

Board and corporate social responsibility disclosure of multinational corporations

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**Board and Corporate Social Responsibility Disclosure of
Multinational Corporations**

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Board and Corporate Social Responsibility Disclosure of Multinational Corporations

Abstract

Purpose-This paper investigates the effects of board model and board independence on corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosure of multinational corporations (MNCs).

Design/methodology/approach- We developed an empirical model in which CSR disclosure is the dependent variable; board model (two-tier vs one-tier), board independence (a proportion of independent directors on a board) and the interaction variable of board model and board independence together with several variables conventionally used as control variables are independent variables. We collated the panel dataset of 244 Fortune World's Most Admired (FWMA) corporations from 2005 to 2011 of which 117 MNCs use the one-tier board model, and 127 MNCs employ the two-tier board model from twenty countries. We used the random-effect regression method to estimate the empirical models with the data we collated and also ran regressions on the alternative models for robustness check.

Findings- We found a significantly positive effect of a board model on CSR disclosure by MNCs. Two-tier MNCs tend to reveal more CSR information than one-tier MNCs. Our results also confirm the significant moderating impact of board model on the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure. The effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in the two-tier board MNCs tends to be higher than that in the one-tier board MNCs. Our results do not support the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in general for all types of firms (one-tier and two-tier board). The impact of board independence on CSR disclosure is only significant in two-tier board MNCs and insignificant in one-tier board MNCs.

Originality/value – Our paper is the first that investigates the role of board model on CSR disclosure of MNCs.

Keywords: Board Independence, Board Model, CSR disclosure, Multinational Corporation.

1. Introduction

Brand image is important to multinational companies (MNCs), and this creates pressure on them to present themselves as a good corporate citizen. In responding to this pressure, many MNCs have developed a self-regulation mechanism by imposing codes of conduct to govern their global supply chains and voluntarily disclose the information about their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. However, achieving the image of a good corporate citizen is not an easy task for MNCs. Operating in multiple countries; MNCs are faced with the diversity of stakeholders and a range of ethical dilemmas in diverse institutional contexts. These can complicate corporate governance practices and hence influence corporate decisions toward CSR engagement and report in MNCs.

The range of reviews of literature about CSR reporting including Ali *et al.* (2017), Fifka (2013), Parker (2011), Belal & Momin (2009) and Gray *et al.* (1995) reveal that studies tend to focus on firms operating in a single country, and there is a gap in research about the effect of corporate governance on CSR disclosure by MNCs across different countries. Therefore little is known about how corporate governance may promote or constrain CSR engagement and reporting in MNCs (Filatotchev & Wright, 2011; Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015). Our paper addresses this gap in the literature.

We investigated the effects of the two attributes of a corporate board on CSR disclosure. The first is the benefits of a two-tier board over a single tier board. The second is board independence, which is measured by the proportion of independent directors on the board. We selected a sample of firms from Fortune World's Most Admired (FWMA) list published in the period from 2006 to 2012. The FWMA list ranks global firms based on the similar worldwide-applied criteria developed by the rating agency.

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2 We collated the panel dataset of 244 FWMA corporations of which 117 firms are one-tier
3 board MNCs, and 127 firms are two-tier board MNCs across seven years. We used the random-
4 effect regression method to estimate our empirical models with the data we collated. We also ran
5 several regressions on the alternative models for robustness check. Our findings are shown in
6 Section 4-Results. The implications of our research findings for literature and practice are
7 presented in the discussion section.
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18 **2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses**

19 **2.1. Corporate Social Responsibility Disclosure**

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21 CSR refers to actions taken by companies with respect to their employees, communities, and the
22 environment that goes beyond what is legally required of a company (Barnea & Rubin, 2010).
23 Accordingly, CSR disclosure refers to corporations' communication about their actions in
24 relation to their employees, communities, and the environment (Gray *et al.*, 1995). CSR
25 disclosure, therefore, can be defined as the information that a company discloses about its
26 governance, social and environmental performance.
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37 Stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) is the fundamental theory predominantly employed
38 to explain why companies voluntarily disclose CSR information. Adopting the stakeholder
39 theory, researchers such as Jizi *et al.* (2014) argued that firms engage in CSR activities and
40 reporting to address societal concerns and maintain positive relationships with key
41 stakeholders in order to improve the sustainability of the business. Gamerschlag *et al.*
42 (2011) articulated that firm characteristics act as a proxy for the degree of stakeholder pressure
43 that companies face, therefore they are likely to determine whether CSR disclosure occurs or not.
44 In the recent review of empirical literature about determinants of CSR disclosure, Ali *et al.*
45 (2017) concluded that firm characteristics, namely company size, industry sector, profitability,
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3 dependence on capital markets, company visibility, age, assets and corporate governance
4 mechanisms are predominantly considered drivers of the CSR reporting agenda in both
5 developed and developing countries.
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10 Mason & Simmons (2014) proposed a stakeholder system model of CSR that embeds
11 CSR in corporate governance. The model incorporates four stakeholder constituencies —
12 investors, clients and suppliers, employees, and community and environmental groups in every
13 level of CSR from the evolution of CSR strategy to its enactment through CSR processes and
14 CSR issues. According to Mason & Simmons (2014) model, CSR communication or disclosure
15 is an outcome of board decisions which are probably determined by characteristics of a corporate
16 board.
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26 Previous empirical literature examining the links between board characteristics and CSR
27 disclosure found board duality (Haniffa & Cooke, 2005), board independence (Khan, 2010;
28 Khan *et al.*, 2013; Jizi *et al.*, 2014; Kaymak & Bektas, 2017), board size (Haji, 2013; Jizi *et al.*,
29 2014; Kaymak & Bektas, 2017), the existence of foreign nationals on boards (Khan, 2010)
30 correlated to CSR disclosure. However, little attention has been paid to the role of board
31 model in CSR disclosure. Besides, these studies did not focus on the issue of CSR disclosure
32 practices at MNCs. Kaymak & Bektas (2017) is a rare study which we found investigating the
33 effect of board characteristics on CSR disclosure of MNCs. Nevertheless, similar to the other
34 studies, Kaymak & Bektas (2017) did not consider the impact of a board model enforced by
35 MNC's home country on disclosure of CSR. The other limitation of this empirical study is that it
36 was built upon on cross-sectional data (data of corporate governance and CSR related issues of
37 80 publicly traded firms in 2010).
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54 Furthermore, almost the studies examining the effects of board characteristics on CSR
55 disclosure used the context of a single country. The reviews of literature about CSR reporting
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2 including Gray *et al.* (1995) Belal & Momin (2009), Parker (2011), Fifka (2013), and Ali *et al.*
3
4 (2017) reveal that a large body of literature about CSR disclosure focuses on firms operating in a
5
6 one country context, either developed or developing countries while little research has been on
7
8 CSR disclosure in firms operating in multi-countries.
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11 Operating in multi-countries, MNCs are faced with a diversity of stakeholders and the
12
13 complexity of ethical dilemmas. Several studies articulate the role of institutional pressures for
14
15 the choice of a CSR approach in MNCs (Barkemeyer & Figge, 2014). Meanwhile, CSR
16
17 engagement and reporting may be determined by the MNC's home country context, since moral
18
19 attitudes and behaviours can be shaped by home country's cultural and legislative context (Spicer
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21 *et al.*, 2004; Husted & Allen, 2006). Aguilera & Jackson (2003) conceptualised how cross-
22
23 national diversity regarding institutional configurations shape the way each stakeholder group
24
25 responds to a firm's decision making and control over resources. Nevertheless, little is known
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27 about the factors governing the CSR engagement and reporting in MNCs. Filatotchev & Stahl
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29 (2015) call for more empirical research about how corporate governance may promote and
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31 constrain CSR engagement and CSR reporting of MNCs. Thus, it is crucial to investigate how
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33 boards in different national corporate governance systems influence CSR engagement and
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35 reporting of MNCs.
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43 **2.2. Corporate board**

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45 A corporate board consists of two groups of directors – executive directors and independent
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47 directors. In corporate governance literature, the terms 'executive directors', 'managers', 'chief
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49 executive officers/ CEOs', 'inside directors' are used interchangeably to indicate the directors
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51 who are employed by a firm to manage the firm's business. Similarly, the terms 'independent
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53 directors' (IDs), 'non-executive directors', 'non-management directors' and 'outside directors' are
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3 equivalently applied to imply the people who are employed by a firm to advise on and supervise
4 managerial decisions but not to run the firm's business. Executive directors are insiders of the
5 firm and manage the firm's daily business, so may have privileged access to particular
6 information while IDs are outsiders with no direct links to the firm and thus may be more
7 objective and benefit from a divergent viewpoint (Kaymak & Bektas, 2017).
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14 As the board of directors is responsible for the development of sustainable business
15 strategies and the supervision of the responsible use of the firms' assets, it is the board that
16 takes the crucial decisions about a firm's CSR policies (Jizi *et al.*, 2014). In light of increasing
17 worldwide awareness of the importance of ethical issues, especially rising pressures from
18 customers and investors, board characteristics, which were initially designed to protect
19 shareholder interests, potentially affect corporate decisions in disclosing CSR information.
20 Therefore, this paper aims to examine the potential effects of a board model on CSR disclosure
21 in MNCs, taking into account its direct effect and moderating effect on the link between board
22 independence and CSR disclosure.
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37 **2.3. The direct effect of board model on CSR disclosure in MNCs**

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39 The terms 'board model', 'board system', 'board type' and 'board structure' have been
40 interchangeably used in literature to indicate the configuration of a board where supervision and
41 management functions are organised in the same board or the two separate boards. There have
42 been two types of board model evolved worldwide. A one-tier (unitary/single) board model is
43 composed of both managers and IDs meanwhile a two-tier (dual) board model consists of a
44 management board that manages the firm's operations, plus a separate supervisory board that
45 excludes managers (or executives) and is charged with overseeing the firm's activities.
46 Traditionally, the one-tier board is adopted in common law countries while the two-tier board
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2 model is mandated in civil/code law countries (Rahman, 2009; Millet-Reyes & Zhao, 2010). For
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4 instance, the United States and the United Kingdom provide examples of unitary board
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6 structures, while Germany and Austria are considered prototypes of the two-tier board structure
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8 (Belot *et al.*, 2014). However, the recent reforms of corporate governance regulations in several
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10 civil law countries such as France and Italy allow firms to choose either the one-tier or the two-
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12 tier board model (see Pellegrini *et al.* (2016) for the case of Italy and Belot *et al.* (2014) for
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14 France). Therefore, nowadays most countries have mandated one of these two models except a
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16 few nations such as France, Italy allow both models.
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21 In corporate governance literature, there are some studies such as Pellegrini & Sironi
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23 (2017), Pellegrini *et al.* (2016), and Millet-Reyes & Zhao (2010) providing empirical evidence of
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25 the effect of board model on firm performance but there are hardly any studies about the impact
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27 of board model on CSR disclosure.
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30 In general, the two-tier board model adds a supervision layer to managerial decision
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32 making. This mechanism is likely to strengthen the justice of corporate decisions and prevent a
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34 CEO engaging in opportunistic behaviours (Rose, 2007). Also, in the two-tier board system, the
35
36 supervisory board is responsible for appointing, dismissing and monitoring members of the
37
38 management board (Jungmann, 2006). Therefore, CEOs in the two-tier board system are
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40 subjected to a higher level of monitoring and supervision compared to the counterparts in the
41
42 one-tier system. CEOs in the two-tier board system are, thus, faced with higher pressure for
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44 transparency. Moreover, in the two-tier system, the separation of the board of supervision and
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46 board of management prevents direct communications and interaction between executive
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48 managers and non-executive managers (IDs). This is likely to enhance the impartiality and
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50 quality of monitoring and supervision. IDs of the firms using the two-tier board system are
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52 probably free from CEO's influence, thus in a better position to do what is right for shareholders
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3 in the long term. Therefore, IDs in the dual board system are more likely to demand a higher
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5 level of voluntary disclosure in comparison to their counterparts in the one-tier system. In
6
7 contrast, the structure of one-tier boards in which executive and non-executive directors operate
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9 on one board may jeopardise the board's ability to monitor executive directors and provide
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11 independent advice to management (Bezemer *et al.*, 2014). Consequently, CEO in the one-tier
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13 system is likely to have a dominant role in the board. In many one-tier board firms, CEO can
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15 take the position of the chairman of the board which enables him/her to have a substantial
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17 influence on board decisions (Maassen, 1999). They are, therefore, faced with less pressure for
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19 transparency and disclosure of CSR information than the counterparts in the two-tier board
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21 system.
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26 Besides, when investing in a firm, shareholders are interested in not only stock value and
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28 return but also the firm's sustainability. Viewing CSR disclosure as an essential tool for
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30 improvement of stock return and firm's value in the long term, the shareholders are likely to vote
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32 for more transparency and disclosure of CSR information to the public (Krüger, 2015). The
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34 separation of supervisory board and management board that characterised the two-tier board
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36 model put IDs in a better position to monitor the way CEOs implement the shareholders' vote for
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38 CSR disclosure in comparison with the IDs in the one-tier board system. This is because a high
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40 level of monitoring can be achieved if IDs have an appropriate degree of detachment to the
41
42 management. Therefore, in general, firms using the two-tier board model are likely to reveal
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44 more CSR information than firms with the one-tier board model.
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49 The effect of board model on the level of CSR disclosure can be seen more clearly in
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51 cases of MNCs. To prevent institutional risks in the countries where they operate, many MNCs
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53 create their CSR self-regulation (Campbell, 2006, 2007). One good example of MNCs' self-
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55 regulation is the codes of conduct which many MNCs impose on their global supply chains.
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3 Nevertheless, it is not the presence of the self-regulation but the enforcement of this that matters.
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5 Monitoring the enforcement by supervisors who detach from executive directors as in the two-
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7 tier board system is deemed to be more effective than that given by supervisors who sit in the
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9 same board meetings with executive directors as in the one-tier board system. This will lead to
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11 better enforcement of the self-regulation and hence more CSR disclosure in MNCs using the
12
13 two-tier board model than in the one-tier-board MNCs. Accordingly, we propose that:

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16 *Hypothesis 1: MNCs using the two-tier board model tend to disclose more CSR*
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18 *information than MNC using one tier board model.*
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23 **2.4. The direct effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in MNCs**

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25 The terms 'board independence' and 'board composite' are used interchangeably to indicate the
26
27 proportion of independent directors (IDs) on board. Agency theory makes the strong proposition
28
29 about the benefits of having independent board members who can question managerial decisions
30
31 and conduct more thorough monitoring activities (Dalton *et al.*, 1999). One would expect an ID
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33 to challenge management more rigorously and promote the disclosure of information (Kaymak &
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35 Bektas, 2017). *First*, IDs are supposed to focus less on short-term financial performance targets
36
37 and more on the measures that enhance long-term corporate sustainability, such as engaging in
38
39 CSR and reporting on CSR (Hung, 2011). *Second*, IDs offer objective advice to corporate boards
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41 on strategic decisions (Tricker, 2015); thus, board resource diversity could be gained from
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43 having more independent members (Bear *et al.*, 2010). The wider the variety of board resource is
44
45 the more potential for problem-understanding and problem-solving with positive engagement in
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47 CSR performance and CSR disclosure (Hafsi & Turgut, 2013).
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53 Stakeholder theory suggests that IDs will be in a better position to represent stakeholders
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55 because they are not influenced by dominant groups and vested interests in the organisation. IDs
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3 will have a better dialogue with groups outside the organisation; this drives greater corporate
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5 responsiveness to societal needs (Johnson & Greening, 1999). Having more IDs allows a
6
7 company to engage in more boundary spanning activities and this may lead to higher
8
9 transparency and disclosure of the firm (Kaymak & Bektas, 2017). Therefore, firms with a high
10
11 proportion of IDs on boards are expected to display a higher engagement in CSR reporting (Jizi
12
13 *et al.*, 2014).
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16
17 The diverse institutional environments that MNCs occupy and the increased media
18
19 scrutiny that they face should compel these firms to seek better linkages with their stakeholders
20
21 and enhance their CSR efforts. A higher number of IDs on boards, which is expected to create
22
23 more board independence in functioning an ID's role, will make MNCs pay more significant
24
25 attention to its external environment and legitimacy through stakeholder engagement and CSR
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27 disclosure. As such, we propose that.
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31 *Hypothesis 2: Board independence is positively associated with CSR disclosure in MNCs.*
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34 35 **2.5. The moderating effect of the board model**

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37 As discussed above, when having more IDs on board, there will be more demand for more CSR
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39 disclosure. This effect of board independence on CSR disclosure is likely to be stronger in two
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41 tier-board firms than in one-tier companies. This is because psychologically when being
42
43 detached from management, IDs in two-tier board firms do not observe managerial activities as
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45 much as IDs in one-tier companies; so they are more concerned about CEOs' accountability and
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47 are likely to demand more information than the counterparts in the one-tier board firms. Having
48
49 high proportion of IDs on board with higher demand for transparency as in two-tier board firms
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51 will lead to more CSR disclosure in comparison with that in one-tier board firms which have the
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53 same high proportion of IDs on board, but IDs have less demand for transparency.
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Furthermore, the separation between a supervisory board and management board in the two-tier system strengthens the independence and effectiveness of IDs (Millet-Reyes & Zhao, 2010). Having a high number of IDs on board who have a high level of detachment from CEOs is likely to induce more pressure for CEO in revealing CSR information, greater monitoring of the implement of shareholders' votes for CSR disclosure and better enforcement of self-regulation in MNCs. This indicates that a two-tier board model may enhance the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure.

On the other hand, the interactions between IDs and executive directors when sitting in the same board meetings as characterised in the one-tier board system probably reduce the independence of the IDs. The possible lack of independence of IDs in one-tier board companies may diminish the effectiveness of having independent board members. Therefore, having a high or low number of IDs on board may not matter much to the level of CSR disclosure in one-tier board MNCs. This means that a one-tier board model may weaken the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure.

In brief, due to the nature of a board model, there is a higher level of separation between IDs and CEO in the two-tier board system in comparison with that in on one-tier board system and so the two-tier board model may strengthen the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure while the one-tier board model is likely to lessen the impact of board independence on CSR disclosure. Accordingly, we propose that:

Hypothesis 3: The effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in the two-tier board MNCs tends to be higher than that in the one-tier board MNCs.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data

We selected a sample of the firms from Fortune World's Most Admired (FWMA) list. The FWMA list rates global firms based on the similar worldwide-applied criteria developed by the rating agency. This rating exercise includes global companies from many countries in the world, which enables the findings to go beyond economic activities in a single country. This allows more chance for the generalisation of the results towards the development of a global theory on corporate governance (Fortune, 2012).

The data collection process comprised three stages. In the first stage, we collected 345 names and the corresponding head-quarter countries from FWMA ranking results released from March 2006 to March 2012 on the Fortune website. This means that the survey was conducted in the year before the release date of the FWMA ranking results, i.e. annually between 2005 and 2011. In the second stage, we manually checked financial reports of firms incorporated in civil law countries for the information about a board model used by the firms. The reason for this is because the recent reforms in several civil law countries allow firms to choose one among the two models. We got rid of the firms incorporated in civil law countries but using one-tier board model. We yielded the shortlist of 244 firms of which 117 firms use the one-tier board model, and 127 firms employ the two-tier board. The MNCs originated from 20 countries (the US, UK and Australia; Japan, Germany, Belgium, Brazil, China, Denmark, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey). Then we manually collected data for financial soundness reputation and the data for global competitiveness reputation from the Fortune website; ranging from 1 to 17. After that, we collected annual data on CSR disclosure, the percentage of IDs, debt-to-equity ratio, sale growth,

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2 number of employees and industry sectors between 2005 and 2011 automatically from
3 Bloomberg. In the final stage, we collected the number of foreign countries where an MNE has
4 subsidiaries or its operation network from the company website.
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9 We have created a sample of 1,023 firm-year observations from 244 FWMA firms in
10 from twenty countries of which 117 firms adopt a one-tier board model and 127 firms use a two-
11 tier board model. This is an unbalanced dataset.
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15 16 17 18 **3.2. Empirical Models** 19

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21 To test hypothesis H1, we firstly investigated the effect of board model (two-tier vs one-tier) on
22 CSR disclosure, then examined if the mean of CSR disclosure in two-tier board MNCs is
23 statistically higher than the mean of CSR disclosure in one-tier board MNCs. In particular, we
24 compared the mean of CSR disclosure of the two sub-samples (one-tier MNCs vs two-tier
25 MNCs), conducted two-tail-t-test to see the difference is statistically significant and one-tail- t-
26 test to see if the mean of CSR disclosure in the two-tier board firms is statistically higher than
27 that in the one-tier board firms.
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37 To test hypothesis H2, we inspected if the effect of board independence on CSR
38 disclosure is statistically significant and positive. To test hypothesis H3, we evaluated if the
39 effect of the interaction variable ($B_{model} * B_{independence}$) on CSR disclosure is statistically
40 significant and positive; then examined if the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in
41 the two-tier board MNC group is statistically higher than that in the one-tier board MNC group.
42 In particular, we estimated the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in two sub-
43 samples (one-tier MNCs and two-tier MNCs) and compared the size of the effect of board
44 independence on CSR disclosure reported in the two-tier subsample with that reported in the
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2 one-tier subsample; then conducted t-test to see if the difference of the size of the effect is
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4 statistically significant.
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8 To obtain robust hypothesis results, we followed the hierarchical approach suggested by
9
10 Aiken and West (1991) to estimate the effects of each predictor on its own without other
11
12 predictors in the estimation model and also its effect in the estimation model which other
13
14 predictors are included. Specifically, only control variables were included in step 1. In step 2,
15
16 only *Bmodel* and control variables were used. In step 3, only *Bindepen* and control variables
17
18 were included. In step 4, *Bmodel*, *Bindepen* and control variables were examined in the same
19
20 model. In step 5, all the predictors including *Bmodel*, *Bindepen*, *Bmodel*Bindependence* and
21
22 control variables were investigated in the same model.
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26 To estimate the effects of board model, board independence and their interaction effect
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28 on CSR disclosure in the same model as mentioned above, we developed an estimation model in
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30 which CSR disclosure is the dependent variable while board model, board independence and the
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32 interaction variable (the product of the board model and board independence are independent
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34 variables. We included several variables conventionally used as control variables in our model.
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37 ***Dependent variable***

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40 ***CSR_{disclose i,t}*** is CSR disclosure score of firm *i* at time *t*. It is proxied by the environment, social
41
42 and governance disclosure score (ESG) which were calculated by the Proprietary Bloomberg
43
44 ESG group. This indicator was used in the previous studies such as Aragón-Correa *et al.* (2016)
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46 and Lai *et al.* (2016). The scores range from 1 for firms which revealed a minimum amount of
47
48 data related to CSR activities in environmental, social and governance aspects to 100 for those
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50 which exhibited every data point.
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53 ***Independent variables***

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3 ***Bindepen*_{*i,t*}** is the board independence of firm *i* at time *t*. It is measured by the percentage of
4
5 IDs on total board members popularly used in previous research such as (Rashid, 2015).
6

7
8 ***Bmodel*_{*i,t*}** is the board model of firm *i* at time *t*. It is a dummy variable, assigned 0 is for a firm
9
10 having the one-tier board and 1 is for a firm with the two-tier board as used in Millet - Reyes &
11
12 Zhao (2010).
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15 ***Bmodel*_{*i,t*} * *Bindepen*_{*i,t*}** is interaction variable of board model and board independence of
16
17 firm *i* at time *t*. We used mean centred scores of board independence and board model to
18
19 calculate the interaction variable to eliminate the possibility of multicollinearity (Aiken & West,
20
21 1991).
22
23

24 25 ***Control variables***

26
27 We included several variables popularly used as control variables in CSR literature.

28
29 ***roe*_{*i,t*}** is the return on equity ratio of firm *i* at time *t*. Firms with higher profitability are
30
31 motivated to disclose information to favourably distinguish themselves from other firms
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33 (Muttakin *et al.*, 2015). Research conducted by Giannarakis (2014) and Khan (2010) shows that
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35 profitability has a positive effect on CSR disclosure. As such, ROE was controlled in the model.
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39 ***compete*_{*i,t*}** is the global competitiveness reputation of firm *i* at time *t*. Firms with higher global
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41 competitive reputation are motivated to disclose information to favourably distinguish
42
43 themselves from other firms. Other research conducted by Kolk (2003) suggests MNCs with
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45 high competitiveness tend to reveal more CSR information. Thus, we included *compete*_{*i,t-1*} as a
46
47 control variable.
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3 **leverage**_{*i,t*} is the debt-to-equity ratio of firm *i* at time *t*. Demand for non-financial disclosure
4 tends to increase once firms rely more on debtors (Ntim & Soobaroyen, 2013) thus, was
5 controlled in the model.
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10 **salesgrow**_{*i,t*} is the sale growth ratio of firm *i* at time *t*. The effectiveness of governance
11 mechanisms and CSR approach is dependent on a firm's growth opportunities (Florackis, 2008),
12 so it was controlled in this model.
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17 **employee**_{*i,t*} is the number of employees of firm *i* at time *t*. This indicator reflects firm size
18 (Luo & Bhattacharya, 2006; Glavas & Piderit, 2009). Big firms may be more cautious about their
19 image in the eye of the public and have more resources to invest in CSR communication.
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23
24 **foreign**_{*i,t*} is the number of foreign countries where firm *i* has subsidiaries or representative
25 offices at time *t*. Firms operating in more foreign markets, particularly with institutional void (El
26 Ghoul *et al.*, 2017), may expose to more pressure to disclosure about their CSR information.
27 Kolk (2003) indicates that MNEs operating in more foreign markets tend to reveal more CSR
28 information. We, hence, included *foreign*_{*i,t*} as a control variable.
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34 **industry**_{*i*} is the industry where firm *i* operates. Ntim & Soobaroyen (2013) and (Menz, 2010)
35 suggest that firms in different industries may expose to varying levels of pressure to disclosure
36 about their CSR information. Therefore, we controlled for industry effect in the model.
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44 Based on the assumption that CSR reporting of the current year is the outcomes of
45 operation in the previous year (Jo and Harjoto, 2012; Bear *et al.* 2010), we developed the
46 baseline model with the one-year lag of the independent and control variables. Equation 1
47 presents our baseline model.
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$$\begin{aligned}
 CSR_{disclose\ i;t} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Bmodel_{i;t-1} + \beta_2 Bindepen_{i;t-1} + \beta_3 Bindepen_{i;t-1} * \\
 & Bmodel_{i;t-1} + \beta_4 roe_{i;t-1} + \beta_5 compete_{i;t-1} + \beta_5 leverage_{i;t-1} + \beta_7 salesgrow_{i;t-1} + \\
 & \beta_8 employee_{i;t-1} + \beta_9 foreign_{i;t-1} + \beta_{10} industry_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1)
 \end{aligned}$$

Further, we examined if the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in the group of two-tier board MNCs is statistically greater than that in the group of one-tier board MNCs by estimating Equation (2) on each of two sub-samples (one-tier MNCs and two-tier MNCs), then comparing the size of the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure reported in the two subsamples and conducting t-test to see if the difference of the size of the effect is statistically significant.

$$\begin{aligned}
 CSR_{disclose\ i;t} = & \\
 & \beta_0 + \beta_2 Bindepen_{i;t-1} + \beta_4 roe_{i;t-1} + \beta_5 compete_{i;t-1} + \beta_5 leverage_{i;t-1} + \\
 & \beta_7 salesgrow_{i;t-1} + \beta_8 employee_{i;t-1} + \beta_9 foreign_{i;t-1} + \beta_{10} industry_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2)
 \end{aligned}$$

For robustness check, we employed two approaches. The first approach is to follow the hierarchical approach (Aiken and West, 1991) as mentioned above and check if the hypothesis testing results hold when each predictor is investigated in separation from other predictors and when they are examined in the same model. The second approach we used is to develop the alternative model with the same specifications as the Equation 1 but using the two-year lag of the independent and control variables (Equation 1*).

$$\begin{aligned}
 CSR_{disclose\ i;t} = & \\
 & \beta_0 + \beta_1 Bmodel_{i;t-2} + \beta_2 Bindepen_{i;t-2} + \beta_3 Bmodel_{i;t-2} * Bindepen_{i;t-2} + \beta_4 roe_{i;t-2} + \\
 & \beta_5 compete_{i;t-2} + \beta_6 leverage_{i;t-2} + \beta_7 salesgrow_{i;t-2} + \beta_8 employee_{i;t-2} + \\
 & \beta_9 foreign_{i;t-2} + \beta_{10} industry_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (1*)
 \end{aligned}$$

We also checked robustness of the results obtained from Equation (2) by employing an alternative model with the same specifications as Equation (2) but using the two-year lag of the independent and control variables (Equation 2*).

$$CSR_{disclose\ i;t} = \beta_0 + \beta_2 B_{independ}_{i;t-2} + \beta_4 roe_{i;t-2} + \beta_5 compete_{i;t-2} + \beta_5 leverage_{i;t-2} + \beta_7 salesgrow_{i;t-2} + \beta_8 employee_{i;t-2} + \beta_9 foreign_{i;t-2} + \beta_{10} industry_i + \epsilon_{it} \quad (2^*)$$

3.3. Estimation Method

Various diagnostic tests on our dataset were conducted. *First*, we checked multicollinearity by examining correlation coefficients among predictors and their Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).

Many studies in econometrics (e.g. Marquardt, 1970; Neter *et al.*, 1989; Mason & Perreault Jr, 1991; Mason *et al.*, 2003; Belsley *et al.*, 2005) show that multicollinearity would not be a problem if VIFs are lower than 10. As presented in Table 1, although the correlations among three key predictors (board model, board independence, interaction variable) are quite high, all the VIFs are lower than 10, so multicollinearity does not appear as a problem, and our estimation model (Equation 1) is acceptable.

(Table 1 here please)

Second, we conducted a Hausman test based on the difference between fixed-effect and random-effect estimations as suggested by Baltagi (2004). We used the whole sample and each of the sub-samples alternatively for testing. The Hausman test results ($p = 0.086$ for the whole sample; $p = 0.998$ for the two-tier board sub-sample; $p = 0.899$ for the one-tier board sub-sample) suggest that the random-effects regression is more relevant than the fixed-effects regression.

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3 *Third*, we examined the potential autocorrelation of the dependent variable. We
4 conducted the Durbin-Watson test. The first-order Durbin-Watson test is insignificant ($p > 0.05$),
5 so we accept the null hypothesis of no first-order autocorrelation (Durbin & Watson, 1971).
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10 *Fourth*, we examined the potential endogeneity of *Bindepen* (board independence). We
11 conducted the Durbin-Wu-Hausman tests (see Hausman 1978 for the detailed explanation of the
12 test). The Hausman test results ($p < 0.05$) are significant, so endogeneity appears in our dataset.
13 To deal with the endogeneity problem of board independence (*Bindepen*), we used the
14 Instrumental variable Two-Stage Least Square regression method as suggested by Wooldridge
15 (2013). We included *Sound_Finance* as an instrumental variable for *Bindepen*. *Sound_Finance*
16 was measured in terms of financial soundness of a firm compared to their peers in their industry,
17 which is positively linked with the level of board independence (Anderson *et al.*, 2004). Data for
18 this variable was collected from FWMA reputation rating result released annually on Fortune
19 website. This data has been used in academic research over the past two decades (Stanwick &
20 Stanwick, 1998; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). Fombrun & Shanley (1990) criticised that there was
21 a *financial halo* in Fortune reputation rating; nevertheless, Flanagan *et al.* (2011) argued that the
22 most recent data continues to be a useful and valid source of data. *Sound_Finance* meet the two
23 requirements for a good instrument variable: *Sound_Finance* is uncorrelated with the error term
24 but significantly correlated with *Bindepen* ($p < 0.01$). The Durbin (score) chi-sq test of
25 endogeneity of *Bindepen* instrumented by *Sound_Finance* produced large p-values ($p = 0.237$ for
26 the whole sample; $p = 0.351$ for the sub-sample of one-tier board; $p = 0.176$ for the sub-sample
27 of two-tier board). Wu-Hausman F-test results display large p-values ($p = 0.240$ for the whole
28 sample; $p = 0.357$ for the sub-sample of one-tier board; $p = 0.182$ for the sub-sample of two-tier
29 board). Further, the first-stage regression summary statistics show that *Sound_Finance* is not
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3 weak ($P=0.000$). Moreover, the Sargan (score) χ^2 and the Basman $\chi^2(102)$ produce small p -
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5 value ($p=0.000$) for the tests of over-identifying restrictions. This suggests that *Sound_Finance* is
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7 a good instrument and the endogeneity problem was fixed for the models by using this
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9 instrument variable.
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11 12 13 **4. Results**

14
15 Descriptive statistics of our dataset are presented in Table 2. The average size of MNCs in our
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17 sample is the one with 67,669 employees. The smallest MNC had 1,960 staff in 2010, and it
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19 came from the UK while the biggest MNC employed 2,100,000 staff in 2008 and is from the US.
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21 The mean of the proportion of independent directors is 81.57 percent for the one-tier board firms;
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23 32.72 percent for the firms with the two-tier board. The min value of board independence
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25 (*Bindepen*) of zero indicates that independent directors are not used at some MNCs, and that is
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27 the cases of an MNC from Japan. The maximum value of *Bindepen* of 100 percentages and that
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29 is the case of MNC from the US. The lowest score of CSR disclosure is 10.75 percents, and that
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31 is the case of MNC from the US, and the highest CSR disclosure score of 79.75 percent is of an
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33 MNC from Germany.
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(Table 2 about here please)

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43 Table 3 displays the results obtained from the random-effects regression of the baseline
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45 models using data from the whole sample. As can be seen from Model 2, 4, and 5 in Table 3, a
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47 board model has a statistically significant effect on CSR disclosure ($p=0.000$, $\beta = 7.178$ when a
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49 board model is investigated in separation from other predictors; $p=0.001$, $\beta = 9.053$ when board
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51 model is examined in conjunction with board independence; and $p=0.00$, $\beta = 11.14$ when all the
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53 predictors are examined in the same model). These results are consistent with the ones obtained
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2 from the alternative models presented in Model 2*, 4*, and 5* in Table 4, meaning that the result
3 is robust and confirming the statically significant and positive effect of board model on CSR
4 disclosure.
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10 *(Table 3 about here please)*

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12 *(Table 4 about here please)*

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14 As mentioned in section 3, to test hypothesis H1, we not only estimated the effect of
15 board model on CSR disclosure but also examined if the mean of CSR disclosure in two-tier
16 board MNCs is statistically higher than the mean of CSR disclosure in one-tier board MNCs. The
17 first *t-test* of the mean difference of CSR disclosure between the two sub-samples has $p=0.000$,
18 confirming that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of CSR disclosure
19 between the two sub-samples. The second *t-test* of the mean of the two-tier group significantly
20 higher than that of the one-tier groups has $p=0.000$, confirming that the mean of CSR disclosure
21 of the two-tier board model group (44.728) is statistically higher than that of the one-tier board
22 model group (34.207). This confirms our H1 that two-tier board MNCs tend to disclose more
23 CSR information than one-tier board MNCs.
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37 As can be seen from Model 3, 4, and 5 in Table 3, the effect of board independence on
38 CSR disclosure by MNCs is statistically insignificant ($p=0.977$ when a board independence is
39 investigated in separation from other predictors; $p=0.975$ when board independence is examined
40 together with the board model; and $p= 0.790$ when all the predictors are examined in the same
41 model). These results are consistent with the ones obtained from the alternative models presented
42 in Model 3*, 4*, and 5* in Table 4, indicating that the result is robust and confirming the
43 statically insignificant effect of board independence on CSR disclosure. Thus, H2 is not
44 confirmed when all types of firms (both one-tier and two-tier board) were considered.
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The regression output in the **Model 5** in Table 3 demonstrates that the moderating effect of board model on the impact of board independence on CSR disclosure is statistically significant (at 90% confidence interval) and positive ($p= 0.074$, $\beta = 0.133$), suggesting that H3 is confirmed. This result is in line with the one obtained from the alternative model presented in **Model 5*** in Table 4. It is worth to note that R^2 obtained from Model 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 is 0.657, 0.691, 0.692, and 0.703 respectively. This means that the full model with control variables, *Bmodel*, *Bindependence* and the interaction variable (*Bmodel* Bindepend*) is the best model.

As mentioned in section 3, to test hypothesis H3, we not only evaluated if the effect of the interaction variable (board model* board independence) on CSR disclosure is statistically significant and positive but further examined if the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in the group of two-tier board MNCs is statistically more significant than that in the group of one- tier board MNCs.

As reported in Table 5, board independence has a statistically significant effect ($p= 0.000$; $\beta= 0.158$) on CSR disclosure by MNCs with two-tier board model (**Model 7**) but does not have a statistically significant effect ($p=0.811$; $\beta= 0.014$) on CSR disclosure by MNCs with one-tier board model (**Model 6**). It is worth to note that these results are respectively consistent with the results reported in **Model 7*** and **Model 6*** which were used for robustness check.

(Table 5 about here please)

Furthermore, we conducted two t-tests of significant difference in the size of the effect of board independence (*Bindepend*) on CSR disclosure (*CSRdisclose*) in the two subsamples. The t-test result of $p = 0.992$ confirms the effect of *Bindepend* on *CSRdisclose* in the one-tier board sub-sample is significantly different from 0.158 which is the size of the effect of *Bindepend* on *CSRdisclose* in the two-tier board sub-sample. Similarly, the t-test result of $p = 0.998$ confirms the effect of *Bindepend* on *CSRdisclose* in the two-tier board sub-sample is significantly different

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2 from 0.014 which is the size of the effect of *Bindepen* on *CSRdisclose* in the one-tier board sub-
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4 sample. These results confirm that the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in the
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6 two-tier board group is statistically higher than that in the one-tier board group. In other words,
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8 H3 is fully validated.
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11 12 13 14 **5. Discussions**

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16 Our result of statistically significant and positive effect of board model on CSR disclosure
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18 suggests the higher level of CSR disclosure in two-tier board MNCs in comparison with one-tier
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20 board MNCs. Moreover, our result of the mean of CSR disclosure of the two-tier board MNCs is
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22 statistically higher than that of the one-tier board group strongly shows that two-tier board MNCs
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24 tends to disclose more CSR information than one-tier board MNCs. To the best of our
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26 awareness, this finding is unique because no existing research has been found examining this
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28 issue.
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33 Our result of the insignificant effect of board independence on CSR disclosure of MNCs
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35 in general for all types of firms (one-tier and two-tier board) indicate that a higher ratio of IDs on
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37 board does not lead to a higher level of CSR disclosure in MNCs in general. However, by
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39 examining the moderating impact of board model on the effect of board independence on CSR
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41 disclosure, we successfully show that board independence has a statistically significant impact
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43 on CSR disclosure in two-tier board MNCs but insignificant on CSR disclosure in one-tier board
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45 MNCs. This finding is a significant discovery because to the best of our knowledge there has
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47 been not any study looking into this matter.
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51 Our findings are more insightful than the results from Kaymak & Bektas (2017). In their
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53 research, Kaymak & Bektas (2017) did not consider the moderating impact of board model.
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55 Their finding of the significant effect of board independence on CSR disclosure may be
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1
2 attributed to the possibility that their sample consists of a majority of two-tier board MNCs, but
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4 there is no information about a board model used by MNCs in their paper. In our study, we
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6 purposely used a research sample which has a quite balanced number of MNCs using one-tier
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8 board (117 firms) and two-tier board (127 firms). We are, therefore, able to clearly show that
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10 board independence positively contributes to CSR disclosure only in the case of two-tier board
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12 firms but does not matter in case of one-tier board firms. Our study shows that a separation
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14 between a board of supervision and board of management is necessary for independent
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16 supervision on the matter of revealing CSR information, and this takes effect in the case of
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18 MNCs with two-tier board models.
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23 Our paper makes three contributions to the literature. *First*, to the best of our knowledge,
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25 our paper is the first that investigates the role of board model on CSR disclosure of MNCs. We
26
27 hypothesised and proved the effects (direct and moderating) of board model on CSR disclosure
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29 using empirical evidence of a global-level dataset of MNCs from twenty countries across three
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31 continents utilizing the panel dataset spanning across seven years. *Second*, our paper responds to
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33 several calls for more research on CG and CSR practices across countries. Specifically, our paper
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35 replies to the call for an investigation of how corporate governance may promote and constrain
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37 CSR activities of MNCs (Filatotchev & Stahl, 2015). While corporate governance and CSR
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39 activities have been practised in MNCs in diverse institutional contexts, little research has
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41 examined the link between the corporate board and CSR disclosure at MNCs. To our awareness,
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43 our paper is the first that provides longitudinal empirical evidence for the effect of different
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45 attributes of a board on CSR disclosure by MNCs. To date, several studies, e.g., Gul & Leung
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47 (2004), Patelli & Prencipe (2007), Jizi *et al.* (2014), have examined how board affects CSR
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49 disclosure of firms, but these studies did not consider the role of board model/system. Moreover,
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51 they were based on samples of firms from one country, and little research is found using a
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3 sample of firms from multiple countries. *Third*, our paper contributes to the knowledge of global
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5 corporate governance. Most corporate governance studies typically examine the relationship
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7 between corporate governance mechanism and firm performance in a specific time frame and
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9 geographically limited empirical settings (Zattoni & Van Ees, 2012). By providing empirical
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11 evidence from the samples of the MNCs from twenty countries across three continents (America,
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13 Europe and Asia), our paper has responded to the call by Zattoni & Van Ees (2012) for the
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15 development of the global theory of comparative corporate governance.
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19 From a managerial and policy perspective, we emphasise the role of a board model in
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21 CSR disclosure and transparency in MNCs. The separation of a board of management and board
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23 of supervision as in two tier-board model enhances the role of board independence in firms'
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25 decision relating to CSR reporting. We advise the MNCs who wish to improve CSR reporting
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27 and transparency to consider the use of two-tier board model and employ a higher number of
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29 outside directors on board. We note that once a firm uses a one-tier model, number of IDs on a
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31 board does not matter to the level of CSR disclosure. We advise regulators to enforce an
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33 application of two-tier board model to improve CSR reporting and transparency in MNCs. We
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35 also recommend regulators to continue mandating publicly traded companies to include more
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37 external members on their boards, especially for two-tier board MNCs.
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43 44 **6. Conclusion**

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46 This article examines the effects of board model (both direct and moderating) and board
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48 independence on CSR disclosure of MNCs. We developed an empirical model in which CSR
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50 disclosure is the dependent variable; board model (two-tier- vs one-tier), board independence (a
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52 ratio of IDS vs inside directors), and the product of board model and board independence
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54 together with several variables conventionally used as control variables are independent
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2 variables. We collated the panel dataset of 244 FWMA corporations from twenty countries
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4 during the period from 2006 to 2012 of which 117 MNCs have the one-tier board and 127 MNCs
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6 with the two-tier board model. We used the random-effect regression method to estimate the
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8 empirical model with the data we collated. We also ran several regressions on the alternative
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10 models for robustness check. We found the significant effect of board model on CSR disclosure.
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12 MNCs using two-tier board model tends to disclose more CSR information than MNCs using
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14 one-tier board model. We did not find the significant effect of board independence on CSR
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16 disclosure of MNCs in general. However, we did see the significant effect of board independence
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18 on CSR disclosure in two-tier MNCs, and that effect is not significant in one-tier board MNCs.
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20 Our results confirm the moderating impact of board model on the effect of board independence
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22 on CSR disclosure. In particular, the impact of board independence on CSR disclosure appears to
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24 be more pronounced in two-tier board MNCs than in one-tier board MNCs.
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30 Our paper has two limitations which future research could overcome. The first is that we
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32 omitted some variables popularly used as control variables in corporate governance such as
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34 board interlocking, board diversity, CEO duality, incentive system, ownership structure because
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36 of unavailability of the data. The second limitation is that our paper only focused on how MNC's
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38 corporate governance (board model and board independence) affect its approach to transparency
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40 and legitimacy at headquarter level and did not examine the practices at a subsidiary level. We
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42 recommend future research to look into how corporate governance system and institutional
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44 context of host countries influence on CSR approach at both subsidiaries and headquarter level
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46 of MNCs.
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Table 1: Correlation matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	VIF
1 <i>CSRdisclose</i>	1.00											
2 <i>Bmodel</i>	0.36***	1.00										3.3
3 <i>Bindepen</i>	0.29***	0.84***	1.00									5.27
4 <i>Bmodel*Bindepen</i>	0.22***	0.77***	0.93***	1.00								2.54
5 <i>roe</i>	-0.10**	-0.23***	0.24***	0.22***	1.00							1.16
6 <i>compete</i>	0.01	-0.27***	0.28***	0.28***	0.06	1.00						1.09
7 <i>leverage</i>	-0.02	-0.01	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.01	1.00					1.01
8 <i>salesgrow</i>	-0.09**	-0.12***	0.12***	0.15***	0.17***	0.03	-0.01	1.00				1.05
9 <i>employee</i>	0.04	-0.00	-0.01	0.03	-0.01	0.01	-0.01	-0.02	1.00			1.01
10 <i>foreign</i>	0.15***	0.02	0.07*	0.08*	0.11***	0.04	-0.03	-0.03	0.06	1.00		1.06
11 <i>SOUND FINANCE</i>	0.12***	0.28***	-0.26***	-0.21***	-0.04	-0.71***	-0.00	-0.02	-0.01	-0.03	1.00	

*p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001; Mean VIF = 1.94

Table 2: Descriptive statistics

	Whole sample	Mean			S.D.			Min			Max		
		One-Tier	Two-Tier	Whole sample	One-Tier	Two-Tier	Whole sample	One-Tier	Two-Tier	Whole sample	One-Tier	Two-Tier	
<i>CSR_{disclose}</i>	41.21	34.21	44.73	13.19	14.26	11.14	12.81	10.74	12.81	79.75	66.53	79.75	
<i>Bmodel</i>	0.37	0	1	0.483	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	
<i>Bindepen</i>	56.72	81.57	32.72	28.93	10.53	20.52	0.00	42.86	0.00	100.00	100.00	70.00	
<i>roe</i>	16.89	22.19	10.04	24.90	29.46	12.82	-200.77	-200.77	-48.89	312.76	316.78	108.32	
<i>compete</i>	11	11.99	9.87	3.94	3.66	3.95	2	2	2	17	17	17	
<i>leverage</i>	152.86	149.25	135.55	502.14	535.02	454.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	8228.99	8228.99	7559.11	
<i>salesgrow</i>	5.88	8.02	3.40	18.51	19.82	15.82	-52.35	-58.06	-38.13	208.42	208.42	79.22	
<i>employee</i>	102000.00	112000.00	111000.00	95194.94	210000.00	97703.16	1960	1960	2790	495000	2100000	495000	
<i>foreign</i>	38.23	37.79	39.00	38.61	39.52	37	1	1	1	200	200	200	
<i>Sound_Finance</i>	5.35	5.96	8.14	3.36	3.61	3.69	1	1	1	15	17	16	

Table 3: Regression results for the whole sample- based line models (one year lag independent variables)

ESG	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	
	Coefficient	P value	Coefficient	P value	Coefficient	P value
<i>L1.Bmodel</i>			7.178***	.000	9.053***	.001
<i>L1.Bindepen</i>					.015	.790
<i>L1.moderator</i>					.133+	.074
<i>L1.roe</i>	-.011	.688	-.004	.889	.000	.819
<i>L1.compete</i>	.083	.431	.120	.254	.153	.257
<i>L1.LEVERAGE</i>	.000	.264	.000	.453	.000	.436
<i>L1.SALES_GROWTH</i>	.016	.223	.016	.228	.016	.257
<i>L1.EMPLOYEE_NO</i>	.000	.701	.000	.701	.000	.696
<i>L1.foreign</i>	.043	.050	.040	.054	.026	.392
<i>Industry</i>	Controlled		Controlled		Controlled	
<i>Year</i>	Controlled		Controlled		Controlled	
cons	18.750***	.000	16.984***	.000	15.984**	.003
N	490		490		490	
R ²	.657		.690		.703	

* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Table 4: Regression results for the whole sample - alternative models (two year lag independent variables)

	(1*)	(2*)	(3*)	(4*)	(5*)	
	Coefficient	P value	Coefficient	P value	Coefficient	P value
<i>L2.Bmodel</i>			8.049***	.000	8.941**	.002
<i>L2.Bindepen</i>					-.027	.667
<i>L2.moderator</i>					.293**	.001
<i>L2.roe</i>	-.005	.878	.006	.845	.012	.994
<i>L2.compete</i>	.194	.195	.232	.108	.352*	.042
<i>L2.LEVERAGE</i>	-.000	.875	.001	.348	.000	.504
<i>L2.SALES_GROWTH</i>	-.003	.851	-.003	.841	-.002	.887
<i>L2.EMPLOYEE_NO</i>	.000	.279	.000	.187	.000	.133
<i>L2.foreign</i>	.035	.115	.042*	.039	.029	.305
<i>Industry</i>	Controlled		Controlled		Controlled	
<i>Year</i>	Controlled		Controlled		Controlled	
cons	19.119***	.001	16.571***	.000	16.463	.016

N	324	324	324	324
R ²	.728	.757	.732	.765
* p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001				

Table 5: Regression results for the two sub-samples

	Baseline model (RE)			Alternative model/Robustness check (RE)		
	One-year lag	Model 2- One-tier	Model 3 -Two-tier	Two-year lag	Model 2* One-tier	Model 3* Two-tier
CSRdisclose	Coeff	P-value	Coeff	P-value	Coeff	P-value
L1.Bindepen	0.014	0.811	0.158	0.000	0.087	0.207
L1.roe	0.005	0.886	-0.019	0.618	0.020	0.006
L1.compete	0.205	0.196	-0.094	0.432	0.327	0.069
L1.leverage	0.000	0.684	0.001	0.105	0.001	0.006
L1.salesgrow	0.022	0.176	0.006	0.711	-0.00	0.014
L1.employee	0.00	0.617	0.00	0.155	0.00	0.00
L1.foreign	0.054	0.171	0.035	0.330	0.001	0.017
industry	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled
year	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled	Controlled
N	292	198	198	N	209	115
R-sq	0.807	0.624	0.624	R-sq	0.851	0.758

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Reviewer 1's comment- 1. The first part of the introduction on page 2- “Although there has been a large body of literature about corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosure, it has mainly examined firms operating in one country. The reviews of literature about CSR reporting including Gray et al. (1995), Belal and Monin (2009), Parker (2011), Fifka (2013) and Ali et al. (2017), reveal that little literature has studied CSR disclosure of multinational corporations (MNCs).”- is not suitable in its current place. I noticed this was partially addressed based on the comments that I provided, but the paragraphs is still in the wrong section. The statements about the literature gap should be placed before the research question or the literature review part.

Our response

We have revised the introduction section which is highlighted in yellow on page 1.

Reviewer 1's comment 2. This H3 statement – a board model (two-tier vs. one-tier) strengthens the effect of board independence on CSR disclosure in MNCs - is too vague. Which board model between the two increases the relationship between board independence and CSR disclosure? Or do both one-tier and two-tier systems strengthen it? Is your argument related to H3? Please clarify your argument.

Our response.

We have revised our argument and H3. The major add-on is highlighted in yellow on page 11.

We also revise hypothesis 1 to make it clearer and consistent with hypothesis 3.

Due to the revision of the statements for hypothesis H1 and H3, we have provided more explanations about the approach we used to test the hypotheses. Please note that there is no change in our approach, just more explanations which are added to the method section on page 13.

Reviewer 1's comment 3. Reorganize the order of the method section to Data, Variables, and Model (specification). This is the typical order of academic articles in the management field.

Our response

We've reorganised the method section as per your recommendation. Data and variables are now relocated to the beginning of the method section on page 11.

Reviewer 1's comment 4. Please explain either how to deal with the high correlation issue between board models and board independence or the reasons why we can accept this model even if the two variables (board models and board independence) have high correlations (the correlation value of 0.89 between board models and board independence is quite high).

Our response

We are aware of the high correlation between board model and board independence. To address the concern about possible multicollinearity, we've undertaken two measures. The first is that we've developed detailed explanations about why our estimation model is acceptable.

"Following the guidance by Belsley et al.(2005), Mason et al.(2003), Mason and Perreault Jr (1991), Neter et al.(1989) and Marquardt (1970) who suggest that would not be a problem when Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) are lower than 10, we examined correlation

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3 *coefficients among predictors and their VIFs. As presented in Table 1, although the*
4 *correlations among three key predictors (board model, board independence, interaction*
5 *variable) are quite high, all VIFs are lower than 10, so multicollinearity does not appear as a*
6 *problem and our estimation model is acceptable"*

7 We've included these discussions in this revised manuscript which is highlighted in yellow on
8 page 17.
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11 The second measure is that we followed the hierarchical approach suggested by Aiken and
12 West (1991) to estimate the effects of each predictor on its own without other predictors in
13 the estimation model and also its effect in the estimation model which other predictors are
14 included. Specifically, we ran a regression of the following models
15

- 16 1. The model with all control variables.
- 17 2. The model with all control variables and Bmodel.
- 18 3. The model with all control variables and Bindepen
- 19 4. The model with all control variables, Bmodel, and Bindepen.
- 20 5. The model with all control variables, Bmodel, Bindepen, and the interaction variable
21 (Bmodel*Bindepen)
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24 The estimation testing results of the above models are reported in Table 3 (baseline models)
25 The hypothesis testing results hold when each predictor is investigated in separation from
26 other predictors and when they are examined in the same model. This indicates that
27 multicollinearity is not a problem in that full model (Model 5) with high correlations among
28 predictors.
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31 We have revised our paper to enable the inclusion of these models. The newly add-on relating
32 to estimation method is highlighted in yellow (line 21-23 on page 13 and line 1-2 on page
33 14). The add-on relating to the results is highlighted in line 5-13 on page 20; line 9-15 on
34 page 21; line 22-25 on page 21.
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37 **Reviewer 1's comment 5.** Contribution and implication are better located in the discussion
38 section.
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40 ***Our response:*** We have moved the contributions and implications to the discussion section.
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