

TRA VINH PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
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**THE IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR: A
CASE OF NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE
PRODUCTS IN THE MEKONG DELTA**

Major: Business Administration
Code: 9340101

**A SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS
IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

TRA VINH, 2022

The thesis is completed at Tra Vinh University

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The thesis shall be defended in front of the thesis defense committee meeting at Tra Vinh University

At.....hour.....date.....month.....year 2022

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research problem

1.1.1 Practical context

The non-alcoholic beverage industry is considered one of the industries with high growth rates, the revenue growth rate of the industry is estimated at an average rate of 11.8% in the period 2018-2022 (VIRAC, 2019). Many businesses producing non-alcoholic beverages have contributed trillions of VND in taxes to the state budget, contributing to stabilizing the macro-economy and ensuring social security, creating jobs for hundreds of thousands of workers directly and indirectly through the product supply chain.

With the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, it has had a great impact on the economy in general. For the non-alcoholic beverage industry, the consumption volume of enterprises in the industry decreased, many businesses reduced their consumption by 40-50%, and many food service businesses that have reduced the number of customers by 70-80% compared to 2019, leading to a decrease in the consumption of non-alcoholic beverages (Kim Anh, 2021). The non-alcoholic beverage industry is also one of the industries most affected by the epidemic due to social distancing, suspension of tourism activities, large gatherings of people, etc.

On the other hand, in the past time, the non-alcoholic beverage industry has also had some problems with enterprises violating CSR such as products containing organisms, products with excessive lead content, FDI enterprises declaring a loss due to the high price of raw materials imported from the country so as not to pay corporate income tax, using expired raw materials, using non-degradable plastic materials that adversely affect the natural environment have made the problem CSR for the non-alcoholic beverage industry is of particular interest to consumers.

The Mekong Delta is one of most densely populated regions, accounting for 22% of the country's population (General Statistics Office, 2019), an important position in the country's socioeconomic development, and an area not only with many favorable conditions but also with many difficulties. The Mekong Delta is frequently affected by floods in upstream areas, saline intrusion in coastal areas, alkaline soil and the spread of acidic water in low-lying areas, lack of fresh

water for production and living in areas far from rivers, near the sea, ... along with the convenience of non-alcoholic beverage products has made the demand for non-alcoholic beverages in this area increase.

With the economic context in particular and the whole world in general changing strongly, Vietnam's economy also has the characteristics of a transition economy, integrating into the region and the world. Therefore, theories of governance and social responsibility in Vietnam have their own characteristics. In particular, in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic crisis, with the requirements of social distancing along with the outstanding development of 4.0 technology, there have been many changes in CSR and consumer behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to study the impact of CSR on the consumer behavior of non-alcoholic beverages in the Mekong Delta.

1.1.2 Theoretical background

The results on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior are much different between different cultures. The implementation of CSR also depends on the conditions of each country, specific conditions, CSR is affected by different cultures and customs of each country, so the results of studies in this country are difficult to apply in other countries (Chapple and Moon, 2005). Research on CSR may be reaching maturity, but consumer responses to CSR activities in developing countries are still far from being done (Butt, 2016).

In Vietnam, there are still not many studies on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior, most of the previous studies on CSR in Vietnam have studied the impact of CSR on performance (Chau Thi Le) Duyen, 2018), CSR and financial results (Ho Thi Van Anh, 2017), CSR and employees (Pham Viet Thang, 2018; Hoang Anh Vien, 2018). Therefore, the research on the topic of the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in Vietnam is still an under researched gap.

According to Hofstede et al (2010), Vietnamese culture is community based, different from individual culture like in some other countries. According to Vu Huy Thong et al (2014), the buying psychology of consumers in Vietnam is often affected by the phenomenon of "crowd effect", consumers often learn about the evaluation of the surrounding community. In order to know information and choose to buy products according to the general trend, their buying behavior is often easily influenced by others. Therefore,

the research on CSR in Vietnam may have different results than in other countries.

Servera-Francés et al. (2019) also said that in the field of retail consumption, most researchers focus on the topic of the impact of CSR on the corporate image of enterprises, showing how it can be improved. To improve corporate image by increasing CSR actions, there have not been many studies exploring the direct impact of CSR actions on consumer behavior. Therefore, it is necessary to have research on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior to contribute to the theoretical and practical contributions to the increase of CSR activities of enterprises today.

1.2 Document overview

1.2.1 Overview of research on CSR

1.2.2 Overview of empirical research related to the research topic

1.2.2.1 Collection and selection of documents

1.2.2.2 Overview of relevant empirical studies in the country

1.2.2.3 Overview of relevant empirical studies abroad

1.3 Research gaps

The topic of the impact of CSR on consumer behavior has been carried out by many researchers. However, the literature review shows that these results are still contradictory, there is no consensus in the results of previous studies.

Research by Imran Ali (2010) shows that the implementation of CSR by enterprises has no impact on consumer behavior, because consumers do not have adequate knowledge about CSR activities. Consumers do not consider businesses' contributions to society in their purchasing decisions, they often choose businesses with good products at cheap prices.

Besides, other studies show that there is a positive impact of CSR on consumer behavior, consumers will have the intention to want to continue buying products of businesses that are perceived as socially responsible (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). When society becomes richer, consumers' awareness will improve, they will be interested in businesses that implement CSR, thus affecting consumers' product consumer behavior. Therefore, this thesis continues to be carried out to test whether CSR has an impact on consumer behavior or not.

Previous studies have often focused on researching the impact of CSR on purchase intention, customer loyalty, but there have not been many studies on the impact of CSR on actual consumer behavior. Intention to buy is considered as a stage in the steps before making a purchase decision and is an important prerequisite to lead to actual buying behavior (Kotler and Keller, 2012). Therefore, purchase intent is often used for the purpose of predicting actual purchasing behavior. However, purchase intention still has a certain rate of change (Keller, 2001), not any purchase intention leads to actual buying behavior. Besides, the impact of CSR on consumer behavior has not been much researched in the country, therefore, this thesis studies the impact of CSR on real consumer behavior.

Moiescu (2017) argues that the relationship between CSR and consumer behavior has not been studied deeply and thoroughly, especially in the commercial sector, where customer intentions are elusive and difficult to predict than in other fields. In particular, this is a research topic that is still relatively new to developing countries (Fatma et al., 2015), the impact of CSR in developing countries remains largely unexplored (Butt, 2016). Thus, there are still many different views when conducting research on consumer perception of CSR activities, showing that this area needs further research.

In this study, we continue to inherit the results of previous studies through testing the role of mediating variables, namely brand trust and corporate reputation. This study further examines the mediating role of electronic word of mouth (eWOM). There have not been many studies that consider these intermediate variables simultaneously in the same study, and this is also a new contribution to the thesis's theory compared to previous studies.

From the practical context, the theoretical context and the review of previous studies, it is shown that the implementation of the research project on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the case of non-alcoholic beverage products in the Mekong Delta is necessary.

1.4. Research objectives and questions

1.4.1 Research objectives

- Determining the factors affecting directly and indirectly in the impact relationship of CSR on consumer behavior in the case of non-alcoholic beverage products in the Mekong Delta region.

- Measuring the direct and indirect impacts of CSR on consumer behavior in the case of non-alcoholic beverage products in the Mekong Delta.

- Proposing governance implications to improve the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the case of non-alcoholic beverage products in the Mekong Delta.

1.4.2 Research questions

1.5 Research object and survey object

1.5.1 Research object

1.5.2 Survey subjects

The thesis focuses on surveying individual consumers who have the right to make decisions to buy and consume non-alcoholic beverage products in the Mekong Delta region, with frequent use of 3 times/week or more, interested in or heard of CSR and is limited to 18 years of age or older, currently residing in the Mekong Delta.

1.6 Limited scope of research

1.6.1 Scope of Content

- The thesis limits the scope of research on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior from the perspective of consumers' intuitive perception of CSR activities of enterprises in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta. The thesis only considers the impact relationship between the independent variable on the dependent variable and the intermediate variable, not considering the interaction relationship between the intermediate variables.

1.6.2 Scope of the study area

1.7 Research Methods

1.7.1 Preliminary research:

1.7.1.1 Qualitative Research

1.7.1.2 Preliminary quantitative research

1.7.2 Formal Research

1.8 New points of the thesis

- In theory:

The study has systematically studied the foundations of CSR and consumer behavior, and previous studies on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. The study has built a theoretical model and a measuring scale of concepts in the relationship of the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

Previous research results also differ that CSR has an influence on consumer behavior. This study has demonstrated a relationship that has not been consistent in previous studies, specifically this study reinforces the view that CSR has a real impact on consumer behavior. The study has demonstrated the specific relationship of the non-alcoholic beverage sector in the Mekong Delta market that CSR has a direct and indirect impact on consumer behavior.

The study contributes to further perfecting the mediating factors in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

- In practice:

The thesis results provide more empirical evidence to enrich the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

The results of the thesis research help business managers reinforce the view that CSR is an important strategy to positively influence consumer behavior, and at the same time, good CSR also contributes to improving corporate reputation, brand trust, and eWOM. This result will contribute to encouraging non-alcoholic beverage businesses to actively carry out CSR activities.

The proposed research governance implications help managers in the process of formulating, planning and implementing CSR strategies to positively influence consumer behavior in the regional non-alcoholic beverage industry. Mekong Delta region.

1.9. Thesis structure: consists of 5 chapters: Chapter 1: Research overview, Chapter 2: Theoretical basis and research model, Chapter 3: Research design of the thesis, Chapter 4: Research results and discussion thesis, Chapter 5: Conclusions and managerial implications.

CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND RESEARCH MODEL

2.1. Related background theory

2.1.1. Stakeholder theory

2.1.2 Social exchange theory (SET)

2.1.3 Social identity theory (SIT)

2.1.4 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

2.1.5 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

2.2 Corporate social responsibility

2.2.1 Concepts

2.2.2 Development stages of the concept of CSR

2.2.3 Components of corporate social responsibility

2.3 Corporate reputation

2.4 Brand trust

2.5 Electronic word of mouth (eWOM)

2.6 Consumer behavior

2.7 Research hypothesis and theoretical research model

Nowadays, consumers are often interested in CSR activities of enterprises (Maignan et al., 2004). In Vietnam, through cases of environmental pollution, cases of poor-quality products such as "flying" soft drinks, lead-contaminated drinking water that have happened in the past, consumers are more interested in corporate CSR implementation. Consumers are very willing to buy products from businesses that participate well in social activities, such as donations, energy programs, sponsorships, etc. (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). Consumers prefer products from responsible businesses over socially irresponsible ones (Menges et al., 2019). From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H1: Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on consumer behavior.

CSR has a very important role in building consumer confidence, consumers are willing to pay higher prices for products they trust (Daniela et al., 2010). Research by Martínez et al (2013) shows that CSR has a positive impact on brand trust. Kaur et al (2011) said that CSR activities contribute to making consumers trust the brand. Consumers are willing to compensate for extremely ethical businesses, willing to pay a higher price when businesses perform well in CSR (Daniela et al., 2010). According to Park et al. (2014), CSR contributes to reinforcing consumers' decision to buy products, because the practice of CSR activities often gives customers the belief that businesses follow ethical and ethical standards. respect society. From there, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H2: Corporate social responsibility has a positive effect on brand trust.

With the current development of social networks, which has facilitated the development of eWOM, eWOM information is spread at a rapid rate. Any negative behavior, causing bad effects of businesses on society will easily be quickly reacted by consumers. Consumers can easily join eWOM by sharing and commenting on CSR activities of enterprises. Consumers often have a good feeling about businesses through accessing good eWOMs on social networks, eWOMs rated by consumers are often reliable because they are shared from relatives or friends, and are easily verified (Colleoni, 2013).

Fatma et al. (2020) argue that information about CSR appearing on social networks attracts and increases the eWOM intention of consumers. Therefore, in line with the theory of social identity, the CSR participation of developed enterprises is positively perceived by consumers. Thus, as a member of a social group, consumers support and promote that business among their friends, colleagues and family members by using eWOM actively. From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H3: Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on electronic word of mouth.

Businesses, especially in the consumer goods industry, the success of the business depends more or less on the reputation, when the business has a reputation, it will have a certain influence on the buying behavior of products from consumers (Mark et al., 2002). Consumers can judge a company's reputation through product quality and CSR activities (Qureshi et al., 2009). Helm et al. (2010) show that reputation plays a role in predicting actual buying behavior, businesses with reputation help consumers reduce uncertainty when consumers perceive a business. The more positive the company's reputation, the higher the customer's consumer behavior towards its products (Kircova et al., 2018). From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H4: Corporate reputation has a positive impact on consumer behavior.

According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), brand trust is a prerequisite for building relationships with customers and thus facilitating consumer behavior. Research by Pham Minh Tien et al (2015) shows that trust has a positive impact on consumers' purchase intention. Research by Pavlou and Fygenson (2006) also shows that the brand trust factor has an influence on consumer behavior.

Punyatoya (2014) suggested that when consumers have confidence in the brand, it contributes to increasing purchase intention. Takaya (2019) argues that there is a positive relationship between brand trust and consumer behavior, if consumers have trust in the brand, their buying behavior will also be high. From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H5: Brand trust has a positive effect on consumer behavior.

Today with the development of social networks, consumers have considered the information from eWOM before making a purchase decision. eWOM today is playing an important role in the purchasing decision process of consumers, the eWOM information from them influences the purchasing behavior of consumers (Chan et al., 2011). With the growth of internet and e-commerce, eWOM is changing consumer behavior, and even when making purchasing decisions offline, consumers still consider information from eWOM (Abdallah, 2015). Several studies show that information from eWOM has an influence on buying behavior (Abdallah, 2015). Research by Jalilvand et al (2012) shows that eWOM has a direct and strong impact on consumer behavior. From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H6: Electronic word of mouth has a positive impact on consumer behavior.

The relationship between CSR and corporate reputation has also been studied by many previous empirical studies. Malik (2015) asserts that quality CSR activities will help businesses build strong brands and good reputations. Shwu-Ing Wu et al (2014) concluded that implementing CSR will help businesses build a good image and reputation with customers. When researching in the fast-food industry, Tong et al (2019) concluded that there is a positive influence between CSR and the reputation of the fast-food place. Thus, there is a relevant relationship between CSR and corporate reputation. From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H7: Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on corporate reputation

The role of mediating variables in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior

According to TPB theory, the relationship between perception and consumer behavior is a hierarchical relationship, in which perception affects actual behavior through behavioral intention.

Several empirical studies have determined that CSR has an impact on consumer behavior through mediating variables. Although there are many intermediate variables that have been studied and tested by many scholars through statistical tools, the eWOM variable has not been implemented by many studies. Fatma et al. (2020) conducted a study on the impact of CSR on eWOM on social networks, showing that CSR information on social networks attracts consumers and thereby increases electronic word of mouth intention. Pham Duc Chinh et al (2020) believe that the influence of eWOM on buying behavior in Vietnam has not been given due attention, and there have not been many studies on this issue. Therefore, more research in this field is really necessary to better understand the effects of eWOM on consumer purchasing behavior (Pham Duc Chinh et al., 2020). From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H8: Corporate reputation plays an intermediary role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior.

H9: Brand trust plays an intermediary role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior.

H10: Electronic word of mouth plays an intermediary role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior.

Identifying demographic variables of consumer behavior will be helpful for marketers to perform market segmentation or targeting their target consumers. Research by Nguyen Phan Thanh Nha et al (2014) shows that there is a difference in the perception of consumers of different education levels towards CSR, but there is no difference in the perception of consumers of different gender and income groups towards CSR. Results from several studies have revealed that men and women have significantly different environmental attitudes, with women showing more positive environmental attitudes than men (Zelezny et al. 2000; Lee, 2008). From that, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H11: There are differences between gender, income and educational groups in the relationship of the impact of CSR on consumer behavior.

CHAPTER 3. STUDY DESIGN

3.1 Research Process

3.2 Exploratory qualitative research

3.2.1 Objectives

To find out consumers' perceptions of corporate CSR activities in the non-alcoholic beverage industry, specifically, which CSR aspects consumers care about, and which consumer reactions have an impact affected by corporate CSR activities. To achieve the objective, the author interviewed 42 consumers (who are both buyers and users of non-alcoholic beverage products) at supermarkets and beverage shops selected according to convenience sampling methods in Can Tho city.

3.2.2 Exploratory research results

The results of the exploratory qualitative research show that CSR activities have an impact on corporate reputation and consumer confidence, this result is similar to the qualitative research results of Nguyen Hong Ha and Nguyen Thi Tuyet Mai (2013). However, the results of this study also show that CSR activities of non-alcoholic beverage companies also affect word-of-mouth behavior on social networks and consumer buying behavior.

3.3 Qualitative research to adjust the scale

3.3.1 Objectives

To ensure the validity of the scale, the author used a qualitative research method to adjust the scale by interviewing experts. Expert group of 13 people, 3 of whom have university degrees (are regional sales managers or supervisors); 10 people have postgraduate degrees (scientists specializing in marketing, consumer behavior, CSR). Experts have in common that consumers directly choose to buy and consume non-alcoholic beverage products on a regular basis (≥ 3 times a week).

3.3.2 Results of the study on adjusting the scale

After expert discussion, the thesis has preliminary scales to measure research concepts, specifically: The CSR preliminary scale includes 7 observed variables; Preliminary scale of corporate reputation includes 7 observed variables; Preliminary scale of brand trust includes 5 observed variables; The eWOM preliminary scale includes 4 observed variables; Preliminary scale of consumer behavior

includes 5 observed variables. Preliminary scales will be used to conduct preliminary quantitative research in the next step.

3.4 Preliminary quantitative research

3.4.1 Objectives

Used to evaluate the reliability, preliminary assessment of convergence value and discriminant value of the scale. After removing the unsuitable variables in the preliminary quantitative research step, the remaining variables will be used for the formal research.

3.4.2 Construction of preliminary quantitative research

In the preliminary quantitative research step, the convenient sampling method was used with a sample size of 70 observations. Survey subjects are individual consumers who use non-alcoholic beverages on a regular basis (≥ 3 times a week).

3.4.3 Methods of data analysis in preliminary quantitative research

3.4.3.1 Cronbach's Alpha

3.4.3.2 Exploratory factor analysis

3.4.4 Preliminary quantitative research results

3.4.4.1 Cronbach's Alpha analysis results

3.4.4.2 Exploratory Factor Analysis results

3.5 Formal Research

3.5.1. Table of questions

3.5.2 Sampling method

In order to research highly representative information for the Mekong Delta region, the thesis focuses on surveying primary data in 4 provinces and cities with high population density of the region to directly survey Can Tho, Tien Giang, Vinh Long and An Giang. These are densely populated provinces in the Mekong Delta region, and these places are also the places where many people from other provinces come to study and work.

However, in the process of direct survey due to the influence of the epidemic, the thesis continues to survey in online form, so it should expand to survey consumers living in areas with average population density in the Mekong Delta, namely Dong Thap, Tra Vinh (medium population density), and Bac Lieu, Long An, and Kien Giang provinces (low population density) to increase the representativeness of the sample.

3.5.3 Primary data collection method

The study collected primary data using a pre-planned questionnaire. Due to the context of the thesis research at a time when the whole country implements social distancing due to the influence of the epidemic, the author collects data in two phases.

Phase 1: The author surveys directly with consumers through a questionnaire (face-to-face), the implementation period starts from August 2019 to December 2019. In the context of conducting research, there is an outbreak of disease, so the author conducts phase 2, an online survey. At the end of phase 1, the author obtained 635 survey questionnaires.

Phase 2: In the context of conducting the research, due to the outbreak of the disease, in order to increase the sample size, the author continued to conduct an online survey through a questionnaire built from the Google Form tool. from February 2020 to April 2020. To reach the survey subjects, the access link (questionnaire link) was sent to the survey subjects on social networking platforms (facebook groups) in the Mekong Delta provinces where the author has not conducted the survey. In phase 2, the author obtained 384 survey questionnaires.

Combining both phases, the author obtained 1,019 valid questionnaires to test the theoretical model and research hypothesis.

3.5.4 Methods of data analysis in formal research

3.5.4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

3.5.4.2 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

3.5.4.3 Bootstrapping

CHAPTER 4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research results

4.1.1 Introduction of research sample

4.1.2 Cronbach's Alpha analysis results

4.1.3 Exploratory Factor Analysis results

4.1.4 Confirmatory Factor Analysis results

Through the results of Cronbach's Alpha analysis and EFA analysis, it is found that the model's scales have good reliability. CFA analysis is used to test data fit, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The results of CFA analysis of the critical model showed that $CMIN/df = 1,085 (<3)$, $GFI = 0.981 (>0.9)$, $TLI = 0.998 (>0.9)$, only

CFI score = 0.998 (>0.9), RMSEA = 0.009 (< 0.08) shows that it is consistent with research data.

4.1.5 Testing theoretical models and research hypotheses by CB-SEM

4.1.5.1 Testing the theoretical model

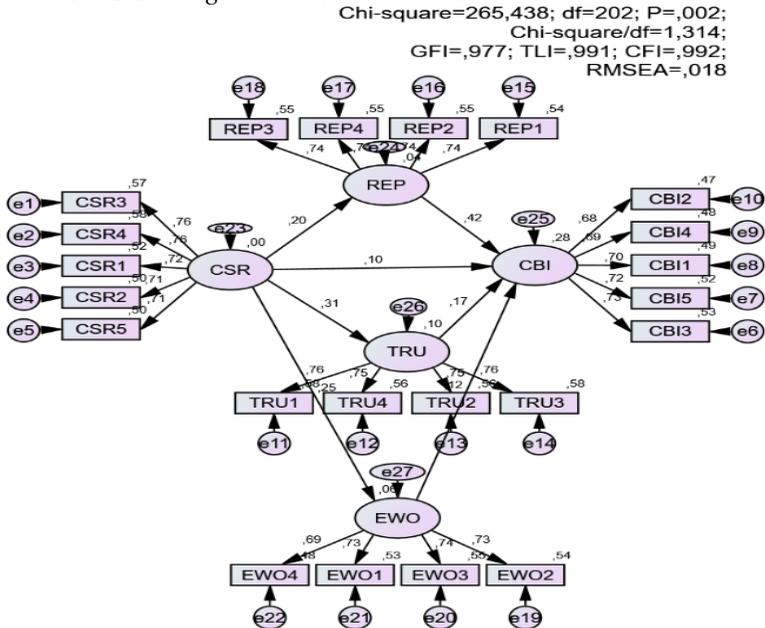


Figure 4.2. CB-SEM results (Standardized)

Source: analysis results, 2020

The CB-SEM model results are presented in Figure 4.2, showing that the model has 202 degrees of freedom, P value = 0.002, indexes CMIN/df = 1.314 (<3); GFI = 0.977 (>0.9); TLI = 0.991 (>0.9); CFI = 0.992 (>0.9); RMSEA = 0.018 (< 0.08) shows that the theoretical model is consistent with the research data.

4.1.5.2 Hypothesis testing

4.1.5.3 Estimating theoretical model with Bootstrapping

4.1.6 Multigroup analysis

Through multigroup analysis, it was found that the impact of CSR on reputation, brand trust, electronic word of mouth, and consumer behavior did not change when tested against the control variables of gender, income and level.

4.2 Discussing research results

Table 4.20. Summarize the results of testing the research hypotheses

Symbol	Hypothesis	Conclusion
H1	Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on consumer behavior	Accept
H2	Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on brand trust	Accept
H3	Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on electronic word of mouth	Accept
H4	Corporate reputation has a positive impact on consumer behavior	Accept
H5	Brand trust has a positive effect on consumer behavior	Accept
H6	Electronic word of mouth has a positive impact on consumer behavior	Accept
H7	Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on corporate reputation	Accept
H8	Corporate reputation plays a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior	Accept
H9	Brand trust has a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior	Accept
H10	Electronic word of mouth plays a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior	Accept
H11	There are differences between gender, income and educational groups in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior	Rejected

Source: analysis results, 2020

- H1: CSR has a positive impact on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.103$; S.E. = 0.040; C.R. = 2.712; $P = 0.007$).

The results of testing hypothesis H1 are also similar to many previous research results, typically Bianchi et al. (2019), Tung-Ju Wu et al (2016), Butt (2016), Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) in different research contexts, according to which consumers will have the behavior of consuming the products of enterprises that are perceived to have good CSR performance. In terms of practice, it shows that consumer behavior has had certain changes, especially due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and social impacts such as climate change, drought, and saltwater intrusion in the Mekong Delta...

consumers have paid special attention to their own health and activities that bring good benefits to society such as CSR activities of enterprises. Consumers have a good attitude towards businesses that implement CSR, they want to behave in a way that can reduce the negative impact on society through consumer behavior.

- H2: CSR has a positive impact on brand trust ($\beta = 0.312$; S.E. = 0.036; C.R. = 8.268; P = 0.000)

This result is similar to many previous studies that identified CSR as contributing to building brand trust (Swaen and Chumpitaz, 2008; Sindhu et al., 2017; Saleem and Gopinath, 2015; Butt, 2016; Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao, et al., 2019; Chaudhuri et al., 2001) concluded that consumers trust businesses with a positive perception of CSR implementation will adhere to ethical standards to provide quality products and will take responsibility for the product quality.

- H3: CSR has a positive impact on electronic word of mouth ($\beta = 0.250$; S.E. = 0.033; C.R. = 6.544; P = 0.000).

The results of this study demonstrate that CSR has a positive impact on electronic word of mouth, which reinforces the conclusion of Fatma et al. (2020) that consumer perceived information about CSR has an influence electronic word of mouth behavior, so it is necessary for businesses to provide information about CSR in the media. Today's consumers are interested not only in product-related attributes (quality, brand, ...) but they also consider other attributes such as CSR activities of enterprises. Corporate CSR activities are often actively communicated by consumers on social networks.

- H4: Reputation has a positive effect on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.422$; S.E. = 0.038; C.R. = 10,807; P = 0.000)

Theoretically, there have been many studies confirming that reputation has a positive effect on consumer behavior (Sindu et al., 2017; Tong et al., 2014). From a consumer perspective, reputable businesses are often related or even tied to the origin of their products. The reality shows that non-alcoholic beverage businesses with good reputation, well-known by many consumers are dominating the market, trusted and used by consumers, this is true even in the field of consumer goods in general and the non-alcoholic beverage market in particular.

- H5: Brand trust has a positive impact on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.169$; S.E. = 0.041; C.R. = 4.645; P = 0.000)

Practice shows that brand trust plays an important role in the consumer goods industry, especially in the non-alcoholic beverage industry, which is considered a favorable business line with high demand. The market is very large, but it still comes with challenges because of the impact, directly related to the health of consumers. Therefore, businesses in gaining brand trust from consumers will contribute to increasing purchase intentions. The results of this study are similar to the results of Sindu et al. (2017), Butt (2016), Saleem and Gopinath (2015), Zhilong Tian et al (2011) showing that reputation impacts on consumer behavior is consistent with the theoretical context and the actual context in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta region.

- H6: Electronic word of mouth has a positive impact on consumer behavior ($\beta = 0.123$; S.E. = 0.043; C.R. = 3.436; P = 0.000)

According to social identity theory, consumers always have a need to distinguish themselves from others, so they often share positive eWOM information for activities that bring good value for society. On the contrary, activities that are harmful to society are often boycotted and strongly opposed by consumers. Practice has shown that for non-alcoholic beverage businesses with socially irresponsible behavior, there have been many consumer groups protesting on social networks and calling on other consumers to boycott their products. The results of this study are similar to previous studies such as Abdallah (2015), Pham Van Tuan (2020) in different research contexts. This study further confirms that eWOM has an impact on consumer behavior for the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

- H7: CSR has a positive impact on corporate reputation ($\beta = 0,200$; S.E. = 0.040; C.R. = 5,331; P = 0.000).

Previous studies have also determined that CSR has a positive effect on corporate reputation (Tong et al., 2019; Shwu-Ing Wu et al., 2014; Helm et al., 2010). In addition, businesses that do well with CSR have been identified as having a positive impact on consumer purchasing behavior compared to businesses that do not pursue CSR activities (Bianchi et al., 2019). Through CSR activities, businesses can increase consumers' perception of corporate reputation. In the context of the non-alcoholic beverage industry, the competition in the daily industry is very fierce when there are many competitors and

many similar substitutes, so the business becomes different. CSR activities are a good reputation building strategy.

-H8: Research results show that corporate reputation plays a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. Previous studies have shown the impact of CSR on reputation (Bianchi et al., 2019; Tong et al., 2019; Shwu-Ing Wu et al., 2014; Helm et al., 2010). impact of reputation on consumer behavior (Sindu et al., 2017; Tong et al., 2014). Furthermore, there are also studies that identify the mediating role of reputation in the relationship between CSR and consumer behavior in different research fields (Balqiah et al., 2011; Tong et al., 2014; Sindhu et al., 2017; Nguyen Hong Ha, 2016). According to the SET theory, it is shown that when non-alcoholic beverage enterprises participate in CSR activities, they will receive positive feedback on their consumer behavior and the business will also have a good reputation due to the result of an exchange process.

-H9: Research results show that brand trust plays a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. The results of this study continue to show that brand trust has a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta. This result is similar to the results of previous studies such as Balqiah et al. (2011), Tong et al. (2014), Sindhu et al (2017), Nguyen Hong Ha (2016) and is suitable for the theoretical context and the actual context of the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

-H10: Research results show that eWOM has a mediating role in the impact relationship of CSR on consumer behavior. This result shows that non-alcoholic beverage consumers today have great interest in CSR activities of enterprises and eWOM information when they make purchasing decisions. Previous studies have shown the impact of CSR on eWOM (Fatma et al., 2020), the impact of eWOM on consumer behavior (Abdallah, 2015; Pham Van Tuan, 2020). Almost no previous studies have investigated the mediating role of eWOM in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. The results of this study show that eWOM has a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

This conclusion continues to prove the importance of CSR in the new context in Vietnam, when social media tends to grow, the

access to online eWOM for CSR issues is increasing day by day. The easier it becomes, the more important it is that a non-alcoholic beverage business implements CSR well, it will directly affect the corporate reputation, brand trust, electronic word of mouth, and consumer behavior.

-H11: Hypothesis H11 is rejected, that is, there is no difference when analyzed by gender, income, and level of education.

Through multi-group analysis, it shows that consumers who are currently interested in CSR issues are the same, there is no difference when compared by gender, income and level. The reason is due to the characteristics of non-alcoholic beverage products as fast-moving consumer goods with low value. Therefore, business managers of the non-alcoholic beverage industry need to implement a CSR strategy aimed at the same consumer groups to achieve the highest results.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The thesis has carried out preliminary qualitative and quantitative research to build a scale to measure research concepts. The thesis has evaluated the following scales: CSR, Corporate Reputation, Brand Trust, eWOM, Consumer Behavior through Cronbach's Alpha testing methods, EFA analysis, CFA analysis, CB model-SEM, check the model estimate using Bootstrapping, and multi-group analysis by gender, age and income variables.

Regarding qualitative research: the thesis has carried out exploratory qualitative research and qualitative research on building scales.

- Exploratory qualitative research: Most consumers admit that perceptions of CSR have an impact on their perception of corporate reputation, increase their trust in the business, and consumer behavior. The results of the exploratory qualitative research have similar results with the research of Nguyen Hong Ha and Nguyen Thi Tuyet Mai (2013) that CSR activities have an impact on the reputation and trust of consumers.

- Qualitative research to build a scale: conducted through interviews with 13 experts. The scale of research concepts is inherited from previous studies and has been supplemented and adjusted

through discussion with experts to suit the research context of the thesis. The results obtained in this step are the preliminary scales of the research concept, specifically: The preliminary scale of perceived CSR includes 7 measurement variables, the preliminary scale of the concept of Corporate Reputation includes 7 measurement variables. Preliminary scale of concept of brand trust includes 5 measurement variables, preliminary scale of eWOM concept includes 4 measurement variables, preliminary scale of concept of Consumer behavior includes 5 measurement variables.

Preliminary quantitative research: conducted through surveying 70 consumers through a convenient sampling method with direct survey form. Reliability analysis results Cronbach's alpha has excluded 5 measurement variables. Performing preliminary EFA, the results of extracting factors are consistent with the proposed theoretical model. Through preliminary research results, there are 23 satisfactory measurement variables that are continued to be used for official research, specifically the perceived scale of CSR includes 5 measurement variables, the conceptual scale of Corporate Reputation includes 5 measurement variables, the concept scale of brand trust includes 4 measurement variables, the eWOM conceptual scale includes 4 measurement variables, the consumer behavior concept scale includes 5 measurement variables.

About the official research: conducted through a survey of 1,019 consumers, sampling by probabilistic and non-probability methods, the form of survey is face-to-face and online. In the official study, the author continues to check the reliability of the scale by Cronbach's Alpha analysis. Reliability test results have excluded 1 variable REP5 in the reputation scale. Through the evaluation by the EFA method, there is no variable type, the remaining 22 measurement variables are reliable, meet the requirements of the convergent value, and meet the requirements of the discriminant value. Thus, the measurement scale of research concepts has been adjusted to suit the research context for the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta region.

The results of the official study, concluded that:

- All the scales used in this thesis achieve the requirements of reliability and validity, and the measurement variables added to the scale in this thesis also achieve the reliability and validity.

- The results of CB-SEM analysis show that the important role of CSR affects consumer behavior, specifically:

(1) The results of the analysis have concluded that CSR has a direct impact on consumer behavior, this research result is consistent with previous studies with typical examples such as Bianchi et al (2019), Tung-Ju Wu et al (2016), Butt (2016), Bhattacharya and Sen (2004). The results of this study show that consumption trends have changed, consumers not only buy products according to their preferences but also care about what businesses can contribute to society. When consumers feel that non-alcoholic beverage businesses perform well in CSR, consumers will support the products produced by enterprises. This study has demonstrated the important role of CSR in influencing consumer behavior.

(2) Corporate reputation plays an intermediary role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. The findings of this study show that CSR has a direct impact on corporate reputation, when businesses perform well on CSR, it also means that businesses are building reputations. When consumers perceive a business as having a reputation, it will affect consumer behavior. Previous studies have shown the impact of CSR on reputation (Bianchi et al., 2019; Tong et al., 2019; Shwu-Ing Wu et al., 2014; Helm et al., 2010), the impact of reputation on consumer behavior (Sindu et al., 2017; Tong et al., 2014). The results of this study continue to show that reputation plays a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

(3) Brand trust plays an intermediary role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. From the results of CB-SEM analysis, it shows that CSR has a direct influence on brand trust, when businesses perform well on CSR, it also means that businesses are building trust with consumers. Brand trust also affects consumer behavior. Previous studies have also shown the impact of CSR on brand trust (Swaen and Chumpitaz, 2008; Sindhu et al., 2017; Saleem and Gopinath, 2015; Butt, 2016; Nguyen Thi Phuong Thao et al., 2019), the impact of trust on consumer behavior (Sindu et al., 2017; Butt, 2016; Saleem and Gopinath, 2015; Zhilong Tian et al., 2011). The results of this study continue to show that brand trust has a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

(4) Electronic word of mouth plays an intermediary role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. Previous studies have shown an independent impact of CSR on eWOM (Fatma et al., 2020); independent impact of eWOM on consumer behavior (Abdallah, 2015; Pham Van Tuan, 2020). Almost no previous studies have investigated the mediating role of eWOM in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. The results of this study show that eWOM has a mediating role in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta.

This is also a new contribution of this study compared to previous studies. This conclusion continues to prove the importance of CSR in the new context in Vietnam, when social media tends to grow, the access to online eWOM for CSR issues is increasing day by day. The easier it becomes, the more important it is for non-alcoholic beverage businesses to implement CSR well, it will have a direct and indirect impact on consumer behavior.

(5) The results of the multi-group analysis show that when performing the multi-group analysis for the control variables: sex variable, income variable, and consumer's level variable, there is no difference.

This conclusion shows that the good implementation of CSR by non-alcoholic beverage enterprises will have an important meaning, CSR directly affects consumer behavior and contributes to building corporate reputation, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth. There was no difference by gender, income and education level.

5.2 Research Implications

The thesis research results provide empirical evidence that the perception of CSR has a positive impact on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry. This result provides useful knowledge for managers on how the benefits of implementing CSR affect consumer behavior. Based on the research results on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior in the case of non-alcoholic beverage products in the Mekong Delta, the thesis proposes the following governance implications:

5.2.1 Developing a CSR strategy

5.2.2 Develop a reputation enhancement strategy

5.2.3 Develop a strategy to enhance brand trust

5.2.4 Developing a strategy to enhance eWOM

5.3 Contribution of the research

5.3.1 Theoretical contributions

- The thesis has built an integrated model of the impact of CSR on consumer behavior including CSR, corporate reputation, brand trust, eWOM and consumer behavior. In which corporate reputation, brand trust, eWOM plays an intermediary role.

- The previous research results also have the difference that CSR has an influence on consumer behavior. This study has demonstrated a relationship that has not been consistent in previous studies, specifically this study reinforces the view that CSR has a real impact on consumer behavior.

- The study proves the specific relationship of the non-alcoholic beverage sector in the Mekong Delta market that CSR has a direct and indirect impact on consumer behavior. Firstly, CSR has a direct impact on consumer behavior. Second, CSR has an indirect impact on consumer behavior through mediating variables such as corporate reputation, brand trust and eWOM. This conclusion continues to prove the importance of CSR in the new context in which many enterprises in the non-alcoholic beverage industry have violated CSR.

- The thesis is one of the few to study the mediating role of CSR in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior, especially the mediating role of eWOM. This is also a new contribution of this study compared to previous studies, previous studies separately studied the impact of CSR on eWOM (Fatma et al., 2020) or the impact of eWOM on consumer behavior (Abdallah, 2015; Pham Van Tuan, 2020). Almost no previous studies have investigated the mediating role of eWOM in the impact of CSR on consumer behavior.

- The thesis research results supplement the basis that consumers are more and more interested in CSR activities of enterprises. The perception of CSR by businesses has a positive impact on consumer behavior and this impact is the same across gender, education and income groups. This is an important theoretical contribution of this study to add to the knowledge related to the topic of CSR.

5.3.2 Practical contributions

The thesis results provide more empirical evidence to enrich the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. The thesis has carried out a fairly comprehensive study on the impact of corporate social

responsibility on consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta region. Quantitative research to analyze the impact of CSR on consumer behavior.

Research results show that CSR is an important strategy to positively influence consumer behavior, and at the same time, a good implementation of CSR also contributes to improving the reputation, brand trust, and electronic word of mouth of consumers. This result will contribute to encouraging non-alcoholic beverage businesses to carry out CSR activities.

Research results have suggested governance implications, contributing to helping managers in the process of formulating, planning and implementing CSR strategies to positively affect consumer behavior in the non-alcoholic beverage industry in the Mekong Delta region.

The thesis can be used as a reference source for graduate students and graduate students in Business Administration.

5.4 Limitations and directions for future research

The study collects data by convenient sampling method, so the representativeness of the population is more or less limited, although the sample size is $n=1,019$, it is still small for the Mekong Delta as a whole. If it is possible to increase the sample size and use the equally distributed probability sampling method in each province in the Mekong Delta to better reflect the overall structure, the analysis results will be more reliable.

The research content of the thesis only conducts a survey for the non-alcoholic beverage industry in general, but does not apply to a specific non-alcoholic beverage manufacturer or company, so it may cause difficulty for survey subjects.

The research content of the thesis only surveys for the non-alcoholic beverage industry, so there may be differences in the measurement scale for products and services in other fields. Therefore, future research can be done with a particular business or other industries and sectors.

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