

# THE IMPACT OF CSR ON BRAND IMAGE: A SURVEY AMONGST GEN Z CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION TOWARD A SUPERMARKET CHAIN IN VIET NAM

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**Abstract:** The topic of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) continues to be a great importance to firms in their businesses, especially when the goal of company brand development associated with CSR activities. The study consists of literature review on CSR theories, concepts of brand image and quantitative analysis of the relationship between them, based on quantitative analysis of a survey on generation Z's perception of CSR practices and brand image of Co.opmart – a well-known supermarket chain in Viet Nam. Research results show that some CSR aspects have positive impacts on the brand image of the supermarket chain.

**Keywords:** Corporate social responsibility (CSR), Brand image, Co.opmart supermarket, Generation Z, Viet Nam

**JEL Classification:** M14, M31

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, responsibility and ethical issues have taken center stage in society (Brunk and Blümelhuber, 2011). More and more consumers are interested in CSR. According to Nielsen's Corporate Sustainability Report (2015), Vietnamese consumers are the most socially conscious in Asia Pacific. The number of Vietnamese consumers willing to pay higher price for products and services that come from companies and sellers who are committed to social and environmental responsibility reached to 86%, while that number in Asia Pacific is 76% (Nielsen, 2015). On the other hand, studies show that CSR practices can enable firms to differentiate themselves from competitors and enhance brand equity (McElhaney, 2008) as well as increase image, reputation, employee motivation and other benefits for a corporation (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006; Said et al., 2011).

The relationship between CSR and corporate reputation as well as the relationship between CSR and brand equity has been identified in recent studies (Lai et al., 2010). Hsu (2012) investigates advertising effects of CSR initiatives on corporate reputation and brand equity based on the evidence from the life insurance industry in Taiwan. The results show that perceptions of policyholders concerning the CSR activities of life insurance companies have positive impact on customer satisfaction, corporate reputation, and brand equity. Developed from the study of Hsu (2012), the study "Building company reputation and brand equity through CSR: the mediating role of trust" of Fatma et al (2015) changes the mediating variable from "consumer satisfaction" into "consumer trust", in order to investigate the effect of CSR on corporate reputation and brand equity, based on the perception of consumers regarding banks in India. Results reveal that CSR both directly and indirectly influences corporate reputation and brand equity. Moreover, the study shows that CSR builds consumer trust in a company which in turn positively impacts corporate reputation and brand equity. With the sample size of 384 respondents consisting consumers of Morghab food industry in Bushehr, the study "The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility and Image on Brand Equity" done by Esmaeilpour and Barjoei (2016) shows that CSR has a significant positive impact on corporate image and brand equity.

In addition, there are many other studies conducted to evaluate the impact of CSR (or components of CSR) on brand equity. In these studies, CSR and brand equity are determined to include various factors, shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Researches on Impact of CSR to Brand ekvity

Research	CSR components	Brand equity components
The Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility on Brand Performance: The Mediating Effect of Industrial Brand Equity and Corporate Reputation (Lai et al, 2010)	CSR activities related to community, environment, society, customers, and employees	Loyalty, Perceived quality, Awareness, Associations, Satisfaction
The Advertising Effects of Corporate Social Responsibility on Corporate Reputation and Brand Equity: Evidence from the Life Insurance Industry in Taiwan” (Hsu, 2012)	Philanthropic, Ethical, Legal, and Economic aspects of CSR	Brand equity
Corporate social responsibility, leadership, and brand equity in healthcare service (Luu, 2012)	Ethical, Legal, and Economic aspects of CSR	Low brand equity and High brand equity
The impact of corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance and perceived brand quality on customer-based brand preference (Tingchi Liu et al, 2014)	CSR activities related to environment, society and stakeholders	Perceived brand equity
How CSR Leads to Corporate Brand Equity: Mediating Mechanisms of Corporate Brand Credibility and Reputation (Hur et al, 2014)	CSR activities related to society and environment	Brand equity
Clinical governance, corporate social responsibility, health service quality, and brand equity (Trong Tuan, 2014)	Ethical, Legal, and Economic aspects of CSR	Brand equity
Happy to support: Emotion as a mediator in brand building through philanthropic corporate sponsorship (Lee et al, 2015)	Philanthropic corporate sponsorship in CSR	Brand equity
The Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility and Image on Brand Equity (Esmaeilpour and Barjoei, 2016)	Ethical, Legal, and Economic aspects of CSR	Loyalty, Perceived equity, Awareness, Associations

Source: collected by the authors, 2020

The relationship between CSR and brand equity can be seen from the above theoretical studies. In some cases, CSR has direct or indirect effects on brand equity. Although there is a great number of studies on the influence of CSR to brand equity, there are a few studies having investigated the direct relationship between CSR and brand image as well as few studies having taken a deeper look at generation Z’s perceptions toward CSR. Generation Z, including consumers who were born in the middle of 1990s (Strauss and Howe, 1991), will become target market for many company in the near future (Ariker and Toksoy, 2017). They are also expected to be more involved in environment, justice, and problems of others (Jain et al, 2014).

On the other hand, Co.opmart, owned by Saigon Co.Op which was established in 1989, has become a popular supermarket brand among consumers in Viet Nam. It can be seen in the Table 2, this brand is currently the leader among supermarkets in Viet Nam with 102 stores nationwide (Deloitte, 2019). With that market position, Co.opmart brand image is expected to have a strong position in consumers’ perception and therefore is chosen to be researched in this study.

Table 2: List of supermarket brands in Viet Nam - January 2019

Brand name	Country of origin	Number of stores
Hapro	Vietnam	6
Intimex	Vietnam	10
Coop Mart	Vietnam	102
Vinmart	Vietnam	67
AEON Citimart	Japan	26
Auchan	France	20
BigC	France	36
Lotte Mart	Korea	14
MM Mega Market	Thailand	19

*Source: Deloitte's report on Retail in Vietnam, February 2019*

This study aims to investigate the direct relationship between CSR and brand image, based on the perception of Gen Z regarding Co.opmart chain in Viet Nam. The study's findings show that Ethical and Philanthropic practices have positive influences on the brand image of Co.opmart.

The remainder of the paper covers an overview of literature on the topic, a design of a conceptual model which shows the correlations between the variables, and an examination of the model with data collection from 200 online surveys conducted in March 2020 amongst consumers belonging to Gen Z in Viet Nam, along with a result presentation based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis, exploratory factor analysis EFA, KMO and Bartlett test, and Multiple regression analysis, as well as discussions about the study's contributions and limitations at the conclusion.

This study is expected to contribute to the need of a better understanding on how CSR impacts on brand image. It is also expected that this research can support Co.opmart as well as other firms to have an understanding about CSR and about which CSR components should be prioritized in order to improve brand image in particular and firms' businesses in general.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1.1 Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

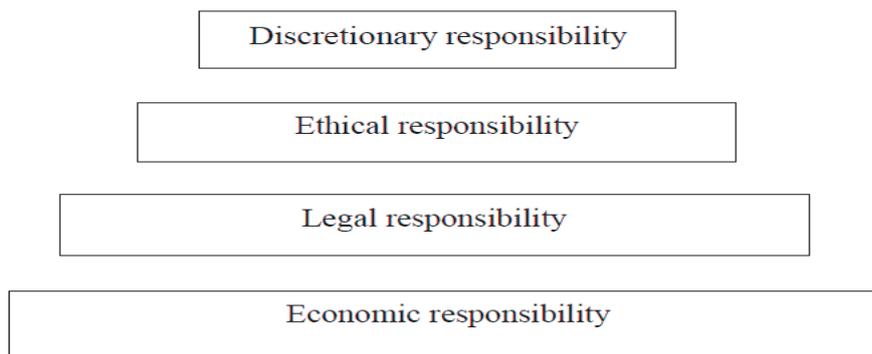
Taking shape in the 1950s, the corporate social responsibility concept (CSR) has developed globally up to present time. Bowen's definition (1953) with 3 core ideas, including (1) the idea of business managers as public trustees; (2) the idea of balancing competing claims to corporate resources; and (3) accepting philanthropy as an expression of business support of good causes, has created an attention for the business community about their contribution to the benefits of society. He states that CSR "refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (Bowen, 1953).

Since the 1970s, with the tendency of globalization, and the information revolution, corporate activities have been increasingly dominated by the publics. The publics is more aware of the importance of protecting the environment, and the responsibility of businesses. This awareness has been creating a lot of pressures for businesses. CSR is more clearly defined and distinguished with social obligation, that social responsibility goes beyond social obligation. A well-known concept of CSR adopted by the Committee for Economic Development (CED) in its 1971 publication, Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations (CED, 1971). The CED used a "three concentric circles" approach to define

CSR: (1) The innermost circle includes the basic responsibilities for performing economic functions such as manufacturing products, creating jobs and economic development; (2) The middle circle includes the responsibilities of businesses so that when performing economic responsibilities, they must strive to protect the environment, build relationships with employees, respect customers with product information, treat them with and protect from injuries when using the product; (3) The outer circle refers to the voluntary responsibilities such as social environment improvement with poverty reduction, urban improvement.

Carroll (1979) also had many similarities with this view, offering CSR definition as “the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time”. Four elements in his definition were later depicted as a ‘Pyramid of CSR’, which is shown below:

Figure 1: Pyramid of Corporate social responsibility



Source: Carroll, 1979

Carroll's four part CSR pyramid determines the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities that society expects of organizations. (1) The base of the pyramid is economic responsibility which gives top priority to economic performance. This content is similar to that of social responsibility mentioned in the central circle in the theory of CSR of CED (1971). (2) Second level is the legal responsibility. Society desires businesses to pursue profitability but must also comply with laws and regulations issued by the government. (3) Third level is ethical responsibility, which involves avoiding questionable practices. Ethical responsibilities include all activities which have not been anticipated or legislated by society. (4) At the top of the pyramid is discretionary (philanthropic) responsibility, which involves actions such as philanthropy, community sponsorship or other community programs. These practices are voluntary as they are not regulated or required by the community. The different components in the pyramid help managers see the different types of obligations and responsibilities that society expects of businesses. In the 21st century, many scholars such as Van Marrewijk (2003), Schwartz and Carroll (2003), Carroll and Buchholtz (2014), use the sustainable development based approach that supposes three main responsibilities of companies. This approach collapsed the discretionary category into the ethical category.

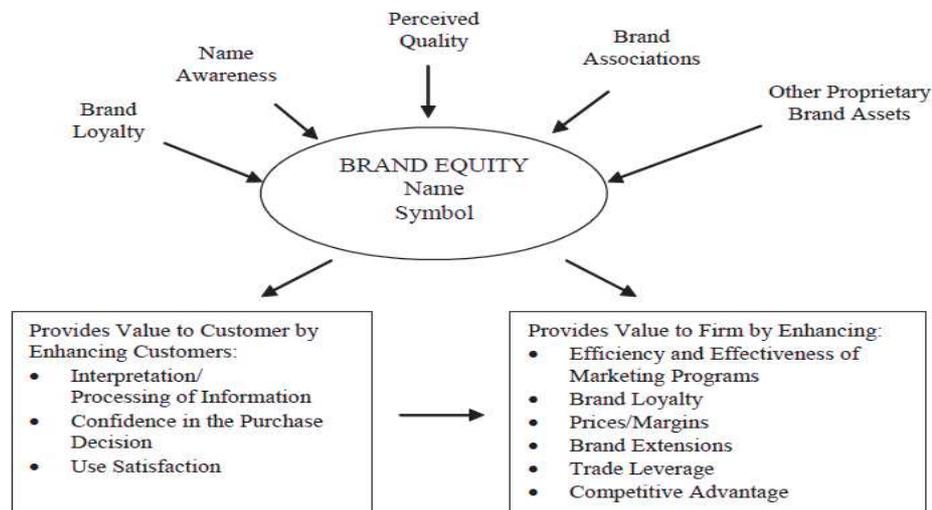
Overall, there have been many definitions of CSR with different approaches. In the opinion of the authors, CSR definition adopted by World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2000) is the most completed. It defines CSR as “the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large” (WBCSD, 2000). As such, for the sustainable growth, firms need to be conscious of voluntarily fulfilling their commitments not only to the business itself, but also to employees, the community, the environment and the society as a whole.

## 1.2 Brand ekvity

Kotler and Armstrong (2017) define “a brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the products or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates

them from those of competitors". They also define brand equity as "the differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer response to the product or its marketing" (Kotler and Armstrong, 2017). Aaker's definition of brand equity (1991), considered to be a popular and commonly used definition, states that brand equity is "a set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add or subtract from the value provided to a firm and/or to that firm's customers". His definition is illustrated in the Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Brand equity model



Source: Aaker, 1991

The model demonstrates that brand equity is developed based on the five dimensions of brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and other proprietary brands assets. Through the brand performance on these dimensions, consumers develop an overall, intangible rating of brand equity which then provides value to the consumer and the firms.

Keller (1993) develops the study of Aaker by defining and outlining customer-based brand equity measurement methods. His research also encourages managers to think more strategically about brand equity. According to Keller (1993), brand equity is "the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand".

### 1.3 Brand image

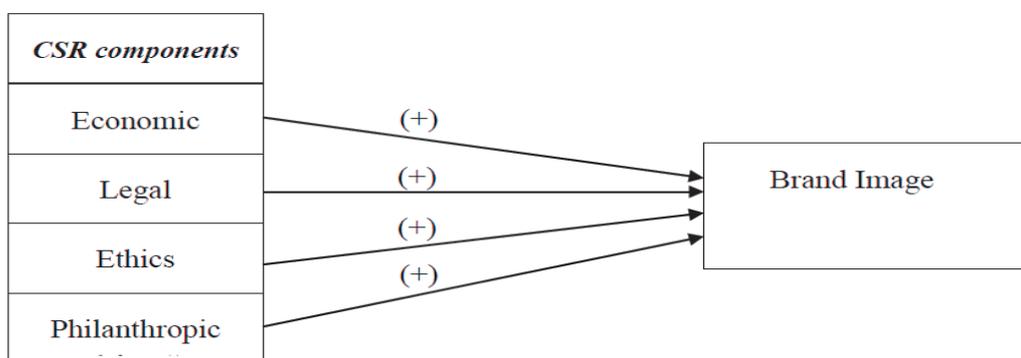
Company's brand image has been considered as one of the most important elements of brand equity. However, there is no consensus in academic studies regarding the elements of the brand image concept. Many authors have researched and sought to solve this problem. According to Aydin and Ozer (2005), the corporate image or the brand image is considered as "an overall assessment of a company in the minds of the people" and "the result of a process", which comes from the ideas, feelings and experiences of consumers of the services received from the company. These are retrieved from their memory and form a mental image about the company. According to Baloglu & Brinberg (1997), the corporate image is the image of ideas, thoughts and impressions from a position. Keller (1993) suggests that the corporate image is a perception of the company and that corporate image or brand image reflects the corporate's performance which is formed in the consumer's memory. He defines brand image as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" and also states that brand associations are "the other informational nodes lined to the brand node in memory and contain the meaning of the brand for consumers". Besides, he supposes an approach to measure brand equity requires measuring brand awareness and associations. Therefore, brand image is not only considered as a part of brand equity but also understood as brand associations.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN

### 2.1 Research model

As mentioned above, the brand image hereby is understood as the brand associations in the brand equity models of Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993). Within the scope of this study, the authors conducted a survey of CSR's influence on Co.opmart's brand image in Viet Nam. In order to build a research model based on the relationship between CSR and brand equity that has been demonstrated in previous theoretical models, the authors include new CSR elements that are adopted from the research "The moderating effects of demographics on the relationship between perceived CSR and brand loyalty in the mobile telecom sector" of Ovidiu-loan Moiescu (2017). The authors then rearrange these elements into 4 groups of Economic (corresponding to Economic success), Legal (respectively Public authorities), Ethics (Corresponding to Customers and Employees), Philanthropic (respectively Environment, Community development and Sponsorship).

Figure 3: Proposed research model results



Source: Proposed by the authors, 2020

Based on studies mentioned above, the authors build a survey questionnaire using the Linkert scale with scores from 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. The scale development is based on prior studies, which can be summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Scale development

Code	Observed variables	Reference
<b>ECO: Economic</b>		
ECO1	Strives to maximize profits and improve economic and financial performance	Ovidiu-loan Moiescu (2017)
ECO2	Provides professional development and promotion opportunities to its employees	
<b>LE: Legal</b>		
LE1	Fully complies with the legislation in conducting its activities	Ovidiu-loan Moiescu (2017)
LE2	Always pays state taxes in a fairly and honestly manner	
<b>ETH: Ethic</b>		
ETH1	Strives to offer its customers products/services of reasonable quality	Ovidiu-loan Moiescu (2017)
ETH2	Provides safe products/services, not-threatening to physical/ mental health of buyers	
ETH3	Is concerned with its customers' satisfaction	
ETH4	Provides customers with complete information about its products/ services	
ETH5	Provides customers with honest information about its products/ services	

ETH6	Charges fair and reasonable prices for its products/services	
ETH7	Works diligently to handle and solve its customers' complaints	
<b>PHI: Philanthropic</b>		
PHI1	Does everything possible to reduce its negative effects on the natural environment	Ovidiu-Ioan Moisescu (2017)
PHI2	Works diligently to use environmentally friendly materials	
PHI3	Contributes to the economic growth and development of the region	
PHI4	Supports charitable and social projects addressed to the disadvantaged	
<b>BI: Brand image</b>		
BI1	The name of this provider is well known in the industry	Lai et al (2010)
BI2	We can recognize this brand among competitive brands	
BI3	I think that the supermarket has a good overall image	Huang et al (2014)
BI4	In comparison to other providers, this company is a leading brand in the industry	Lai et al (2010)
BI5	I have no difficulties in imagine this brand in mind	
BI6	We can recall some characteristics of this brand	

Source: Collected by the authors, 2020

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Sampling and data collection

Based on Generational Theory developed by Strauss and Howe (1991), the authors choose the age interval scale as following: <18 (younger Generation Z), 18- 24 (older Generation Z), 25-39 (generation Y), 40-60 (generation X), and >60 (Baby boomers). According to William and Page (2011), different generations with different characteristics have different buying behaviours. Therefore, generational groups can be considered as major market segments (Levickaite, 2010).

A survey was conducted online with questionnaires sent to consumers selected randomly in Viet Nam in March 2020. The authors then received 250 responses, with 80% of the sample falling in the 18-24 age group, followed by group 25-39 with 14%. This can be explained that the survey was sent online to consumers among whom, Generation Z consumers are true digital natives and spend more time online than other generation (Twenge, 2017). Besides, they have positive attitudes toward implementations of CSR activities by companies (Ariker & Toksoy, 2017).

200 responses from 18-24 age group are then used in this study as the sample for the Generation Z in Viet Nam in the purpose of understanding the relationship between CSR and brand image. Details of the sample are described in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Descriptive statics of research sample

Occupation	Number	Percentage (%)
Students	160	80
Officer	35	17.5
Other	5	2.5
Total	200	100

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

It can be seen from Table 4 that students constitute a large proportion of the research sample (80%) due to the fact that they are often aged from 18 to 23.

### 3.2 Method of analysis

SPSS 23.0 is used for data analysis. Results are discussed based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis, exploratory factor analysis EFA, KMO and Bartlett test, and Multiple regression analysis. The EFA analysis runs as the following steps:

Firstly, Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis is carried out to check the reliability of factors. Specifically, the Cronbach's Alpha of 0.6 and above is the criterion for choosing the scale. If the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the item (Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted) is greater than the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the total scale, it should be rejected from the scale. Observed variables with an Corrected Item-Total Correlation less than 0.4 shall be removed (Corrected item - Total Correlation  $\geq$  0.4 shall be accepted) with the aim of increasing the reliability (internal consistency) of the scale (Loiacono et al, 2002).

Secondly, in order to ensure the statistical significance of EFA, it is important to consider KMO Measure of the Sampling Adequacy (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin). The higher the KMO value, the more relevant the factor analysis factor is. The value ranging from [0.5;1] is appropriate for the sample research (Hair et al, 2010). Besides KMO, Bartlett's Test is also conducted to consider the hypothesis whether factors are correlated in overall or not.

Thirdly, the study continues with extraction method as the Principal Component Analysis in which Eigenvalue more than 1.0 is to be developed. At the same time, the total variance extracted must be greater than 50% (Gerbing and Anderson, 1988).

Finally, Varimax rotation is used in terms of factor rotation. In the words of Hair et al (1998), factor loading must be greater than or equal to 0.5 after being rotated. If not, these factors are considered to be removed due to the misappropriation.

## 4. RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

### 4.1 Results

#### Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

Table 5: Results of Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis for independent and dependent variables

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ECO: Cronbach's alpha = .408					
ECO1	4.050	.601	.257	.066	.
ECO2	3.475	.663	.257	.066	.
LE: Cronbach's alpha = .732					
LE1	3.590	.625	.577	.333	.
LE2	4.035	.627	.577	.333	.
ETH: Cronbach's alpha = .828					
ETH1	23.305	12.233	.548	.420	.810
ETH2	23.430	11.804	.645	.516	.795
ETH3	23.540	11.255	.650	.449	.793
ETH4	23.345	11.564	.610	.512	.799
ETH5	23.550	11.455	.603	.524	.800
ETH6	23.455	12.350	.391	.189	.837
ETH7	23.925	11.396	.603	.387	.801

PHI: Cronbach's alpha = .758					
PHI1	11.250	3.575	.675	.536	.632
PHI2	11.340	3.291	.631	.520	.662
PHI3	10.595	4.715	.451	.236	.754
PHI4	11.170	4.323	.495	.266	.733
BI: Cronbach's alpha = .802					
BI1	20.010	10.050	.554	.462	.774
BI2	19.960	9.948	.525	.423	.779
BI3	20.310	9.702	.669	.454	.753
BI4	21.005	9.513	.465	.238	.796
BI5	20.345	9.262	.590	.432	.764
BI6	20.895	8.466	.607	.459	.762

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

Table 5 shows that ECO1, ECO2 and ETH6 have corrected item-total colleration (which are 0.257, 0.257 and 0.391 respectively) less than 0.4, fail to meet the requirement for reliability suggested by Loiacono et al (2002). Hence, these items are eliminated from the research scale. Other 18 items, included in variables with Cronbach's alpha > 0.6, have corrected item-total colleration > 0.4, hence meet the reliability requirement and serve the purpose of conducting Regression Analysis of research model.

#### Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

Result of running EFA for 18 items by SPSS is shown in Table 6 below:

Table 6: 1<sup>st</sup> Rotated component matrix of independent variables

Factor	Component	
	1	2
ETH1	.747	
ETH2	.745	
ETH5	.715	
LE2	.691	
LE1	.664	
ETH4	.598	
ETH3	.554	
ETH7	.531	.509
PHI1		.864
PHI2		.827
PHI4		.624
PHI3		.529

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

About Varimax rotation, Table 6 shows that after the first rotation for independent variables LE, ETH, PHI, two groups of factors are created. ETH7 is eliminated because it appears in 02 groups of factors. Moreover, LE1 and LE2 are in the same groups with ETH factors. However, they are not related in meaning to ETH factors, therefore the authors decide to remove them from the research, and conduct the second rotation.

Table 7: 2rd Rotated component matrix of independent variables

Variable	Factor	Component	
		1	2
Ethical (ETH)	ETH2	.804	
	ETH5	.757	
	ETH1	.727	
	ETH4	.689	
	ETH3	.639	
Philanthropic (PHI)	PHI1		.847
	PHI2		.842
	PHI4		.654
	PHI3		.538

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

Table 7 shows that the second rotation for independent variables creates 02 groups of factor, including ETH (ETH1, ETH2, ETH3, ETH4, ETH5) and PHI (PHI1, PHI2, PHI3, PHI4). Moreover, it can be seen from Table 8 that the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index = 0.796 and sig.=0.000, less than 0.05, indicates the appropriateness of EFA.

Table 8: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.796
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	693.042
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

### Proposed research model

If BI (Brand image of Co.opmart supermarket) is the dependent variable, and ETH and PHI are independent variables as well as determinants of CSR, the multiple regression equation demonstrates the relationship between dependent variable and independent variables as follows:

$$BI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \cdot ETH + \beta_2 \cdot PHI + \epsilon$$

Table 9: Summary of regression analysis of the model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.567	.321	.314	.50047

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

According to the results displayed in Table 9, there is a positive relationship between CSR and brand image and the level of association between these variables is 56,7 % which shows that the relation of both variables is moderate. The R<sup>2</sup> coefficient is 0.321 and Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is 0.314, which means 31.4% of the variance of dependent variable is explained by independent variables, and 68.6% is due to measurement errors and is also explained by other absent elements in the model.

$$\text{Hypothesis } H_0: \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = 0$$

$$\text{Hypothesis } H_1: \text{at least a } \beta \neq 0$$

According to the ANOVA test results, the statistical value F calculated from the value of R<sup>2</sup> of the full model is different from 0 (F Statistics = 46.561) and the significance Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, therefore, H<sub>0</sub> is acceptably rejected.

Table 10: Summary of F-Test in ANOVA Analysis

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.324	2	11.662	46.561	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	49.342	197	.250		
	Total	72.667	199			

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

This proves that the linear regression model is good enough for the overall data and can be used for further analysis.

Table 11: Results of regression analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.609	.259		6.212	.000
	ETH	.428	.070	.419	6.070	.000
	PHI	.208	.065	.220	3.184	.002

Source: Primary data analysis, 2020

The results in Table 11 display the relationship between 2 groups of factors ETH, PHI towards the brand image (BI). In particular, the impact levels of 2 groups of factors are expressed via Beta – Standardized Coefficient. With Sig. <5%, ETH and PHI affect BI positively. This means corporate's image in the mind of consumers will increase if the corporate can improve its ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. The relationship between 2 determinant affecting brand image is demonstrated in the following regression equation:

$$BI = 0.419*ETH + 0.220*PHI$$

The findings supplement research results of other studies (He and Lai, 2012; Arslan et al, 2014) in the term that ethical and philanthropic practices have positive influence on brand images. However, among the determinants, ETH with  $\beta = 0.419$  has more impact on the brand image of the supermarket, followed by PHI with  $\beta=0.220$ . This is different from the finding of Arslan and Zaman (2014) which shows that Philanthropic, among four dimensions of CSR, has the most impact on brand image.

## 4.2 Implications

The study's findings indicate that, in order to enhance the brand image, a company needs to maintain and improve ethical responsibilities including ensure the quality of the products and services so that they are safe and not threatening to physical and mental health of buyers. It also needs to provide customers with complete and honest information about its products and services. This can be communicated to consumers through channels that the company is using, such as catalogue, point of sale materials, social media, website...etc. Besides, the company must takes activities to show its concern to customer's satisfaction. According to Noyan and Simsek (2011), satisfaction means that a supermarket's performance meet the customer's expectations, not exceed nor disappointed those expectations. Therefore, the company's practices must be consistent with values promised and communicated to consumers.

Beside ethical responsibilities, philanthropic responsibilities also need to be noticed by the company in order to increase the brand image even though according to Caroll (1979) these responsibilities are

supposed to be voluntary as they are not regulated or required by the community. Co.opmart should offer environmental friendly wrapping and packaging materials such as banana leaf and carton box to reduce the amount of plastic bags used in stores and taken home by buyers. It should also try their best to reduce its negative effects on nature such as choosing suppliers who have the environmental commitment, establishing energy efficient stores, and reducing waste. The company's philanthropic practises should not only focus on natural environment but also on human welfare by supporting charity funds, involving in social projects and contributing to the economic growth and development of the region through their products and services as well as through other employment and investment opportunities that they offer.

## CONCLUSIONS

By introducing literature on CSR, brand image and investigating how perceived CSR practices influencing brand image of Co.opmart chain in Viet Nam, our findings demonstrated that ethical and philanthropic responsibilities are cues for companies to developing brand image toward Gen Z consumers. The study have both theoretical and practical implications, reflected as followings: (1) It contributes to research results about CSR, brand image and Gen Z by exploring the influence of CSR on Gen Z's perception of brand image, (2) That CSR practices enhance brand image encourages managers of the supermarket to continue investing in CSR because customers tend to favor companies that are more socially responsible. (3) It is suggested that in terms of marketing communication, companies in generally and Co.opmart in particularly should communicate their CSR practises towards customers in order to improve their brand image. (4) If the company wants to target Gen Z consumers, among CSR activities, they should prioritize ethical and philanthropic practises in term of ensuring the product quality, customers safety and satisfaction with complete information and being committed to the development of natural environment, the wellbeing of the disadvantaged and the economical development of the region as well. Besides contributions of this study, shortcomings are unavoidable. Firstly, the study used only a single brand in retailing industry as our research context. This limits the generalisability of the results to other brands and industries. Secondly, the factors have not played an important role, and have not showed a great influence on the brand image of the supermarket ( $R^2$  only reaches 32,1%). This can be explained by the fact that in the perception of consumers, CSR is only a small part of the business operations besides other important factors such as advertising and pricing (Dib, H., & Alhaddad, A. A. (2015). Since investigating CSR activities in terms of ethical and philanthropic responsibility is incomplete, further researches are needed to discover other factors. Qualitative research methods are proposed in this case. Thirdly, due to the fact that CSR concept is quite unfamiliar to Vietnamese consumers, many answers do not reflect the true situation, consumer's perceptions toward company' CSR do not necessarily reflect the actual level of companies' social responsibility either. It is necessary to provide more theory on CSR to consumers before conducting the survey. Last, probability-sampling method should be replaced by non-probability sampling method to select more suitable survey participants for the research topic as well.

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