

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
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**STATEMENT OF NEW THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL
CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE THESIS**

Dissertation Title: *The impact of corporate sustainability on corporate performance through stakeholder behavior: A case study of coffee enterprises in the Central Highlands of Vietnam*

Major: Business Administration

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PhD Candidate: Le Thanh Ha

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Scientific and Practical Contributions of the Dissertation

Scientific Contributions:

Developing the theoretical framework on corporate sustainability in Vietnam's coffee and agricultural sectors. The dissertation concretizes the concept of corporate sustainability into three core pillars (economic, social, and environmental) aligned with the Triple Bottom Line framework (Elkington, 1997). The novelty lies in the localization of this concept within the Vietnamese coffee industry—a specialized, export-oriented sector influenced by global markets and deeply rooted in local socio-cultural and ecological conditions. The successful design and validation of a measurement scale with 16 indicators for these three pillars contributes to quantifying and applying the concept practically in agribusiness management in developing countries.

Clarification and expansion of Stakeholder Behavior Theory. Rather than adopting a traditional approach that focuses solely on stakeholder perception or influence, the study conceptualizes stakeholder behavior as a mediating construct reflecting a two-way interaction between firms and key groups, including employees, customers, suppliers, and the community. By measuring behaviors such as engagement, loyalty, cooperation, commitment, and community participation, the dissertation enriches the theoretical framework of Stakeholder Response Behavior. This emerging research direction is encouraged in the international literature. This helps clarify how sustainability strategies translate into performance through stakeholder behavior, affirming the importance of behavioral factors in modern strategic management.

Extension of the theoretical framework linking sustainability and performance. The dissertation empirically validates a model wherein the three corporate sustainability pillars indirectly affect performance through stakeholder behaviors. It offers a novel perspective on the causal link between sustainability strategy and organizational outcomes. Unlike prior studies that rely solely on financial indicators (e.g., ROA, ROE), this study combines financial and non-financial metrics (e.g., supply chain efficiency, customer satisfaction, labor productivity) to provide a holistic view. This broadens the applicability of sustainability theory in measuring business success, particularly for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in agriculture, where financial indicators may not fully capture the value created.

Proposition of a multidimensional integrated theoretical model. A key theoretical contribution is the integration of four theoretical foundations: Stakeholder Theory, Resource Dependence Theory, Institutional Theory, and Legitimacy Theory. This integrated model explains the interaction between endogenous factors (corporate sustainability strategy) and exogenous pressures (institutional and societal expectations), as well as stakeholder behavioral responses, ultimately influencing performance. This contemporary approach reflects the complex nature of the agribusiness environment in rural settings and represents an innovative theoretical contribution in sustainable development research in Vietnam.

Development of theoretical measurement tools. Based on both qualitative and quantitative foundations, the dissertation develops, refines, and validates measurement scales for three conceptual groups: (1) corporate sustainability, (2) stakeholder behavior, and (3) business performance. These scales ensure scientific reliability (validity, convergent and discriminant validity) and contextual relevance for the Central Highlands, and they can be reused in other studies in similar sectors or agricultural industries. This is a practical contribution toward standardizing theoretical measurement tools in sustainability research in developing countries.

Affirmation of the role of local contextual factors in adapting global theories. By applying global theories to the context of the Central Highlands coffee industry, which features a blend of modern management practices and indigenous culture (small-scale, community-based relationships,

underdeveloped institutions), the dissertation demonstrates the limits and adaptability of sustainability theories to local realities. This contributes to the academic discourse on “theoretical contextualization,” helping adjust and refine international frameworks for transitional economies like Vietnam.

Practical Contributions:

Supporting coffee enterprises in developing practical and measurable sustainability strategies: The dissertation presents a comprehensive measurement system for the three pillars of sustainability, providing a valuable management tool for Central Highlands coffee businesses. This enables the assessment, comparison, and monitoring of sustainability implementation over time, forming a basis for strategy adjustments in response to internal capacity and global market expectations that increasingly emphasize sustainability values.

Enhancing stakeholder relationship management capabilities: By clearly distinguishing behavioral responses from four key stakeholder groups (employees, customers, suppliers, and the community), the study enables coffee business managers to identify strengths and weaknesses in each relationship. This supports the design of evidence-based policies, rather than relying on intuition or isolated experience, and contributes to more professional stakeholder management in SMEs.

Proposing solutions to improve business performance via stakeholder behavior: The findings reveal that positive stakeholder behaviors are crucial mediators in translating sustainability strategies into performance outcomes. This demonstrates that investing in social relationships is not just an ethical obligation but a strategic lever to enhance performance, particularly in non-financial areas such as brand building, customer loyalty, supply chain efficiency, and employee motivation.

Informing policy development to support local businesses: The empirical evidence from the dissertation can assist government agencies, industry associations, and development organizations in formulating policies and support programs tailored to regional and sectoral characteristics. Examples include green credit policies for sustainable agriculture, sustainable coffee value chain initiatives in the Central Highlands, and specialized training on sustainable management for SMEs in the agricultural sector.

Raising sustainability awareness in the business community: Applying the measurement system improves internal management and serves as a strategic communication tool, demonstrating corporate responsibility to customers, communities, and partners. This helps build a responsible brand image, increases social trust, and creates long-term competitive advantages amid growing market preference for sustainability-oriented brands.

Guiding the sustainable transformation of the Central Highlands coffee sector: Beyond the enterprise level, the dissertation provides practical foundations for a broader transformation of the coffee industry, from traditional production models to green, sustainable, and responsible development. The findings can be applied to enhance resource governance, product quality, supply chain relationships, and balanced value creation across economic, social, and environmental dimensions, consistent with the region’s strategic role in Vietnam’s agricultural landscape.

Expanding impact to the national coffee sector and Vietnam’s agri-exports: The research model and tools developed in the Central Highlands context are highly applicable to other coffee-growing regions such as Son La, Quang Tri, and the Northwest. Furthermore, the dissertation provides strategic guidance for other key agri-products, such as pepper, cashew, fruits, and rice, in implementing sustainable strategies, adapting to climate change, meeting export standards, and responding to increasingly stringent international market requirements.

Dong Nai, ... [day] ... [month], 2025

Supervisor 1

Supervisor 2

Doctoral Candidate