EDU REKHA INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP, ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Journal Homepage: https://edurekhapublisher.com/erijeebm/

ISSN: 3107-5460 (Online)

Volume- 1 Issue- 1 (May-June) 2025

Frequency: Bimonthly

PAGES: 1-7

ARTICLE TITLE:

# The Relationship between Corporate Culture and Employee-Based Brand Equity with Supply Chain Performance in Petroleum Enterprises in Vietnam

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ARTICLE HISTORY

RECEIVED
01-05-2025

ACCEPTED
18-05-2025

PUBLISHED
22-05-2025

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## Abstract

The objective of this paper is to study the relationship between Internal Brand, Corporate Culture (VHDN) affecting Supply Chain Performance through the mediating role of Employee-based Brand Equity (THNV) in Vietnamese petroleum enterprises. The study conducted testing and analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) "Employee-based Brand Equity Affects Supply Chain Performance at Some Large Petroleum Enterprises in Vietnam" followed by Bootstrap with a sample size of 2000. The results of the study showed that the factors of Internal Brand (THNB), Corporate Culture (VHDN), Employee Satisfaction (HL); Brand Commitment (CKTH) and Brand Knowledge (KTTH) all positively affected Supply Chain Performance of Vietnamese petroleum companies. Based on these results, the author proposes some management implications to help business leaders come up with solutions to improve the Supply Chain Performance (HQCCU) of the Vietnamese petroleum industry.

**Keywords**: supply chain, brand value, brand commitment, brand knowledge

## 1. INTRODUCE

Over the years, the petroleum industry has faced various challenges in managing petroleum supply chain performance, especially in the logistics sector, which is unique to the industry. These logistical challenges have a major impact on the prices of oil and its derivatives. In addition to the lack of flexibility in the logistics network of the oil and gas industry due to limitations in the production capacity of crude oil operators, long transportation times and limitations of transportation methods (Industry and Trade, 2022), in terms of human factors, employees at petroleum production and supply companies still do not have good brand awareness, do not clearly understand and believe in the core values, vision and mission of the brand and they do not feel attached to be ready to convey these values to customers. Therefore, studying the impact of factors related to internal branding (THNB), corporate culture (VHDN), and employee-based brand equity (THNV) on the petroleum supply chain performance (HQCCU) is an urgent requirement in the current context, contributing to helping petroleum companies come up with solutions to increase brand competitiveness and improve supply chain performance (HQCCU).

## 2. THEORETICAL BASIS AND RESEARCH MODEL

### 2.1.1 Corporate Culture (VHDN)

Corporate culture can be viewed and understood in three different ways: as an internal variable from within the workplace; as an external variable brought into the workplace; or as a symbolic origin, meaning that culture is something that an organization has or symbolizes that organization (Smirchich, 1983). According to Thompson & Luthans (1990), culture is best understood by tying these three perspectives together, emphasizing that culture is not a stable structure, but rather a constantly evolving structure.

### 2.1.2 Internal Branding (THNB)

Internal branding is considered a tool to ensure that employees have a common understanding of the desired

corporate brand image and that they are able and willing to reflect this image to other stakeholders through their own behavior, Ragheb et al. (2018). Miles & Mangold (2004) showed the impact of internal brand on brand knowledge and there is a positive relationship between internal brand and brand commitment.

#### 2.1.3 Employee Satisfaction (HL)

Keller (1998) argues that brands are not only for customers, but also for employees and that employees play an important role in expressing brand values. Employee satisfaction is linked to how employees feel about their company's brand and how they express that brand when interacting with customers. Employees need to understand and feel a clear sense of brand identity, which will help them feel proud and connected to the company.

#### 2.1.4 Brand Commitment (CKTH)

Brand commitment is the degree to which a customer is willing to repurchase or use a product/service again from a particular brand instead of choosing other brands. Aaker (1991) describes brand commitment as an important part of brand equity, because loyal customers help brands maintain market share, reduce marketing costs, and protect against competitors. Brand commitment can be viewed as a measure of the level of affection, satisfaction, and value that customers feel about a brand.

#### 2.1.5 Brand Knowledge (KTTH)

According to Keller (1998), *Brand Knowledge* is defined as everything that consumers know and feel about a brand. This is the level of consumer awareness of the existence and characteristics of the brand. Aaker (1991) divides brand knowledge into 2 levels:

• Brand Recognition: The ability of consumers to recognize a brand when they see it in a certain context.

• Brand Recall: The ability of consumers to recall a brand without being reminded, such as when thinking about a specific product category.

#### 2.1.6 Employee-based Brand Equity (THNV)

Keller (1993, 1998) believes that Brand equity is the customer's knowledge (brand knowledge) about the brand. Thus, for internal customers, employees, the first thing is the employee's brand knowledge. This is where information is held in the final stage before conveying information about the organization's brand knowledge to customers as promised in the most effective way. Burmann & Zeplin (2005) believe that EBBE is all employee behaviors that are consistent with the brand identity and brand promise. Thus, it can be said that brand knowledge (Empoyee's brand knowledge) is an important factor in forming EBBE. Both of the above views show that brand equity lies not only in how customers feel, but also in how employees feel, connect with and implement the core values of the brand.

#### 2.1.7 Supply Chain Performance (HQCCU)

Supplied chain efficiency refers to the extended supply chain activities in meeting the requirements of the end customer, including product availability, on-time delivery and all necessary inventory and capacity in the supply chain to provide an efficient and responsive manner (Warren H.H, 2002). The existence of innovative work behavior in modern organizations is significantly recognized by effective leadership. They cultivate innovative thinking and form an innovative work culture to acquire new knowledge, skills, and technologies (Jung et al., 2003). Transformational leadership is positively related to employees' perceptions of empowerment and support for innovation (Jung et al., 2003). In addition, Lianju Ning and Dan Yao (2023) also studied - digital transformation has a positive impact on supply chain performance.

### 2.2 A Brief Review of Some Studies:

There have been many studies on this issue in the world. The study of Musanzikwa1 & Ramchander (2018) on the relationship between corporate culture and supply chain performance has quite similar content to the content of the author's research; Punjaisri et al. (2011) studied the relationship between internal brand communication, employee-based brand equity and company performance; King and Grace's model (2010) explored the role of employee-based brand equity on employee engagement and job performance; Xiong et al.'s (2013) research model focused on the relationship between employee-based brand equity and employee performance in the service industry; The research model of Burmann et al. (2005) examines the role of employee-based brand equity in creating internal brand engagement based on the use of SEM (Structural Equation Model) to analyze the relationship between brand awareness, employee commitment and performance;

### 2.3 Research hypothesis and research model:

Aurand et al., (2005) stated that EBBE is the attitude of employees towards the brand of their organization and integrating brand messages into work activities. Thus, employees will try to convey messages to customers about brand value through service style, making customers satisfied. Customer's satisfaction will bring about the effectiveness of production and business activities. Therefore, Hypothesis H1 "Employee-based brand equity positively affects supply chain performance". The study of Peters and Waterman (1982) demonstrated that a company with a strong corporate culture has a positive impact on superior financial performance. A later study by Kotter and Heskett (1992) reiterated the importance of culture in determining superior financial performance. Thus, this has confirmed that corporate culture is a resource of the enterprise that affects the business activities of the enterprise. From this, the hypothesis "H2 Corporate culture positively affects supply chain performance" is established. In branding, if consumers have a high level of commitment, it shows that they are satisfied with the product (Oliver, 1999) and have a high level of repeat purchase. Ganesan and Weitz, (1996) argued that brand commitment is understood as trust, evidence in commercial transactions and brand commitment as an important factor in building EBBE (Boukis A & George. C., 2018). Therefore, hypothesis H3 "Brand commitment has a positive impact on EBBE" is established. According to Heskett et al., (1994), employee satisfaction leads to work motivation, which increases employee productivity, increasing the efficiency of customer service work. Therefore, Hypothesis H4: "Employee satisfaction has a positive impact on EBBE" is established. Keller (1993, 1998) believes that Brand value is customer knowledge about that brand. For employees who are internal customers, brand knowledge is the skills and knowledge that employees want to convey to customers during the transaction process, interacting to complete tasks to increase the company's brand reputation. Hypothesis H5: "Internal brand positively impacts employee engagement" is established.

Internal brand is considered a tool to ensure that employees have a common understanding of the desired corporate brand image and that they are able and willing to reflect this image to other stakeholders through their own behavior, Ragheb et al. (2018). According to the International Journal of Bank Marketing (2014), internal brand management is considered a major contributor to employee satisfaction at work, brand commitment. Studies by Baumgarth et al.,

(2013), Lohndorf & Diamantopoulos (2014), show that there is an impact of internal brand on brand commitment and brand knowledge. From the above arguments, the research hypotheses are proposed as follows:

**Hypothesis H6:** Internal brand has a positive impact on brand commitment

**Hypothesis H7:** Internal brand has a positive impact on employee satisfaction

**Hypothesis H8:** Internal brand has a positive impact on brand knowledge.

Corporate culture has a strong influence on employees' behaviors and attitudes at work. According to the research results of Xiaoxia Zhang and Bing Li (2013), a good organizational culture will satisfy employees at work. Thompson et al., (1999) emphasized that the culture of an organization is linked to a shared understanding of the brand vision. This shared understanding contributes to employee engagement and commitment to the brand (Thomson et al., 1999) Thus, hypotheses H9, H10, and H11 are established:

**Hypothesis H9:** Corporate culture has a positive impact on employee satisfaction

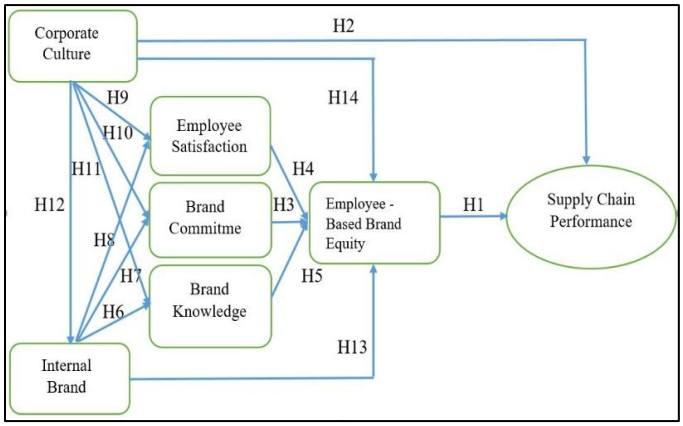
**Hypothesis H10:** Corporate culture has a positive impact on brand commitment

**Hypothesis H11:** Corporate culture has a positive impact on brand knowledge

The research results of Rose Xiaying Chen (2013) have identified corporate culture as one of the strong factors affecting internal brand, it has a positive impact on both brand knowledge and brand experience and employee behavior and attitudes. From the above research results, Hypothesis H12 "Corporate culture has a positive impact on internal brand".

Based on inheriting theories, concepts and synthesizing relevant studies, the group of authors proposes the following theoretical research model.

**Figure 1:** Proposed research model




## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The article uses qualitative research methods combined with quantitative methods to conduct the research. With the qualitative method, the authors conducted interviews and group discussions with 7 experts including 2 PhDs who are university lecturers specializing in logistics, 3 experts who are managers in petroleum companies and 2 experts who are customer partners, business directors. The results are to build a measurement scale and design a survey table. Quantitative methods are used to conduct the survey in the next step. The authors conducted the survey by sending questionnaires directly to subjects with management level from petrol station manager and above at 4 petrol companies: Vietnam National Petroleum Group (Petrolimex), Vietnam Oil Corporation - Joint Stock Company (PVOIL), Dong Thap Petroleum Trading Joint Stock Company (PETIMEX) and Thanh Le Import-Export Trading Corporation - Joint Stock Company (THALEXIM), the survey period was from April 12, 2024 to August 20, 2024. A total of 600 questionnaires were distributed and 560 valid samples were collected, processed using SPSS 20.0 and AMOS 28 software.

## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Cronbach's Alpha test results of 22 observed variables in the research model, the THNB variable has the observed variable THNB13 with a total variable correlation = 0.138 < 0.3, so we eliminated this variable, ran the second time, the reliability of the THNB scale increased from 0.815 to 0.885. The results showed that 21 observed variables met the requirements and were transferred to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The factor analysis results (CFA) of 21 observed variables of 7 factors VHDN, THNB, HL, CKTH, KTHH, THNV and SE had KMO = 0.952, Sig. = 0.000, Eigenvalues = 1.201 > 1, Total Variance Explained = 68.279%, loading factor of 21 observed variables > 0.5. The composite reliability (CR) of the 7 variables is > 0.5 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of the 7 variables is > 0.5. Therefore, the composite reliability (CR) and the average variance extracted (AVE) both meet the requirements.

The CFA results for CMIN/df = 1.382 < 5. The Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = 0.932, (Tucker-Lewis) TLI = 0.980, (Comparative fit index) CFI = 0.982 are all greater than 0.9. The Root mean squared error of approximation (RSMEA) = 0.026 < 0.05 shows that the model is good. PCLOSE = 1.000 > 0.05. These results show that the model fits the market data very well.

The results of the composite reliability coefficient test CR (Composite Reliability) of the scales are all greater than 0.7. In which the largest coefficient is THNV (0.947) and the smallest is THNB (0.872). Therefore, the scales all ensure good reliability. The average variance extracted AVE (Average Variance Extracted) of the variables KTTH, VHDN, CKTH, THNB, HL, THNV and SE all have values higher than 0.5. Therefore, the average variance extracted all meet the requirements.

**Table 1:** Test results on reliability and average variance extracted

| Latent variables | CR | AVE | MSV | MaR(H) | KTTH | VHDN | CKTH | THNB | HL | THNV | HQ CCU |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| KTTH | 0,942 | 0,766 | 0,326 | 0,944 | **0,875** | | | | | | |
| VHDN | 0,875 | 0,504 | 0,164 | 0,890 | 0,128** | **0,710** | | | | | |
| CKTH | 0,905 | 0,657 | 0,399 | 0,910 | 0,390*** | 0,235*** | **0,810** | | | | |
| THNB | 0,872 | 0,578 | 0,382 | 0,881 | 0,193*** | 0,345*** | 0,290*** | **0,760** | | | |
| HL | 0,913 | 0,723 | 0,371 | 0,915 | 0,489*** | 0,178*** | 0,502*** | 0,139** | **0,850** | | |
| THNV | 0,947 | 0,818 | 0,399 | 0,950 | 0,571*** | 0,202*** | 0,631*** | 0,328*** | 0,609*** | **0,905** | |
| HQCCU | 0,896 | 0,683 | 0,382 | 0,900 | 0,211*** | 0,404*** | 0,406*** | 0,618*** | 0,266*** | 0,355*** | **0,827** |

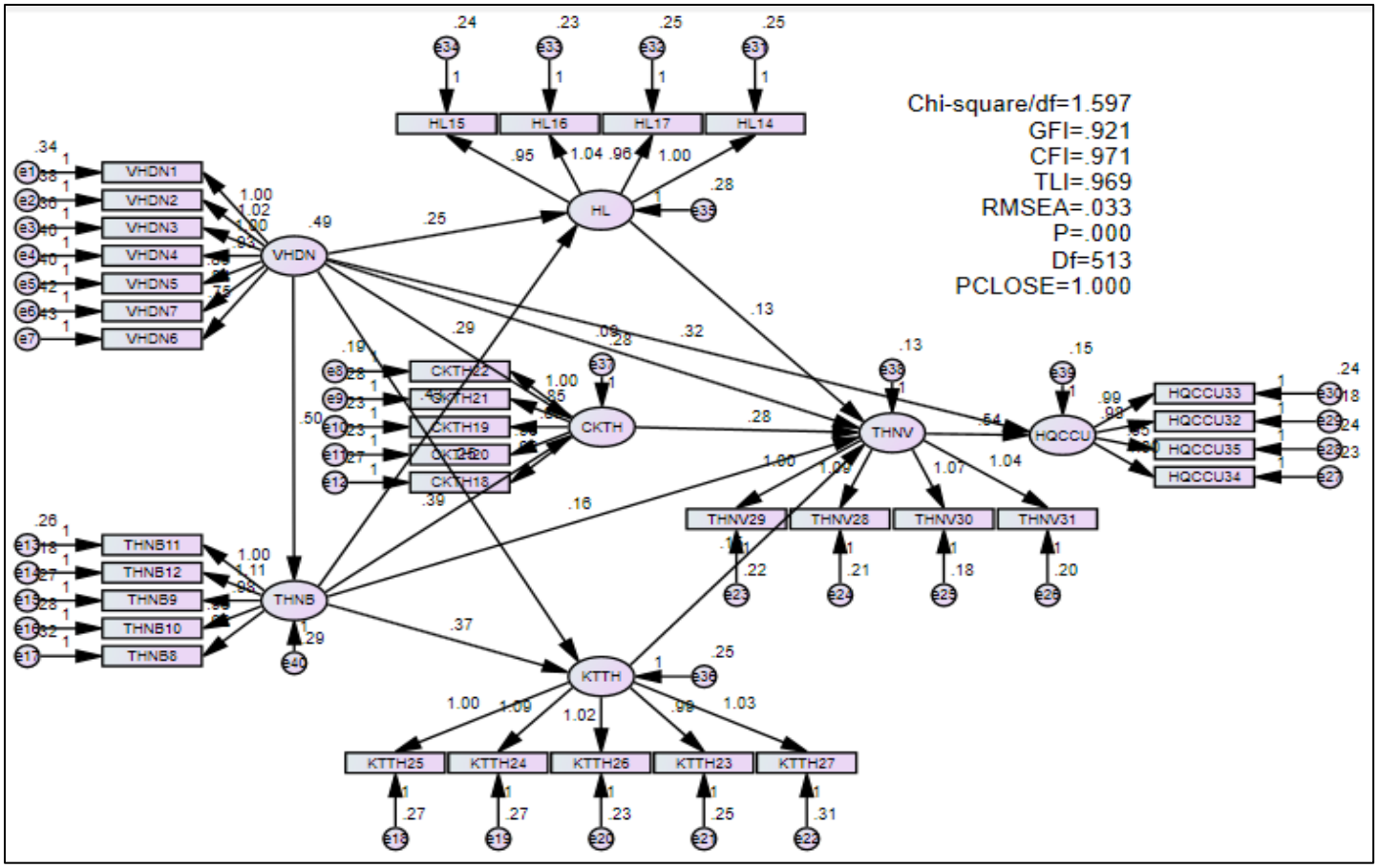
**Source:** Extracted from AMOS

Table 1: Test results on reliability and average variance extracted Based on the AMOS results, the unstandardized regression coefficients of pairs of variables showing the relationship all have statistical values (P) of 0.000 (***) lower than the 5% significance level, and the AVEs in Table 1 are all greater than 0.5 and the MSV values are all less than AVE. Thus, the model ensures convergence. At the same time, the average variance extracted (AVE) index > 0.5 and is greater than the maximum shared variance index MSV (Maximum Shared Variance), and the correlation between variables in the model must have a p-value < 0.05 and the square root of AVE is greater than the correlations between latent variables, so the model is discriminative (Hair et al., 2010).

### 1.1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

AMOS processing results for CMIN/df = 1.597 < 5. Goodness-of-fit index GFI = 0.921, Tucker-Lewis TLI = 0.969, Comparative fit index CFI = 0.971 are all greater than 0.9. Root mean squared error of approximation RSMEA = 0.033 < 0.05, indicating that the model is well-fitted. PCLOSE = 1.000 > 0.05. These results indicate that the model fits the market data very well.

**Figure 2:** Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)




**Source:** Extracted from AMOS

The results of data processing show that the unstandardized regression coefficients showing the relationship between pairs of variables are all > 0 and have statistical value, P = 0.000 (***) lower than the 5% significance level, or in other words, these regression coefficients reflect the level and direction of the impact of factors on each other.

**Table 2:** Results of Regression Weights

| | | | Estimated | S.E. | C.R. | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| THNB | <--- | VHDN | 0,505 | 0,045 | 11,218 | *** |
| HL | <--- | VHDN | 0,246 | 0,049 | 5,048 | *** |
| CKTH | <--- | VHDN | 0,293 | 0,049 | 5,984 | *** |
| KTTH | <--- | VHDN | 0,255 | 0,046 | 5,507 | *** |
| HL | <--- | THNB | 0,431 | 0,055 | 7,829 | *** |
| CKTH | <--- | THNB | 0,388 | 0,054 | 7,185 | *** |
| KTTH | <--- | THNB | 0,373 | 0,052 | 7,230 | *** |
| THNV | <--- | VHDN | 0,093 | 0,039 | 2,366 | .018 |
| THNV | <--- | THNB | 0,159 | 0,048 | 3,309 | *** |
| THNV | <--- | HL | 0,126 | 0,039 | 3,225 | .001 |
| THNV | <--- | CKTH | 0,284 | 0,040 | 7,150 | *** |
| THNV | <--- | KTTH | 0,150 | 0,041 | 3,682 | *** |
| HQCCU | <--- | THNV | 0,537 | 0,057 | 9,369 | *** |
| HQCCU | <--- | VHDN | 0,318 | 0,042 | 7,531 | *** |

**Source:** Summary of results from AMOS

### 1.2 Bootstrap test

Bootstrap test results with sample size 2000 show that the indicators showing the model's suitability with unchanged data and the pairwise relationships of variables all have P < 0.05, lower than the 5% significance level.

The results of Bootstrap 2000 show that the research sample has a fairly small standard deviation SE of the parameters, indicating the higher reliability of the estimates; The absolute value of Bias is less than 0.1, indicating that the parameters are stable and the Bias/ (SE-Bias) value is not greater than 2. Thus, the parameters of the research model are reliable and ensure stability

**Table 3:** Results of Bootstrap 2000

| Parameter | | | SE | SE-SE | Mean | Bias | SE-Bias | Bias/(SE-Bias |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| THNB | <--- | VHDN | .059 | .001 | .551 | .000 | .001 | 0 |
| HL | <--- | VHDN | .065 | .001 | .260 | -.002 | .001 | 2 |
| HL | <--- | THNB | .065 | .001 | .422 | .001 | .001 | 1 |
| CKTH | <--- | VHDN | .052 | .001 | .309 | -.001 | .001 | 1 |
| CKTH | <--- | THNB | .048 | .001 | .376 | .001 | .001 | 1 |
| KTTH | <--- | THNB | .046 | .001 | .389 | .002 | .001 | 2 |
| KTTH | <--- | VHDN | .050 | .001 | .289 | .000 | .001 | 0 |
| THNV | <--- | HL | .045 | .001 | .153 | .001 | .001 | 1 |
| THNV | <--- | CKTH | .055 | .001 | .346 | -.001 | .001 | 1 |
| THNV | <--- | KTTH | .038 | .001 | .172 | .001 | .001 | 1 |
| THNV | <--- | VHDN | .064 | .001 | .119 | -.001 | .001 | 1 |

| Parameter | | | SE | SE-SE | Mean | Bias | SE-Bias | Bias/(SE-Bias |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| THNV | <--- | THNB | .063 | .001 | .187 | -.001 | .001 | 1 |
| HQCCU | <--- | VHDN | .068 | .001 | .368 | -.002 | .002 | 1 |
| HQCCU | <--- | THNV | .066 | .001 | .485 | .000 | .001 | |

**Source:** Extracted from AMOS

### 1.3 Testing the hypotheses

**Table 4:** Results of testing the research model hypothesis

| Hypothesis | Relationship | | | Unstandardized estimates (SE) | Standard deviation (S.E.) | Reliability (CR) | Value P | Hypothesis evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) | (2) | | | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) |
| 1 | HQCCU | <--- | THNV | 0,537 | 0,057 | 9,369 | *** | Accept |
| 2 | HQCCU | <--- | VHDN | 0,318 | 0,042 | 7,531 | *** | Accept |
| 3 | THNV | <--- | CKTH | 0,284 | 0,04 | 7,15 | *** | Accept |
| 4 | THNV | <--- | HL | 0,126 | 0,039 | 3,225 | 0,001 | Accept |
| 5 | THNV | <--- | KTTH | 0,150 | 0,041 | 3,682 | *** | Accept |
| 6 | KTTH | <--- | THNB | 0,373 | 0,052 | 7,23 | *** | Accept |
| 7 | CKTH | <--- | THNB | 0,388 | 0,054 | 7,185 | *** | Accept |
| 8 | HL | <--- | THNB | 0,431 | 0,055 | 7,829 | *** | Accept |
| 9 | HL | <--- | VHDN | 0,246 | 0,049 | 5,048 | *** | Accept |
| 10 | CKTH | <--- | VHDN | 0,293 | 0,049 | 5,984 | *** | Accept |
| 11 | KTTH | <--- | VHDN | 0,255 | 0,046 | 5,507 | *** | Accept |
| 12 | THNB | <--- | VHDN | 0,505 | 0,045 | 11,218 | *** | Accept |
| 13 | THNV | <--- | THNB | 0,159 | 0,048 | 3,309 | *** | Accept |
| 14 | THNV | <--- | VHDN | 0,093 | 0,039 | 2,366 | 0,018 | Accept |

**Source:** Synthesis from AMOS

The results from AMOS show that the hypotheses expressing the relationship between pairs of variables all have unstandardized regression coefficients > 0 and the hypotheses all have P < 0.05, so all 14 research hypotheses are accepted.

## 2. CONCLUSION AND MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

**Conclusion**

By using the method of SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), the research results show that the factors: Employee satisfaction; Brand commitment and Brand knowledge all have a positive impact on Supply Chain Performance of petroleum companies through the mediating variable Employee-based Brand Equity. This is a fundamental difference compared to previous studies.

**Management implications**

Based on the research results, the authors propose a number of management implications to help business leaders come up with solutions to improve the Supply chain performance of the Vietnamese petroleum industry, specifically as follows:

***Brand Commitment:***

Petroleum companies must create prestigious values for their brand and communicate those values not only to customers, but also to all employees, thereby making them care and be proud of the brand of the organization they work for and consider the company as part of the family. Companies must propose solutions to maintain and promote the core values of their current brand.

***Brand knowledge***

Oil and gas companies need to present a compelling vision of the future; Instill a clear sense of the vision of the organization in employees, and communicate to employees the importance of the organization's goals in delivering on the brand promise. In addition, the company needs to organize seminars and competitions to help employees understand the difference between the unit and competitors, thereby making employees more familiar with the meaning of the company's brand.

***Employee satisfaction***

Business leaders must regularly motivate and encourage employees, creating good working conditions for employees. In addition, leaders must also pay attention to the personal life and spirit of employees to have timely support, meet the legitimate needs of employees at work to create a close connection between employees and the organization. From there, employees will be ready to share the hardships, stick with the business in any circumstances

***Employees - Based Brand Equity***

Companies should build a friendly and positive image of petroleum industry employees in the minds of customers. To do so, businesses should pay attention to the spiritual life of employees, so that they feel happy when working for the company. Pay attention to training and improving professional skills so that employees feel appreciated and feel that this job is really suitable for them. Create a healthy working environment, always with the attention and support of superiors so that employees feel full of positive energy.

***Corporate Culture***

Therefore, administrators/managers in the petroleum business sector in Vietnam need to have a proper understanding of the value of corporate culture, considering it a sustainable competitive advantage that competitors can hardly pursue, a very valuable and sustainable resource from internal resources at low cost. Therefore, the top leaders of the above enterprises must commit and make specific plans and directions to build corporate culture for their enterprises. Furthermore, Implement investments to accelerate digital transformation that foster the mindset, behaviors, and values needed for the organization to fully integrate new technologies and ways of working. - Develop a management style within the organization that is characterized by teamwork, consensus, participation, entrepreneurship, innovation, or risk-taking.

***Internal Brand***

Leaders of petroleum businesses in Vietnam must determine goals for internal branding, determine messages, images, brands and methods of conveying and communicating the above information to employees, need to develop orientation programs and orientation sets that inspire employees to appropriately deliver on the brand promise and enhance training and team meetings to build skills that can effectively deliver the brand promise and clearly communicate the brand mission.

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