kervyn et al., 2012).

When stakeholders assign to a firm that performs CSR any unique anthropomorphic motivations, characteristics, awareness, emotions, or a willingness to act, they tend to believe that a willingness to be socially responsible indicates that the firm itself has the personality and qualities of care, concern, loyalty, integrity, competence, skill, and efficiency (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002), which is to say that stakeholders will make a judgment based on their perception of warmth and competence, and therefore CSR affects their social perception of the firm (Shea & Hawn, 2019). However, this research result has been applied mainly to the consumer field and has not yet attracted the attention of scholars from the job-seeker perspective.

Corporate Social Responsibility, Warmth, and Competence

According to the stereotype concept model (Fiske et al., 2007), people judge the warmth dimension first and foremost when making social judgments. We argued that, among job seekers, CSR similarly leads to making snap judgments. This is because companies that are active in socially responsible activities typically care about relationships with customers and employees, and have prosocial tendencies and behaviors, that is, they genuinely care about others (Aguilera et al., 2007; Grant et al., 2008). From an anthropomorphic perspective, this leads job seekers to believe that the firm has sincere, respectable, caring, and trustworthy qualities, like pleasant traits within the personality, which can lead to a reassuring perception of the organization (Van Hove & Saks, 2011). Thus, job seekers tend to believe that the firm is willing to care about the environment and others, and so surely it will also care about its existing and potential employees (Behrend et al., 2009; Rupp et al., 2006).

Hypothesis 1: Job seekers will perceive companies engaging in corporate social responsibility as having greater warmth than companies that do not engage in corporate social responsibility.

Consistent with consumer research findings, we anticipated that when companies engage in being socially responsible job seekers would believe that, under the halo effect of warmth, these companies have good knowledge, skills, and capabilities (Shea & Hawn, 2019). Furthermore, since CSR is seen as a symbol of a firm's financial strength (Waddock & Graves, 1997), when a firm goes out of its way to invest financial resources in social responsibility, this often means that the firm is stable in its operations and is able and willing to provide its employees and job applicants with a fair and stable work environment and a sense of control over future job achievements (Aguilera et al., 2007; Farooq et al., 2017; Tsai et al., 2014). The anthropomorphic perspective leads job seekers to further perceive organizations that fulfill social responsibility requirements as not only warm and genuine, but also as having personality traits of autonomy and achievement (Van Hove & Saks, 2011). Therefore, compared with other companies, those that are actively socially responsible will be perceived by job seekers as having higher levels of competence.

Hypothesis 2: Job seekers will perceive companies engaging in corporate social responsibility as having greater competence than other companies that do not engage in corporate social responsibility.

The Mediating Roles of Warmth and Competence

Cuddy et al. (2007) argued that, compared to other potential mechanisms, warmth and competence help predict specific behavioral outcomes, such as helping behavior, from social perceptions. This is because people with warm traits are more likely to be perceived as safe and trustworthy, and others are correspondingly more likely to interact socially with these warm people (Rodebaugh et al., 2016). Greater warmth leads to higher levels of helping behavior (Cuddy et al., 2007); in an organizational context, helping can be conceptualized as positive evaluations and willingness to purchase from the firm (Shea & Hawn, 2019). Thus, consistent with prior consumer-based research findings, we reasoned that helping behavior can be conceptualized as positive evaluations and willingness to apply for a position with the firm.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived warmth will mediate the relationship between the job seekers' perceived corporate social responsibility and organizational attractiveness.

Social judgment of degree of competence can predict a distinct emotion and behavior toward a target, where high-competence targets are passively facilitated and low-competence targets are neglected (Cuddy et al., 2007). This prediction is consistent with existing consumer research findings that ability perceptions can be a significant positive predictor of purchase intention and brand loyalty (Aaker et al., 2012; Kervyn et al., 2012). A similar logic applies to job seekers: Perception of competence may be a significant positive predictor of the organizational attractiveness of firms that engage in CSR.

Hypothesis 4: Perception of competence will mediate the relationship between job seekers' perceived corporate social responsibility and organizational attractiveness.

The Moderating Effect of Corporate Nature

As the two types of enterprise in the dual-ownership structure, state-owned enterprises and private enterprises are very different in terms of their employment relations. Private enterprises have labor relations of a contractualized type, with strong capital and weak labor relations. People usually perceive low warmth in profit-oriented firms (Aaker et al., 2010), and also have doubts about their motives for CSR (Vlachos et al., 2009). Therefore, job seekers will attribute CSR in private enterprises to instrumental motives and form an overall perception of the firm as being a hypocrite. In contrast, employment in China's state-owned enterprises is often for the duration of an employee's career, which will bring the employee a strong sense of organizational belonging and job security.

Hypothesis 5a: The corporate nature of the enterprise will have a moderating effect on the relationship between job seekers' perception of corporate social responsibility and warmth, that is, state-owned enterprises engaging in corporate social responsibility will have a stronger effect on perception of warmth compared to private enterprises.

The competency of enterprises also varies greatly under the dual-ownership structure. Because of their natural property rights relationship with government, state-owned enterprises can receive more resources and help from the government, and often have great economic strength and research power in the competitive market. Undoubtedly, state-owned enterprises will be prompted to play an exemplary role in fulfilling CSR to respond to government calls and demands (Yin & Quazi, 2018), which has been particularly evident in the case of fighting the pandemic or resuming work and production. These behaviors clearly give job seekers a very strong perception that state-owned enterprises are inherently capable industry leaders and the job seekers then attribute CSR activities to altruistic motives, thus enhancing their perception of the attractiveness of state-owned enterprises.

Private enterprises lack government support so that, in order to survive and grow, they view financial performance and enterprise value as the foundation of their business since inception. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly increased pressure from the external environment and competition in the stock market, leading most private enterprises in China to enter a passive defense mode, in which the motives of these innately deficient private enterprises to fulfill CSR objectives are often questioned by the public more than are the motives of the state-owned enterprises and, thus, attributed to instrumental motives.

Hypothesis 5b: The corporate nature of the enterprise will have a moderating effect on the relationship between job seekers' perceptions of corporate social responsibility and competence, that is, state-owned enterprises engaging in social responsibility will have a stronger effect on perception of competence compared to private enterprises.

Experiment 1

Method

Procedure

Participants in Experiment 1 were 180 senior undergraduate and graduate students at Guangdong University of Technology who were in the process of looking for a job. Following Jones et al. (2014), in our experiment CSR fulfillment was controlled for by dividing participants into three experimental groups, each of which was provided with a different version of corporate recruitment materials. Specifically, participants received recruitment announcement materials from Bank M (a real firm, but advertised under a pseudonym). All participants received identical materials in terms of basic corporate background and recruitment requirements, but the information on CSR implementation was different for each group. Specifically, the recruitment material received by the no-CSR group included only the history, competitive position, and business performance of M Bank, followed by three basic requirements for candidates, and no description of CSR; participants in the community-responsibility group received materials containing the same basic information as those in the no-CSR group, in addition to information about the firm's community responsibility; and participants in the environmental-responsibility group received materials containing the same basic information as those in the no-CSR group, in addition to information about the firm's environmental responsibility.

Measures

The five-item scale of organizational attractiveness was taken from Highhouse et al. (2003). A sample item is "For me, the firm would be a good place to work."

The eight-item measure of perceived CSR was developed by Jones et al. (2014) and contains two dimensions: community involvement (four items) and proenvironmental practices (items). Sample items are "The firm gives back to the community in which it operates" (community involvement) and "The firm has a good environmental policy" (proenvironmental practices). All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

According to a common approach to experimental research data processing (Jones et al., 2014), to test whether the participants read the material carefully, in Experiment 1 we added artificially distracting items in the middle of the CSR scale to ask about the time of establishment of the firm, and if the answer was a short time, the survey form was judged invalid and excluded from analysis.

Results

The final numbers of valid survey responses for the community-responsibility group, the environmental-responsibility group, and the no-CSR group were 61, 40, and 41, respectively. Of the respondents, 48.1% were men and 51.9% were women, and they ranged in age between 21 and 25 years.

The statistical results showed that Cronbach's alpha values of the scales of organizational attractiveness and perceived CSR were .85 and .92, respectively. Organizational attractiveness differed significantly among the three groups ($F = 5.22, p = .006$). Specifically, the mean of organizational attractiveness in the community-responsibility group ($M = 4.94$) was higher than that in the no-CSR group ($M = 4.30$), and the difference between these two means was statistically significant ($t = 2.06, p = .041$). The mean of organizational attractiveness in the environmental-responsibility group ($M = 4.75$) was higher than that in the no-CSR group ($M = 4.30$), and there was a statistically significant difference between these two means ($t = 3.21, p = .002$).

The above data suggest that the manipulation of CSR in this experiment was successful and demonstrate that companies performing CSR held a higher level of attraction for job applicants than did those not performing CSR.

Experiment 2

Method

Procedure

For Experiment 2 we used a 2 (high CSR vs. low CSR) \times 2 (private enterprise vs. state-owned enterprise) design to test the mediating and moderating effects between the factors, which resulted in four different experimental scenarios. Similar to Experiment 1, the level of CSR and the nature of enterprise ownership were controlled for by providing different versions of enterprise promotional materials to each of the four experimental groups. Specifically, corporate nature was manipulated by controlling for the description of the ownership in the first paragraph of the material (i.e., for the private enterprise version, the following description was provided: "Bank M is a joint-stock commercial bank").

Measures

Consistent with Experiment 1, the measures of organizational attractiveness and perceived CSR were developed by Highhouse et al. (2003) and Jones et al. (2014). The operational test of "The firm was just recently established," along with subscales assessing warmth (six items, e.g., "The firm is friendly") and competence (six items, e.g., "The firm is competent") were taken from the scale developed by Kervyn et al. (2012). For corporate nature, we asked the participants to categorize Bank M based on the information in the promotional materials, with three questions: "What do you think the nature of ownership of this enterprise is?" "Do you think that a state-owned enterprise is more responsible?" and "Do you think that a private enterprise is more responsible?" All questions were rated using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

Results

We recruited 220 senior graduates from Guangdong University of Technology to participate in Experiment 2, and 203 survey forms were collected. After excluding those that were incomplete and did not pass the interference test, 198 surveys were retained (32% women, 68% men; age range = 21–23 years). There were 56 respondents in the state-owned enterprises with CSR group, 43 in the state-owned enterprises without CSR group, 50 in the private enterprises with CSR group, and 49 in the private enterprises without CSR group.

Descriptive and correlation analyses were performed on the main variables of organizational attractiveness, competence, warmth, and CSR. As shown by the data in Table 1, the correlation coefficients between the main variables, except for the control variables, were all significant. This indicates that there were strong correlations between the variables, which provides evidence for the appropriateness of subsequent analysis.

Participants in Experiment 2 were divided into four groups: state-owned enterprise with CSR, private enterprise with CSR, state-owned enterprise without CSR, and private enterprise without CSR. Regarding organizational attractiveness, the mean scores of the four groups were 4.814, 4.96, 4.27, and 4.592, respectively, and there was a statistically significant difference between these four means ($F = 2.76, p = .043$). In terms of warmth manipulation, the means of the four groups were 5.128, 5.037, 4.517, and 3.895, respectively, and there was a statistically significant difference between these four means ($F = 16.67, p < .001$). As regards competence, the means of the four groups were 5.384, 5.227, 5.265, and 4.543, respectively, and there was a statistically significant difference among these four means ($F = 6.72, p < .001$). This indicates the manipulation of perceptions of organizational attractiveness, warmth, and competence were appropriate in Experiment 2.

Table 1. Pairwise Correlations for Study Variables

| Variables | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Organizational attractiveness | 4.68 | 1.25 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| 2. Corporate social responsibility | 0.54 | 0.50 | .18* | 1.00 | | | | | |
| 3. Warmth | 4.69 | 1.06 | .50* | .40* | 1.00 | | | | |
| 4. Competence | 5.13 | 1.03 | .50* | .18* | .64* | 1.00 | | | |
| 5. Corporate nature | 0.50 | 0.50 | -.08 | .06 | -.09 | -.11 | 1.00 | | |
| 6. Age | 2.15 | 0.35 | .07 | -.02 | -.06 | -.07 | .01 | 1.00 | |
| 7. Gender | 0.32 | 0.47 | -.00 | .02 | -.02 | .03 | .11 | .08 | 1.00 |

Note. $N = 198$.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

The reliability of the main variables was tested and the results showed that Cronbach’s alpha values for organizational attractiveness, CSR, warmth, and competence were .92, .92, .91, and .88, respectively, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency. To effectively analyze the relationships between the models, we used Mplus 7.0 to perform validated factor analysis on the three variables, and the results of the confirmatory factor analysis are shown in Table 2. In terms of validity, the fit indices for the three-factor model were found to be better than those of the other models, indicating that the three-factor model had good structural validity.

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

| Factor analysis | χ^2 | <i>df</i> | RMSEA | CFI | TLI | SRMR |
|-------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|------|------|------|
| A: Three-factor model ^a | 332.148 | 116 | .097 | .913 | .900 | .072 |
| B: Two-factor model ^b | 62.405 | 118 | .147 | .797 | .767 | .087 |
| C: Two-factor model ^c | 719.952 | 118 | .161 | .757 | .720 | .110 |
| D: Two-factor model ^d | 669.630 | 118 | .154 | .778 | .744 | .105 |
| E: Single-factor model ^e | 948.067 | 119 | .188 | .666 | .618 | .118 |

Note. RMSEA = root-mean-square error of approximation; CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; SRMR = standardized root-mean-square residual.

^a Competence, Warmth, Attractive; ^b Competence + Warmth, Attractive; ^c Competence, Warmth + Attractive; ^d Competence + Attractive, Warmth; ^e Competence + Warmth + Attractive.

Using SPSS 20.0 to test the experimental manipulation, the data showed that the mean score for perceived CSR of Bank M in the high CSR experimental group was 5.483, which was higher than the mean score for perceived CSR of the same bank in the low CSR experimental group ($M = 4.23$), and the difference between these two means was statistically significant ($t = -8.68, p < .001$), indicating that the manipulation of the perception of CSR was successful.

Given the relatively small sample size, independent *t* tests were conducted separately for warmth, competence, and organizational attractiveness, and the results showed that there were significant differences in scores between the groups with and without CSR ($t_{\text{warmth}} = -6.20$, $t_{\text{competence}} = -2.63$, $t_{\text{attractiveness}} = -2.52$; $p < .001$). Therefore, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported.

Next, the mediating effects of competence and warmth were tested. We used two methods to ensure the robustness of the experimental results. First, we used the mainstream academic test of Baron, in which a three-step approach is applied to test for mediating effects and data processing. Second, robustness tests were conducted, also using the mainstream academic method of autonomous repeated sampling (bootstrapping) to test for mediating effects. Changes in the data were observed after 2,000 repetitions of sampling through autonomy. In terms of testing the mediating effect of warmth, it can be seen from Models 2 and 3 in Table 3 that there was a significant effect of CSR on organizational attractiveness in Model 2, and the conclusion of Experiment 1 is supported again.

Model 3 shows the regression analysis results after adding the mediating variables of competence and warmth, and the results (see Table 3) indicated that after including the mediating variables, the effect of CSR on organizational attractiveness was no longer significant. Warmth and competence had a significant positive effect on organizational attractiveness, indicating that these variables fully mediated the relationship of CSR and organizational attractiveness.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Intermediary Effects

| Variables | Organizational attractiveness | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
| Gender | -.024 (.191) | -.033 (.188) | -.037 (.159) |
| Age | .259 (.252) | .269 (.249) | .399 (.211) |
| Corporate social responsibility | | .445* (.176) | -.005 (.163) |
| Warmth | | | .354*** (.099) |
| Competence | | | .387*** (.094) |
| Constant | 4.130*** (.547) | 3.872*** (.549) | 0.193 (.621) |
| <i>N</i> | 198 | 198 | 198 |
| <i>R</i> ² | .005 | .037 | .320 |

Note. Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

On this basis, we further tested the robustness of the mediating effect by conducting a bootstrapping analysis with 95% confidence intervals (CIs). The results show that the point estimate of the warmth variable was .522, 95% CI [0.314, 0.730], excluding zero. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported. Similarly, the point estimate of the competence variable was .227, 95% CI [0.042, 0.412], excluding zero. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

With the mediating effect validated, we proceeded to test the moderating effect of corporate nature. As seen in Model 4 in Table 4, the interaction between corporate nature and CSR had a significant effect on warmth ($\beta = .176$, $p < .05$), indicating that corporate nature had a positive moderating effect on the relationship between CSR and warmth.

Table 4. *Regression Analysis of Adjustment Effect for Warmth*

| Variables | Warmth | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
| Gender | -.166 (.214) | -.146 (.197) | -.144 (.196) | -.079 (.195) |
| Age | -.045 (.162) | -.061 (.149) | -.035 (.149) | -.052 (.147) |
| Corporate social responsibility | | .858*** (.139) | .872*** (.139) | .889*** (.137) |
| Dummy variables | | | -.235 (.139) | -.248 (.137) |
| Interaction | | | | .176* (.069) |
| Constant | 5.057*** (.465) | 4.560*** (.434) | 4.657*** (.436) | 4.511*** (.433) |
| <i>N</i> | 198 | 198 | 198 | 198 |
| <i>R</i> ² | .004 | .167 | .179 | .206 |

Note. *** $p < .001$.

Similarly, Model 4 in Table 5 shows that the interaction term of corporate nature \times CSR had a significant positive effect on competence ($\beta = .214, p < .01$), indicating that state-owned enterprises had a positive moderating effect between CSR and competence. Thus, the moderating effect of corporate nature on warmth and competence was supported.

Table 5. *Regression Analysis of Adjustment Effect for Competence*

| Variables | Competence | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 | Model 4 |
| Gender | -.210 (.209) | -.201 (.206) | -.199 (.205) | -.120 (.202) |
| Age | .075 (.158) | .068 (.156) | .098 (.156) | .076 (.153) |
| Corporate social responsibility | | .379** (.145) | .394** (.145) | .416** (.142) |
| Dummy variables | | | -.259 (.145) | -.276 (.143) |
| Interaction | | | | .214** (.072) |
| Constant | 5.558*** (.453) | 5.339*** (.454) | 5.446*** (.456) | 5.268*** (.451) |
| <i>N</i> | 198 | 198 | 198 | 198 |
| <i>R</i> ² | .006 | .040 | .055 | .097 |

Note. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

To more clearly demonstrate the moderating effect of corporate nature, we drew two schematic diagrams of the moderating effect. Figure 1 shows that a state-owned enterprise with CSR had a greater effect on warmth compared to a private enterprise with CSR; therefore, Hypothesis 5a was supported. Figure 2 shows that a state-owned enterprise with CSR had a stronger impact on competence than did a private enterprise with CSR. Thus, Hypothesis 5b was supported.

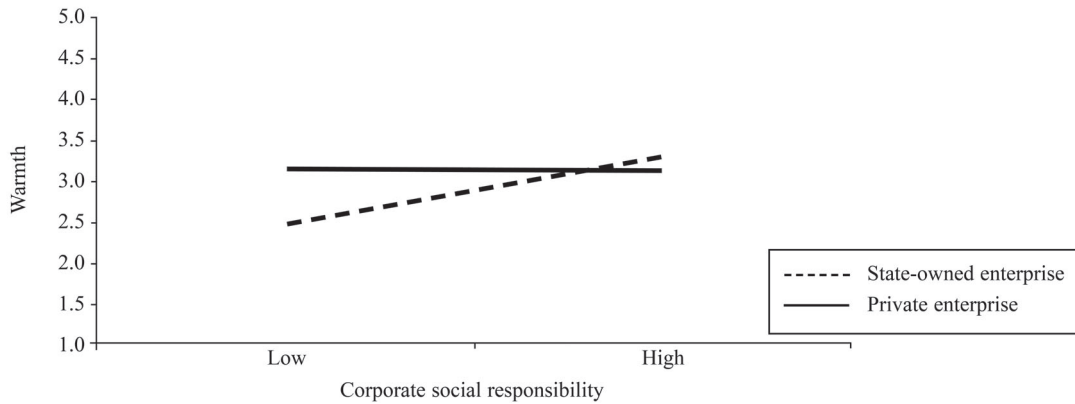


Figure 1. *Moderating Effect of State-Owned/Private Enterprise Types Between Corporate Social Responsibility and Warmth*

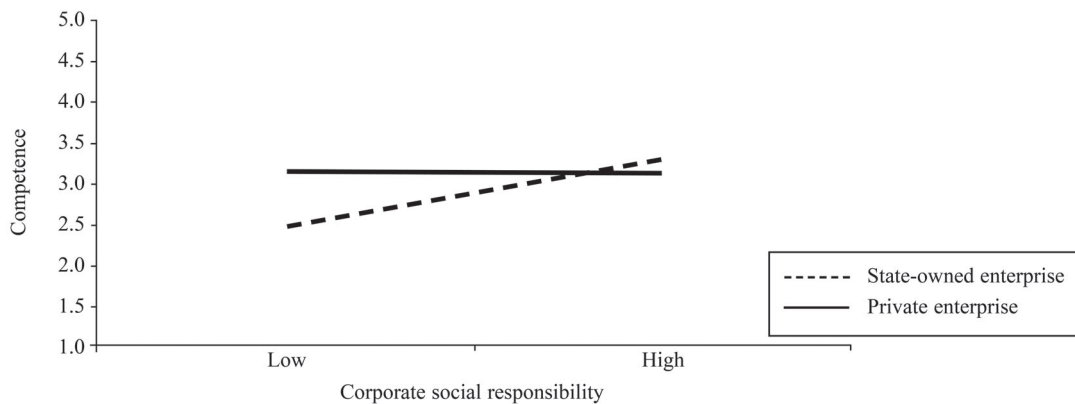


Figure 2. *Moderating Effect of State-Owned/Private Enterprise Types Between Corporate Social Responsibility and Competence*

Discussion

The COVID pandemic situation lasting for 3 years to date has led to an unprecedented rise in public and corporate concern about CSR. Consistent with the international mainstream view, our research shows that for job seekers in China, CSR enhances organizational attractiveness, and for the organization, it boosts the talent advantage and reputation. In terms of impact mechanisms and theoretical foundations, we explored the impact of CSR on job seekers, which is in line with the frontier topics of interest to international scholars in the field.

From the results of our experiments, we can draw the following meaningful conclusions: First, an initial echo of the outlook expressed by Gond et al. (2017) on the lack of CSR assessment is provided. We used the stereotype content model to provide new insight into job seekers' perception of the warmth and competence of an organization's CSR and,

thus, an assessment of the attractiveness that perceived CSR engenders in job seekers. The dynamic process of evaluation of CSR by job seekers is clearly shown. Second, in our examination of moderating variables we found that, compared with private enterprises, job seekers perceive that state-owned enterprises that engaged in CSR have greater warmth and are more competent. This is a useful complement to Western studies, because research with a focus on emerging economies is both an opportunity and a necessity (Yin & Quazi, 2018), and it is fertile ground not only for testing existing theories but also for developing new ones (Wright et al., 2005).

For recruitment practice, our results suggest that enterprises that are fulfilling CSR objectives should not only show a sincere and warm side, but should also avoid going beyond their competence, otherwise they may arouse suspicion among job seekers. Further, to boost their own appeal, private enterprises should highlight the roles of job security and career prospects that are relatively renowned for state-owned enterprises.

Although we selected highly meaningful mediating and moderating variables in our research and tested them individually, the relevant tests mostly follow the traditional mainstream practice and our analysis of intermediary mechanisms lacks consideration of the interactions between variables. Future researchers could explore mutual constraint or facilitation between the two moderating variables.

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