### CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES - A CASE STUDY OF VIETNAM

### Ta Nguyet Phuong<sup>1</sup>, Nguyen Thi Minh Tam<sup>2</sup>

#### Abstract

Vietnam has witnessed increasing inflows of foreign direct investment in recent years, highlighting its concerted efforts to attract foreign capital. While this influx drives technological advancement and job creation, concerns persist regarding corporate social responsibility and its environmental impacts. The scarcity of research on Vietnamese consumer perspectives of corporate social responsibility highlights the critical need to address this gap, particularly amidst the escalating importance of corporate social responsibility globally. This study aimed to identify Vietnamese consumers' expectations regarding multinational enterprises' social responsibility and assess their impacts on consumers' support for socially responsible businesses. Data from 240 respondents in Danang were analyzed quantitatively. The results revealed that Vietnamese consumers' expectations for corporate social responsibility of multinational enterprises could be categorized into four factors, ranked in terms of expectation level from high to low: Economic, Ethical, Legal, and Philanthropic responsibility. These expectations varied according to respondents' gender, education level, income, and living areas. The study also demonstrated that expectations related to Economic, Philanthropic, and Ethical responsibility had a positive influence on consumers' willingness to support the socially responsible activities of multinational enterprises. These findings have significant implications for multinational enterprises.

**Keywords:** Consumer expectations, Consumer support, Corporate Social Responsibility, Developing country, Multinational Enterprises.

JEL classification: D11, D12, D21, D22, M14.

### Kỳ VỌNG CỦA NGƯỜI TIÊU DÙNG VỀ TRÁCH NHIỆM XÃ HỘI CỦA CÔNG TY ĐA QUỐC GIA - TRƯỜNG HỢP NGHIÊN CỨU TẠI VIỆT NAM Tạ Nguyệt Phương<sup>1</sup>, Nguyễn Thị Minh Tâm<sup>2</sup>

### Tóm tắt

Việt Nam ghi nhận sự gia tăng đáng kể về vốn đầu tư trực tiếp nước ngoài trong những năm gần đây, cho thấy những nỗ lực để thu hút danh mục đầu tư này. Mặc dù mang lại những lợi ích về tiến bộ công nghệ và cơ hội việc làm, điều này vẫn gây ra lo ngại liên quan đến trách nhiệm xã hội và môi trường. Sự thiếu hụt thông tin về quan điểm của người tiêu dùng Việt Nam đối với trách nhiệm xã hội doanh nghiệp nhấn mạnh một khoảng trống nghiên cứu, đặc biệt khi vấn đề này đang ngày càng được quan tâm toàn cầu. Nghiên cứu này nhằm phân tích kỳ vọng của người tiêu dùng Việt Nam đối với trách nhiệm xã hội của công ty đa quốc gia, và tác động của chúng đến sự ủng hộ của người tiêu dùng với các công ty có trách nhiệm xã hội. Dữ liệu từ 240 đáp viên tại Đà Nẵng đã được phân tích bằng phương pháp định lượng. Theo kết quả, kỳ vọng bao hàm bốn khía cạnh chính, với mức độ ưu tiên giảm dần: kinh tế, đạo đức, pháp lý và nhân đạo. Những kỳ vọng này thay đổi theo giới tính, trình độ học vấn, thu nhập và khu vực sinh sống của đáp viên. Đặc biệt, kỳ vọng về trách nhiệm kinh tế, nhân đạo và đạo đức tác động tích cực đến sự ủng hộ của người tiêu dùng. Những phát hiện này mang ý nghĩa quan trọng đối với sự phát triển trong tương lai của các công ty đa quốc gia.

**Từ khóa:** Công ty đa quốc gia, Kỳ vọng của người tiêu dùng, Quốc gia đang phát triển, Sự ủng hộ của người tiêu dùng, Trách nhiệm xã hội doanh nghiệp. JEL classification: D11, D12, D21, D22, M14.

### 1. Introduction

Over the years, Vietnam has strategically prioritized the attraction of foreign investment, yielding considerable economic and social gains. The country has enacted a suite of open economic policies designed to incentivize foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows, bolster foreign aid acquisition, and enhance access to international markets (Nguyen, 2020). According to data from the Foreign Investment Agency under the Ministry of Planning and Investment (2023), Vietnam experienced a substantial surge in FDI inflows in 2023, totaling nearly \$36.61 billion, marking an impressive year-on-year increase of 32.1%. Extensive research has scrutinized the impact of FDI on economic growth, particularly within emerging economies such as Vietnam. Ahmed et al. (2022) confirmed a positive and significant relationship between FDI and Vietnam's economic growth, suggesting contributions to technological advancement, job creation. and infrastructure development. Moreover, Nguyen (2020) emphasized the interconnectedness of FDI and international trade, highlighting their pivotal roles in driving Vietnam's economic development. Additionally, Nguyen (2020) underscored the potential positive effects of FDI, aid, and exports on Vietnam's economic growth, demonstrating the complex interplay between FDI, trade, and economic development.

However, while FDI can promote economic growth, its environmental and other dimensions of social responsibility consequences need to be considered. Agboola et al. (2022) examined the environmental consequences of FDI influx and conventional energy consumption in Turkey and found that FDI could lead to environmental challenges. In Vietnam, there have also been numerous incidents related to poor CSR performance of multinational enterprises (MNEs), such as environmental pollution (Hoang, 2021) or tax evasion (Nguyen, 2020). This has raised Vietnamese consumers concerns about MNEs' CSR practices, as the country's collectivist culture leads consumers to prioritize CSR due to its perceived importance (Palihawadana, et al., 2016). Consumers, recognized as pivotal stakeholders, wield significant influence over corporations' CSR initiatives, as highlighted by Auger et al. (2007). The consumer's valuation of CSR could influence the incentives for MNEs to engage in CSR practices through FDI, as noted by Kaymak & Bektaş (2017). Despite the significant consequences Vietnamese consumers have faced from escalating CSR issues, their perceptions and expectations regarding CSR remain largely unexplored, indicating a research gap. Studies on factors influencing MNEs' practices have primarily concentrated on strategies in developed countries, overlooking the roles and impacts of CSR on business success and consumer wellbeing in the Vietnamese context (Yang & Rivers, 2009; Bui, 2010; Husted, et al., 2016).

On a larger scale, globalization has underscored the importance of CSR in business operations, creating new challenges and opportunities across social, political, economic, and environmental spheres (Olajide & Fadun, 2014). As MNEs expand globally, particularly in emerging markets, there is increased scrutiny on their operations (Strike, et al., 2006), prompting greater emphasis on CSR activities (Mohan, 2006). With MNEs facing heightened media exposure and public scrutiny, CSR initiatives become even more crucial compared to local corporations (Fougere & Solitander, 2009; Sotorrio & Sanchez, 2010). Moreover, CSR has evolved to become a crucial component of business operations not only in developed nations but also in emerging and developing markets, where CSR practices are characterized by a trend towards less formalization, deeper integration, and a more philanthropic orientation, reflecting the dynamic growth and maturation of CSR in these regions (Amaeshi, et al., 2006; Visser, 2008).

Given the increasing consumer demands for CSR and the mounting pressure on MNEs to behave responsibly, especially in emerging and developing nations like Vietnam, understanding these expectations is crucial. Therefore, this study

aims to Vietnamese consumers' assess expectations concerning MNEs' CSR. investigating their content, divergence across CSR dimensions, and potential disparities among consumer groups based on socio-demographic factors. Moreover, the study evaluates how these influence consumer expectations support. Additionally, it provides managerial recommendations for MNEs in Vietnam, including advice on CSR resource allocation and tailoring activities to meet diverse consumer expectations. Furthermore, it serves as a foundation for Vietnamese government agencies to formulate strategies for overseeing and enhancing CSR practices among MNEs.

### 2. Literature Review

## 2.1. Academic perspective of Corporate Social Responsibility

### 2.1.1. Definition and Scope of CSR

Social responsibility has been conceptualized in a wide range of different ways through decades, in other words, the concept of CSR has a diverse history in the literature (De Bakker, et al., 2005). Bowen's 1953 publication marked the beginning of modern CSR, defining it as aligning business actions with societal objectives and values (Bowen, 1953). This concept spurred subsequent research and debate. In 1962, Friedman countered, asserting that a firm's core responsibility is profit maximization and shareholder value, advocating for limited government intervention to preserve economic freedom amidst increasing federal expenditures (Friedman, 1962). Subsequent research has rejected Friedman's view, leading to a broader conception of CSR that extends beyond economic and legal obligations. This modern perspective emphasizes firm responsibilities toward employee and community welfare, as well as addressing societal needs, giving rise to the concept of corporate citizenship (Maignan, et al., 1999). This aligns with Gossling & Vocht's (2007) definition of CSR, which emphasizes accountability for environmental and stakeholder concerns beyond financial aspects. In line with stakeholder theory, this evolution broadens management focus from

shareholder-centric to encompassing a wider range of stakeholders.

For a definition of CSR to fully address the entire range of obligations business has to society, Carroll (1979); (1991) proposes a four-part comprehensive model of the "Pyramid of CSR," which clarifies different dimensions of social responsibility: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities, where the base economic and legal responsibilities are required, whereas ethical responsibilities are expected and charitable responsiveness is desired. According to this model, the four dimensions of CSR could be described as follow:

- Economic responsibilities are fundamental to a firm's societal role. As the primary economic entity, businesses are tasked with producing goods and services that meet consumer demands at fair prices, ensuring profitability. All other business obligations stem from fulfilling this economic duty.

- **Legal responsibilities** require businesses to operate within the bounds of laws and regulations set by governments. This represents a part of the "social contract" between business and society, ensuring fair and ethical operations as defined by lawmakers.

- Ethical responsibilities extend beyond legal and economic obligations, encompassing practices expected by society but not necessarily codified into law. They reflect concerns for fairness, justice, and stakeholder rights, often driving higher standards than those required by law. However, these responsibilities can be ambiguous and subject to public debate, challenging businesses to operate at levels exceeding legal requirements.

- **Philanthropic responsibilities** involve businesses contributing resources to the community to enhance quality of life, reflecting societal expectations for corporate citizenship. Unlike ethical obligations, philanthropy is not morally mandatory but is discretionary, though there is societal pressure for businesses to engage in it.

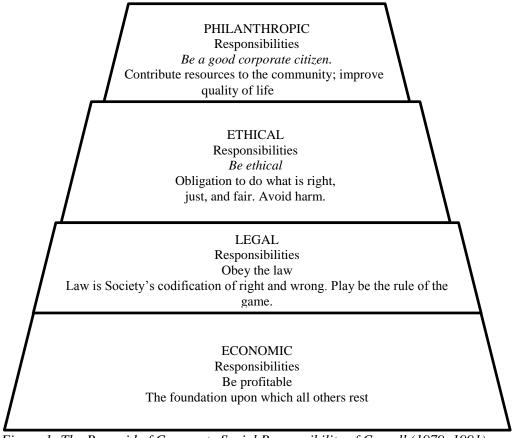


Figure 1: The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility of Carroll (1979, 1991)

Although there are various scholarly definitions of CSR, Carroll's definition is widely accepted (Han, 2015). These four basic expectations offer a comprehensive categorization of CSR supported by empirical studies (Ramasamy & Yeung, 2009; Olajide & Fadun, 2014; Arli & Tjiptono, 2014). They also serve as a foundation for investigating how CSR is manifested within the specific context of a developing country (Visser, 2008).

## 2.1.2. CSR in Multinationals Companies in developing countries

In developing countries, MNEs face challenges in navigating unfamiliar territory, prompting them to engage in local CSR activities to mitigate costs (Yang & Rivers, 2009; Gifford, et al., 2010). Implementing CSR in these regions is complex due to social and environmental issues resisting quick fixes (Lund-Thomsen, 2004). Despite this, certain CSR efforts by MNEs are praised for their positive impact, including job creation, technology transfer, and promoting good governance (Davids, 1999; Ite, 2004; Wiig & Kolstad, 2010). Ultimately, adopting CSR activities can yield mutual benefits for both MNEs and host countries (Porter & Kramer, 2006).

Regarding specific aspects, CSR in developing countries tends to be less formalized and more philanthropic in nature (Amaeshi, et al., 2006; Visser, 2008). Philanthropy is emphasized as a significant CSR strategy in these regions, contrasting with the Western world (Frynas, 2005). Baskin (2006) found that CSR in developing countries is less integrated into corporate strategies, less widespread, and less politically motivated than in developed nations. Consequently, philanthropic responsibility often receives the second-highest priority after economic responsibilities, followed by legal and ethical responsibilities (Visser, 2008). This perspective creates a CSR pyramid differs from Carroll's (Figure 1), with economic

responsibilities given top priority, followed by philanthropic, legal, and ethical responsibilities, in that order. To conduct research within the context of a developing country like Vietnam, this study will adopt the perspective outlined in Visser's model, as presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2: CSR Pyramid for developing countries of Visser (2008)

# 2.2.Consumer CSR Expectations and their support of socially responsible behavior of MNEs

Consumer expectations are customers' desires for a brand's attributes (Olson & Dover, 1979). Creyer (1997) defines them as beliefs about what should be offered, serving as benchmarks for satisfaction and product appraisal (Han, 2015). Meeting or exceeding these expectations, including those related to ethical conduct, can lead to positive consumer evaluations of firms (Han, 2015), emphasizing the importance of understanding and catering to consumer expectations in CSR initiatives. Consumer expectations regarding CSR activities vary across countries due to diverse social, cultural, and political backgrounds (Wong, et al., 2010; Adeyanju & David , 2012). These differences offer crucial insights for CSR implementation strategies.

Consumers express socially responsible concerns through positive actions like ethical purchasing and negative actions like boycotts. In which, consumer reactions, whether in the form of rewards or punishments, are determined by the extent to which those actions align with their expectations of CSR (Hallahan, 2001; Dawkins & Lewis, 2003). Therefore, expectation about CSR serves as a reference point for consumer intentions (Creyer and Ross, 1997), particularly the consumer support for CSR behaviors of companies.

Consumers' support for CSR, indicating their willingness to endorse socially responsible behavior by companies, is influenced by different expectations regarding various aspects of social responsibility (Podnar & Golob, 2007). Through the experimental study, Podnar & Golob (2007) found that only expectations related to ethicalphilanthropic CSR had a significant positive impact on the overall intended support for CSR in Slovenia. Similarly, according to Maignan's (2001) research, German consumers displayed strong support for CSR practices by firms, particularly emphasizing the legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions. Therefore, this study aims to measure the influence of expectations across different dimensions on customer support. Customer support for CSR can be assessed using Stern et al.'s (1999) classification of social

movements, focusing on two activities that indicate support or criticism towards responsible or irresponsible behavior: committed public activism and self-reported customer behavior.

### 2.3. Hypothesis development

In Vietnam, CSR is increasingly important for MNEs due to growing public interest. Traditional values heavily influence CSR practices (Vo Thuc Quyen, 2013), seen as essential for sustainable development and reputation enhancement (Nghia, 2012). Leading MNEs like KPMG Vietnam, Sony Ericsson, Honda Vietnam Co., P&G Corp., and Unilever Corp. pioneer CSR concepts through customerdriven motives (Hamm, 2012). Manufacturers' reputation significantly impacts consumer behavior, prompting a focus on effective CSR implementation (Dung, 2012), albeit resource constraints necessitate alignment with customer expectations.

Carroll's CSR framework, comprising economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic dimensions, is widely acknowledged as the foundation of CSR concepts (Matten & Moon, 2005). Empirically tested and confirmed globally, it serves as a basis for CSR reporting research (Nielsen & Thomsen, 2007), facilitating further studies (Golob, et al., 2008). According to Carroll (1979), the economic dimension focuses on profitability, the legal dimension on adherence to laws, the ethical dimension on moral standards, and the philanthropic dimension on voluntary societal benefits. Despite widespread usage, studies like Podnar & Golob (2007) and Mueller & Theuvsen (2014) challenge Carroll's CSR model. Podnar & Golob (2007) found Slovenian consumers link ethical and philanthropic dimensions closely, while Mueller & Theuvsen discovered German consumers differentiate between a firm's economic, internal, and external responsibilities, deviating from Carroll's framework. These studies primarily targeted consumers in developed Europe.

In developing countries like Indonesia and Nigeria, consumer perceptions align with

Carroll's CSR model. Arli & Tjiptono (2014) found that Indonesian consumers differentiate legal, ethical, between economic. and philanthropic CSR. Similarly, Olajide & Fadun (2014) observed the same distinction among Nigerian consumers. In Vietnam, Bui (2010) found that consumers differentiate CSR dimensions, replacing Ethical Responsibilities with Environmental and Societal Responsibilities due to health and safety concerns. Vo & Le (2016) supported this, focusing on the environmental aspect of CSR. Ethical dimensions are now recognized as broader due to increasing awareness and diverse ethical issues. In Vietnam, an empirical study by Palihawadana et al. (2016) revealed that consumers perceive CSR across economic, ethical, philosophical, and legal dimensions. This suggests that consumers differentiate among these dimensions, aligning with Carroll's classification and previous research on individual expectations. The first hypothesis is supposed to test this argument:

### H1: Consumers will differentiate among four dimensions of CSR: Economic, Legal, Ethical and Philanthropic

Stakeholder perceptions and expectations of CSR activities vary across countries due to diverse social, cultural, and political backgrounds (Wong, et al., 2010; Adeyanju & David, 2012). Similarly, stakeholders' expectations and interests are influenced by organizational contexts (Ramachandran, 2011). In developing countries, asserts Visser (2008)that economic responsibilities are prioritized, followed by philanthropic, legal, and ethical responsibilities. Amaeshi et al. (2006) also highlight the emphasis on philanthropic responsibilities in these countries. In Vietnam, previous research by Bui (2010) shows that Economic and Philanthropic responsibilities are highly valued. Palihawadana et al. (2016) note a recent increase in the importance of Legal responsibility due to disclosed misconducts. Additionally, the Ethical dimension is not considered significant in customer evaluations or buying decisions. Hence, the second hypothesis is formulated as follows:

# H2: Consumers do not ascribe equal expectations to the four dimensions of CSR activities

Previous research suggests that consumer expectations of CSR activities influence customer behavior towards companies (Nebenzahl, et al., 2001; Creyer, 1997). In other words, customers tend to integrate their expectations and concerns into their behavior towards companies (Maignan, et al., 2005). Customer responsiveness hinges on the alignment between expectations and companies' activities (Dawkins & Lewis, 2003; Hallahan, 2001). Creyer (1997) found that CSR expectations influence how consumers reward or punish company behavior. Customers may pressure companies through boycotts or express socially responsible concerns through ethical purchasing behavior (De Pelsmacker, et al., 2005). Thus, CSR expectations serve as a reference point for customer intentions (Creyer, 1997). Therefore, the third hypothesis was proposed:

H3.Consumer expectations for the (a) economic, (b) philanthropic, (c) ethical, and (d) legal philanthropic CSR will be positively related to the customers' support of socially responsible behavior of companies.

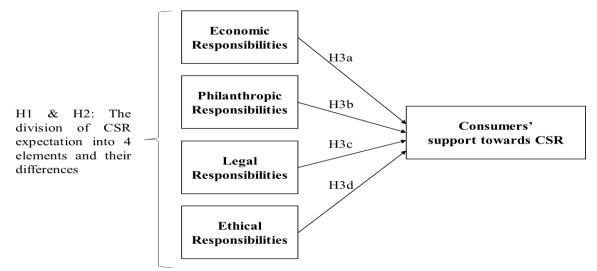


Figure 3: The proposed model

### 3. Methodology

A convenience sample survey of 250 questionnaires was conducted online among consumer-sharing and university student groups in April, 2023. Convenience sampling was chosen for its accessibility and diversity in respondents. However, this non-probability method may exclude some population members. Respondents were assured of the scholarly purpose of the study. The respondents were asked to rate 37 statements on a 5-point Likert scale (from "totally disagree" to "totally agree"). CSR expectation measures were developed following a standardized procedure, initially based on Carroll's four levels of CSR and relevant literature. Items were adapted from authors like Carroll (1991), Maignan (2001), Mueller & Theuvsen (2014), Han (2015), Vo & Le (2016) to fit the Vietnamese context. To assess support for responsible behavior and consumer activism, questions from Stern et al. (1999) were used, covering willingness to support CSR and engage in activism. Specific information is presented in Table 1. The questionnaire also included demographic questions regarding gender, age, income level, education level and lung area of respondents. All the measures are translated into Vietnamese and back-translated for consistency. After eliminating invalid responses, the number of valid responses was 240.

Factors		Items	Sources
	ECO1	MNEs should commit strongly for product quality	
	ECO2	Products of MNEs should be good for consumers' health, hygienic and	
		safe	
	ECO3	MNEs should explain clearly and provides sufficiently information and	Carroll (1991);
Economic	FCOA	origin of products	Mueller &
Responsibility	ECO4	Manufacturing processes of MNEs should follow Vietnamese and/or	Theuvsen (2014);
(ECO)	ECO5	international standards MNEs should sell low-cost products.	Vo & Le (2016)
	ECO5 ECO6	-	10 00 120 (2010)
	ECO0 ECO7	MNEs should strive to provide good quality services.	
	ECO7 ECO8	MNEs should assure to prosper and does not go bankrupt MNEs should maintain a strong competitive position	
	LG1	MNEs should be a law-abiding corporate citizen	
	LG2	There should be not any information of MNEs about avoiding governmental tax or losing report or transferring profit to foreign countries	
		There should be not any information of MNEs about using unsafe	
	LG3	materials during business operation	Carroll (1991);
Legal		MNEs should seek to comply with all laws regulating hiring and employee	
Responsibility	LG4	benefits	Han (2015);
(LG)	1.05	MNEs should have programs that encourage the diversity of its workforce	Vo & Le (2016)
	LG5	(in terms of age, gender, or race)	
	I C C	MNEs should provide goods and services that at least meet minimal legal	
	LG6	requirements	
	LG7	MNEs should refrain from putting aside contractual obligations in dealing	
	207	with suppliers	
	ETH1	MNEs should perform in a manner consistent with expectations of societal	
		mores and ethical norms	
	ETH2	MNEs should recognize that corporate integrity and ethical behavior go	
	DTU 2	beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations	
Ethical	ETH3	MNEs should have comprehensive code of conduct	Carroll (1991);
Responsibility (ETH)	ETH4	MNEs should avoid compromising ethical standards in order to achieve	Maignan (2001);
		corporate goals	Han (2015);
· · · ·	ETH5	MNEs should take part in environmentally activities that aim to protecting and improving natural environment's quality	Vo & Le (2016)
	ETH6	MNEs should construct modern waste water treatment systems	( )
	ETH0 ETH7	MNEs should conduct energy savings methods	
	ETH7 ETH8	MNEs should conduct energy savings methods MNEs should provide full and accurate information to all customers	
		-	
	ETH9	MNEs should be fair toward coworkers and business partners	
	PHI1	MNEs should organize charitable activities, supports society and campaigns staffs participating	
		MNEs should contribute to campaigns and projects (health, protecting	
	PHI2	environment, improving infrastructure) to enhance prosperity and	
		social welfare	
	DI 112	MNEs should provide assistance to private and public educational	Carroll (1991);
Philanthropic	PHI3	institutions	Mueller &
Responsibility	PHI4	MNEs should assist the fine and performing arts	
(PHI)	PHI5	MNEs should encourage employees to join civic organizations that	Theuvsen (2014);
	11115	support its community	Vo & Le (2016)
	PHI6	MNEs should enhance the number of apprenticeship training positions for	
		disadvantaged young people	
	PHI7	MNEs should employ local people even when other people are better	
	PHI8	qualified for the job	
		MNEs should use goods from local suppliers	
	SUP1	I would be loyal to MNEs that is socially responsible when shopping	
	SUP2	I would be willing to pay more for the products in order to support socially responsible MNEs.	
Consumers'		responsible MNEs Given a choice between two MNEs, one is socially responsible and the	
support towards	SUP3	other not especially so, I would always choose to buy from the socially	Stern et al. (1999)
CSR (SUP)	5015	responsible MNEs	
	SUP4	I highly appreciate socially responsible MNEs	
		I would be willing to participate as a co-organizer of a boycott of a MNE	
	SUP5	involved in socially irresponsible activities	

<b>Table 1</b> : Measurement items synthesis	Table 1	: 1	<i>leasurement</i>	items	synthesis
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### 4. Results and discussion

These results of descriptive Statistic indicate a diverse sample in terms of gender, age, and income, alongside a strong educational background, ensuring robust representation. This diversity is essential for gaining comprehensive insights into consumer CSR expectations, aligning perfectly with the research objectives. Cronbach's alpha analysis confirmed the reliability of constructs in this study. Table 2 provides the specific results, in which, all five factors, including the independent variables ECO, LG, ETH, PHI, and the dependent variable SUP, showed acceptable Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values (0.7 <  $\alpha$  < 1) and high item-to-total correlations (>0.3) for variables within each factor. Hence, these variables will be used for further analysis.

<b>Research Items</b>	Scale Mean if	Scale Variance if	<b>Corrected Item-</b>	Cronbach's Alpha
	Item Deleted	Item Deleted	<b>Total Correlation</b>	if Item Deleted
ECO1	42.84	14.879	0.691	0.875
ECO2	42.80	14.546	0.729	0.871
ECO3	42.88	15.245	0.631	0.880
ECO4	42.88	15.057	0.617	0.882
ECO5	42.84	14.176	0.792	0.864
ECO6	42.83	14.357	0.772	0.866
ECO7	42.87	14.827	0.688	0.875
ECO8	43.11	15.757	0.436	0.900
<b>Overall Cronbach's</b>	Alpha of Economi	c Factor		0.891
LG1	30.28	34.262	0.554	0.886
LG2	29.66	30.987	0.736	0.865
LG3	30.19	33.258	0.619	0.879
LG4	29.64	31.453	0.703	0.869
LG5	30.03	32.267	0.647	0.876
LG6	29.96	32.032	0.727	0.866
LG7	29.86	30.906	0.782	0.859
<b>Overall Cronbach's</b>				0.888
ETH1	42.34	56.226	0.766	0.924
ETH2	42.24	57.554	0.641	0.931
ETH3	42.24	58.584	0.588	0.934
ETH4	42.33	55.326	0.748	0.925
ETH5	42.32	52.639	0.896	0.916
ETH6	42.25	56.207	0.700	0.928
ETH7	42.33	54.188	0.793	0.922
ETH8	42.41	52.812	0.893	0.916
ETH9	42.30	55.592	0.721	0.927
<b>Overall Cronbach's</b>				0.933
PHI1	31.97	56.175	0.875	0.888
PHI2	31.96	61.789	0.618	0.909
PHI3	32.07	57.054	0.807	0.894
PHI4	32.20	54.116	0.706	0.906
PHI5	32.30	60.050	0.749	0.900
PHI6	32.13	60.130	0.689	0.904
PHI7	31.88	56.246	0.854	0.890
PHI8	31.85	61.595	0.506	0.920
<b>Overall Cronbach's</b>				0.913
SUP1	21.89	15.130	0.718	0.877
SUP2	21.78	15.210	0.742	0.872
SUP3	21.70	15.282	0.739	0.873
SUP4	21.79	14.461	0.781	0.863
SUP5	22.00	14.079	0.737	0.875
		r's Support Factor		0.895

Table 2: Results of Reliability Analysis

### 4.1. The structure of Consumer expectations in MNEs

To test the first hypothesis, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. The dataset proved suitable with a KMO value of 0.8 (>0.5) and significant Bartlett's test (sig = 0.00 < 0.05), indicating variable correlation. Following this, EFA utilizing Principal Component Factor Analysis and Varimax rotation identified relevant factors with eigenvalues > 1. Table 3 presents factor values, revealing four factors: Economic, Legal, Ethical, and Philanthropic Responsibilities (the title for each group was based on their suggested theoretical aspects). These factors explain 63.33% of total variance, meeting the criterion of cumulative variance  $\geq 50\%$ .

In general, most items exhibit high factor loadings and communalities (> 0.5) without cross-loadings, except for a few instances such as

ETH2, ETH3, PHI3, PHI5, PHI6. Although ETH2 displays cross-loading, with correlation coefficients exceeding 0.35 with both Ethical and Philanthropic factors, its loading with the Philanthropic factor falls below the practical significance threshold of 0.45. Moreover, ETH2 maintains a high item-to-total correlation within the Ethical group, justifying its retention in the model. Similar observations are noted for ETH3, PHI3, PHI5 and PHI6.

The EFA results with 4 factors, which are consistent with the initial discussions suggested theoretically, fully reflect Carroll's distinction between four responsibility classes. Hence, H1 is accepted, Vietnamese consumers tend to differentiate among four dimensions of corporate social responsibility: Economic, Legal, Ethical and Philanthropic

		Components					
	Ethical	Philanthropic	Economic	Legal			
ETH1	0.803						
ETH2	0.564						
ETH3	0.531						
ETH4	0.753						
ETH5	0.918						
ETH6	0.732						
ETH7	0.859						
ETH8	0.920						
ETH9	0.707						
PHI1		0.892					
PHI2		0.710					
PHI3		0.774					
PHI4		0.778					
PHI5		0.731					
PHI6		0.667					
PHI7		0.875					
PHI8		0.504					
ECO1			0.790				
ECO2			0.798				
ECO3			0.720				
ECO4			0.713				
ECO5			0.847				
ECO6			0.852				
ECO7			0.768				
ECO8			0.516				
LG1				0.658			
LG2				0.813			
LG3				0.723			
LG4				0.789			
LG5				0.750			
LG6				0.808			
LG7				0.854			

Table 3: Results of EFA for independent variables.

In addition, the study also conducted EFA for the dependent variable SUP to assess the validity of the measurement scale. The test results indicated that the observed items in the factor had significant correlations and were suitable for analysis. The KMO coefficient of 0.823 and the Bartlett's test significance coefficient of 0.000 (< 0.05) supported this finding.

	Component
	1
SUP1	0.824
SUP2	0.842
SUP3	0.838
SUP4	0.863
SUP5	0.834

 Table 4: Results of EFA for dependent variable.

At the eigenvalue value of 3.532 > 1, the analysis extracted 1 factor comprising 5 observed variables retained in the research model. The total variance extracted at this level is 70.634% > 50%. It can be said that the extracted factor in EFA accounts for 70.634% of the variation in all the observed variables included.

The analysis results in the factor matrix (Table 4) show that the 1 factor comprising 5 observed variables all have factor loadings greater than 0.5, indicating that the observed variables have very good statistical significance. Therefore, all these variables are retained for use in further analyses.

### 4.2. The differences between the factors of Consumer expectations

Table 4-6 shows mean and standard deviation scores for four CSR expectation factors, indicating unequal expectations among them. Significance of these differences was tested using a means comparison test, with results presented in Table 5 and Table 6. All p-values were below 0.05, confirming significant mean differences among the factors. Thus, H2 is accepted, indicating substantial differences in CSR expectations Economic among factors in Vietnam. responsibility receives the highest expectation from Vietnamese consumers, followed by ethical, legal, and philanthropic components.

<b>Table 5:</b> Descriptive statistics of four factors						
	ECO	LG	ETH	PHI		
Mean	6.1260	4.9911	5.2884	4.5776		
Std. Deviation	0.54636	0.93655	0.92700	1.08493		

(I) (J) Variable Variable			Differe- nce (I-	ere- (I- Std. Std. Error		nfidence ll of the rence	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)
		J)	Mean	Lower	Upper	-			
	LG	1.135	1.077	0.998	1.272	16.323	239	0.000	
ECO	ETH	0.838	1.042	0.705	0.970	12.456	239	0.000	
PH	PHI	1.548	1.123	1.406	1.691	21.368	239	0.000	
LC	ETH	-0.297	0.082	-0.459	-0.136	-3.628	239	0.000	
LG Pl	PHI	0.413	0.088	0.239	0.588	4.669	239	0.000	
ETH	PHI	0.711	0.059	0.596	0.826	12.160	239	0.000	

# 4.3. Consumer expectations of CSR and customers' support of socially responsible behavior in MNEs

A multiple-linear-regression was performed to examine the link between consumer expectations of CSR factors and customers' support for socially responsible behavior in MNEs.

Firstly, the correlations between dependent and independent variables will be tested by Pearson Correlation coefficient. The results are presented in Table 7, in which, the correlations between the dependent variable (SUP) and independent variables, including ECO, ETH, PHI were confirmed. All these p-values were <0.05, indicating significant correlations, except for the case of LG, which will be excluded from the regression analysis. The results also indicated a significant correlation between ETH and PHI, suggesting potential multicollinearity in the upcoming regression analysis.

		ECO	LG	ETH	PHI	SUP
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.015	0.072	0.182	0.293
ECO	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.818	0.269	0.005	0.000
	Ν	240	240	240	240	240
	Pearson Correlation	0.015	1	0.072	0.085	0.052
LG	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.818		0.268	0.191	0.418
	N	240	240	240	240	240
Pearson Correlation		0.072	0.072	1	0.605	0.414
ETH	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.269	0.268		0.000	0.000
	N	240	240	240	240	240
DIII	Pearson Correlation	0.182	0.085	0.605	1	0.482
PHI	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.005	0.191	0.000		0.000
	Ν	240	240	240	240	240
~~~~	Pearson Correlation	0.293	0.052	0.414	0.482	1
SUP	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.418	0.000	0.000	
	N	240	240	240	240	240

 Table 7: Correlation Test

Based on the ANOVA test results, with F = 34.168 and p(F) = 0.000 < 0.05, it's again confirmed that there are significant relationships between PHI, ECO, ETH, and SUP. Table 8 displays regression analysis results, including

standardized beta coefficients, significance levels, and variance inflation factors (VIF) for multicollinearity assessment. No multicollinearity is suspected as all VIFs are near 1.

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Model		dardized icients	Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
Would	В	Std. Error	Beta	_		Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.574	0.699		0.822	0.412		
ECO	0.391	0.098	0.221	3.980	0.000	0.965	1.037
ETH	0.215	0.072	0.206	3.008	0.003	0.632	1.581
PHI	0.283	0.062	0.317	4.552	0.000	0.614	1.630

As evident from the table, all p-values (Sig. = p(t)) for the variables ECO, ETH, and PHI are below 0.05. Thus, these three variables hold significance in the established model, outlined as follows:

$$\label{eq:SUP} \begin{split} \text{SUP} &= 0.547 + 0391\text{ECO} + 0.215\text{ETH} + \\ 0.283\text{PHI} + \varepsilon \end{split}$$

The equation reveals that Economic Responsibility has the greatest impact on CSR behavior support, with a 0.391-unit increase per level. Philanthropic and Ethical factors contribute less, with increases of 0.283 and 0.215 units, respectively. The model's quality is indicated by an R-squared value of 0.303, explaining 30.3% of the variance in the model.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the whole set of H3 can not be confirmed. There are only 3 of four CSR expectation factors that influence the customers' support of socially responsible behavior. In which, Economics Responsibility expectations yield the most significant influence, followed by the factor of Philanthropic and Ethical, respectively.

# 4.4. Consumer expectations of CSR in MNEs comparison between socio-demographic groups

In this section, a comparative analysis of means using T-tests or ANOVA, with Levene's

tests is conducted to examine differences in expectations among customer groups based on demographics, including gender, age, education level, income, and living area. Below are some notable findings presented:

### 4.4.1. Gender

The analysis reveals significant differences between genders in Economic expectations, with males exhibiting higher levels compared to females. However, no significant disparities are found in Legal, Ethical, and Philanthropic expectations between males and females in MNEs. *4.4.2. Education level* 

The respondents in 4 levels of study are regrouped into "High school or lower", "College/University" and "Post Graduate Education". The ANOVA test results, as be showed in table 9 show that respondents with higher education levels generally express significantly higher CSR expectations compared groups, except for Economic other to expectations. Specifically, respondents with Post display Graduate Education significant differences in their expectations regarding Legal, whereas those with College/University education or higher exhibit notable distinctions in their Ethical expectations.

		Mean value		
	High school or lower (n=27)	College/ University (n=140)	Post Graduate Education (n=73)	P(t,df) value
ECO	6.1991	6.1107	6.1284	0.745
LG	4.4815	4.8510	5.4481	0.000
ETH	4.4362	5.3262	5.5312	0.000
PHI	4.1759	4.5402	4.7979	0.46

Table 9: Difference among various study level groups about CSR expectations

### 4.4.3. Income

There's a significant increase in economic expectations when moving from the 5-10 million VND group to higher income levels, but the under 5 million VND group stands out as an exception. The value of this group remains higher than that of the average income groups. This might be attributed to the fact that part of the study was conducted within a university setting, and these low-income individuals are predominantly students.

### 4.4.4. Living area

The study segregated the respondents based on their place of residence into "Areas with Industrial Zones" and "Areas with No Industrial Zone" to analyze variances in CSR expectations. As per the findings presented in table 10, individuals residing in areas with industrial zones anticipate significantly higher levels of Ethical responsibilities but lower levels of Economic responsibilities compared to those in other areas.

	Mea	n value	Mean Difference	P(t,df) value
	Area with	Area with no	-	
	Industrial zone	<b>Industrial zones</b>		
	(n=144)	( <b>n=96</b> )		
ECO	6.0408	6.2539	-0.21311	0.001
ETH	5.3958	5.1273	0.26852	0.036

Table 10: Difference among various in Living area groups about CSR expectations

### 4.5. Discussion

4.5.1.Vietnamese consumer expectations of CSR in MNEs

The EFA results suggest that Vietnamese consumers, like those in other developing countries such as Indonesia and Nigeria (Arli & Tjiptono, 2014; Olajide & Fadun, 2014), can distinguish between the four corporate social responsibilities: economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic. This supports prior research by Palihawadana et al. (2016) on Vietnamese consumers.

While the study confirms Carroll's (1979) categorization of corporate social responsibilities for Vietnamese consumers, it challenges the suggested order of importance proposed by Carroll (1991) for developed countries and Visser (2008) for developing ones. In Vietnam, economic responsibilities are prioritized, followed by ethical, legal. and philanthropic responsibilities, respectively. Despite variations, all CSR dimensions are expected to be high (above 5), consistent with Palihawadana et al.'s (2016) findings, which attribute this to Vietnam's collectivistic culture favoring idealism over egoism.

### **Economic Responsibility – The highest expectation of consumer**

In Vietnam, economic responsibility remains paramount, reflecting Maignan's (2001) findings. This supports the traditional view of CSR prioritizing economic concerns, as proposed by Carroll (1979) and Visser (2008). Given Vietnam's economic developmental challenges, there's a strong expectation for multinational enterprises (MNEs) to contribute significantly to the national economy. In addition, the transition of Vietnam's economy from command to openmarket, typical of emerging economies, justifies the high expectation for economic responsibility. This supports research emphasizing economic benefits over environmental and human rights issues in transitional economies (Wong, et al., 2010; Hsieh, 2009; Frost & Ho, 2005). Ellis and Bastin (2010) also suggest that in this stage, CSR activities tend to prioritize economic responsibilities.

Recent corporate frauds and bankruptcy scandals, especially regarding product safety, have led consumers to expect businesses to prioritize economic growth and prosperity (Retolaza, et al., 2009), while ensuring consumer interests. In the digital era, consumers have access to more information, prompting heightened concerns about product quality, pricing, and services.

# Ethical Responsibility – The second highest expectation of consumer

Previously, most Vietnamese consumers overlooked ethical responsibility, often associating it solely with health and safety concerns. Visser (2008) notes that in developing countries, ethics ranks low on the CSR agenda, seen as voluntary and government-supported. Corruption remains pervasive in business, indicating a prolonged effort to integrate ethical responsibilities in developing nations.

However, in Vietnam 's recent context, the emphasis on ethical responsibility, ranked second highest, isn't surprising. This is due to the widening scope of ethics, driven by increased awareness and diverse problems. Environmental incidents, like Formosa's pollution, have also heightened consumer focus on ethical issues. Additionally, cultural differences prompt Vietnamese consumers to expect higher ethical standards from multinational companies, especially those from Western countries, where norms may differ. With ethical values not yet legally regulated, consumers are wary of potential transgressions by these companies.

# Legal Responsibility – The third highest expectation of consumer

The third position of Legal responsibility reflects a growing concern among consumers in Vietnam. Previously, legal dimensions were not seen as significant in CSR considerations. However, recent misconduct, particularly by multinational companies, such as price manipulation, tax evasion, and safety violations, have shifted consumer attention towards legal compliance. Additionally, the prevalence of corruption and nepotism among businesses has exacerbated social and economic issues. Consequently, Vietnamese consumers now expect companies to adhere to legal standards to mitigate negative consequences.

# Philanthropic Responsibility – The last highest expectation of consumer

Despite not being top priority, Philanthropic responsibility remains significant, especially in developing countries like Vietnam. Donations and volunteering are seen as ways to improve a company's image and reputation within the community. However, its importance diminishes when public attention shifts to Ethical and Legal factors due to company misconduct. Additionally, using philanthropy to compensate for wrongdoing can lead to customer dissatisfaction.

4.5.2.Consumer expectations of CSR and customers' support of socially responsible behavior in MNEs

The study indicates that economic, ethical, and philanthropic considerations significantly influence Vietnamese consumers' support for responsible companies. Specifically, consumers prioritize economic responsibility most strongly, followed by philanthropy and ethics. This underscores the importance of economic responsibility in Vietnam. Moreover, companies that fulfill these responsibilities gain a competitive edge, as consumers prefer socially responsible firms, particularly in terms of economic practices, when product differentiation is minimal.

4.5.3.Consumer expectations of CSR in MNEs comparison between socio-demographic groups

This study reveals that males in Vietnam expect higher economic performances from companies compared to females. This trend reflects traditional gender roles where males are perceived to hold more significant economic responsibilities in Vietnam. This finding contrasts with previous literature that suggests similar CSR expectations between genders (Mohammad, et al., 2014).

In terms of income classification, higherincome individuals expect more economic responsibility from multinational companies due to their purchasing power, demanding premium services and high-quality products. They also have a greater understanding and concern for economic matters, scrutinizing companies' practices and advocating for transparency, fair taxes, and corporate responsibility.

Results pertaining to education level suggest that generally those with higher education level have the more tough requirements, especially in the area of legal. This could be due to the fact that higher educated people usually understand more comprehensive about legal dimensions, such as the regulations and the rights of consumers as well as employees.

Resident groups living in areas with industrial zones tend to prioritize ethical performance over economic contributions. This is because they directly experience the environmental impacts of industrial activities, leading them to expect companies, including multinational enterprises, to prioritize environmental protection and enhancement.

### 5. Research implications and Conclusion

This study offers insights into Vietnamese consumers' expectations of multinational enterprises' (MNEs) corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices. It introduces a scale to measure these expectations, emphasizing the significant influence on consumer support. It underscores the importance of integrating CSR into corporate culture and communication strategies, as CSR can enhance corporate identity and reputation. Additionally, CSR is viewed as a strategic marketing tool, contributing to long-term organizational performance by meeting customer expectations.

To maximize competitive advantages, MNEs should allocate a majority of their CSR resources to establishing Economic and Ethical factors, as consumers have the highest expectations and provide the most support in these areas. Encouraging economic and ethical behaviors not only benefits companies directly but also aligns with socially responsible practices, which can yield further benefits. Marketing managers should take an active role in shaping these expectations, with a particular focus on fostering environmentally friendly conditions.

MNEs should focus on consumer groups divided by socio-demographic factors, as expectations vary across different segments. For example, males and higher-income individuals prioritize economic responsibility, while welleducated individuals and residents in industrial areas emphasize ethical responsibility. Tailored strategies and campaigns targeting these groups are crucial for meeting their expectations and gaining their support. For example, MNEs should develop communication strategies targeting males. especially in sectors like automotive where they hold sway. This entails boosting male involvement in economic discussions across media and policy spheres. Moreover, for ethical outreach, MNEs can target educated segments through goodwill ads in pertinent media and backing academic research on best practices. This approach ensures effective dissemination of responsible corporate messages to a diverse audience.

On the contrary, some resources should be allocated to philanthropic factors, but not a majority, as consumer appreciation for it varies. MNEs should only allocate a minority of resources to legal practices, as they have relatively low expectations and minimal impact on customer support.

In conclusion, this research sheds light on Vietnamese consumers' CSR expectations of MNEs. It shows how economic, ethical, and philanthropic expectations positively impact consumer support for socially responsible activities. Additionally, practical solutions are proposed for governments and businesses to implement CSR effectively while optimizing resources. This research also has some limitations. Firstly, the scope of investigation is narrow, and the sample size is small, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Secondly, the theoretical models and scales used are new and untested in the Vietnamese market, introducing subjectivity. Additionally, there may be other factors influencing consumer expectations and support for socially responsible activities not considered in the research. Finally, the study only focuses on multinational companies in general, without considering differences across sectors, areas, or sizes, warranting further research.

Future research could compare Vietnamese consumers' CSR expectations for MNEs and local

companies, or focus on consumer perceptions of CSR. Expanding sample sizes and investigation scopes is crucial for accuracy. Targeting specific industries or areas, like tourism in Da Nang, aligns with local development goals. Developing additional evaluation items for CSR factors in Vietnam's business environment is recommended. Finally, employing advanced analytical tools like linear SEM modeling can enhance understanding of CSR relationships.

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<sup>2.</sup> Nguyễn Thị Minh Tâm

<sup>-</sup> Đơn vị công tác: Trường Đại học Kinh tế - Đại học Đà Nẵng