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The Role of Stakeholders Pressure in Promoting Sustainable Performance in Textile and Garment Enterprises in Hanoi City

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Abstract
The study was constructed with the aim of examining pressure exertion by stakeholders on enhancing the performance of Textile and Garment enterprises through innovation capacity and organizational reputation in mediating roles. The study uses Stakeholder Theory and is based on a sample of 154 Textile and Garment company from survey responses. SmartPLS is used for analyzing data. The findings confirm that both internal and external stakeholders contribute meaningfully to improved sustainable performance of Textile and Garment companies through innovation capacity and firm reputation. The findings offer valuable lessons for policymakers and business managers in strategy formulation based on stakeholder involvement to improve performance.

Keywords: Stakeholders, Innovation Capacity, Firm Reputation, Sustainable Performance, Textile and Garment Enterprises, Hanoi

1. Introduction

Textile and Garment enterprises play a vital role in the socio-economic development of Vietnam, accounting for over 30% of the total number of enterprises and contributing significantly to employment and GDP. In Hanoi city—one of the country's major economic hubs—Textile and Garment field are increasingly facing complex challenges due to market volatility, technological shifts, and the growing demands of sustainability and competitiveness. As such, enhancing sustainable performance has become an urgent priority for Textile and Garment companies to survive and grow in the rapidly changing business landscape.

Previous studies have extensively explored the determinants of sustainable performance, particularly in the context of innovation, strategic orientation, and stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder Theory highlights the importance of both internal stakeholders (e.g., employees, managers) and external stakeholders (e.g., customers, suppliers, regulators) in influencing organizational outcomes. Research has shown that stakeholder pressure can drive firms to adopt innovative practices, improve transparency, and optimize operational efficiency. Moreover, innovation capacity has consistently been identified as a key enabler of sustainable performance, allowing businesses to adapt and thrive in dynamic environments.

However, despite these valuable contributions, certain research gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature has focused on large corporations or global markets, with limited attention given to Textile and Garment enterprises in transitional economies like Vietnam. Second, few studies have examined how stakeholder pressure impacts sustainable performance through multiple mediating variables. In particular, the role of organizational reputation—a critical intangible asset influencing stakeholder trust and competitive advantage—has been largely overlooked in empirical research.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the influence of stakeholder pressure on the performance of Textile and Garment enterprises in Hanoi, while explicitly considering the mediating effects of innovation capacity and firm reputation. By employing Stakeholder Theory as a conceptual foundation and analyzing primary data from 154 Textile and Garment companies using SmartPLS, the research offers new empirical evidence on the mechanisms through which stakeholder involvement contributes to business success. The findings aim to enrich the literature on stakeholder engagement in emerging economies and provide practical insights for leaders and policymakers striving to improve organizational performance.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Stakeholder Theory

This study is built upon Stakeholder Theory, which emphasizes that firm success depends on effectively addressing the expectations of both internal and external stakeholders (Freeman, 1984). In the context of Textile and Garment company, stakeholder pressure can act as a significant driver of change and improvement.

First, stakeholder pressure encourages firms to enhance their innovation capacity, prompting them to develop new ideas, adopt technologies, and improve products or processes to remain competitive (Anzules-Falcones & Novillo-Villegas, 2023) [3].

Second, stakeholder expectations also influence firm reputation. Companies under stakeholder scrutiny are more likely to engage in transparent, ethical, and socially responsible practices, thereby strengthening their public image and credibility (Fombrun, 2005) [8].

Both innovation capacity and firm reputation are key mediators that positively impact sustainable performance. Innovation boosts efficiency and market adaptability, while a strong reputation attracts resources and fosters stakeholder trust. Together, these factors explain how stakeholder pressure indirectly promotes Textile and Garment company sustainable performance.

2.2 Hypotheses Development

Stakeholder pressure refers to the influence exerted by parties who have a vested interest in the operations and outcomes of a business, including internal stakeholders (such as employees and managers) and external stakeholders (such as customers, suppliers, competitors, and regulators). According to Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 2010) [9], organizations are more likely to innovate when they are under pressure to meet the evolving demands of stakeholders.

In particular, such pressure can push firms to adopt new technologies, improve existing processes, and develop novel products or services to satisfy stakeholder expectations. This is especially relevant for Textile and Garment, which often face high expectations for adaptability, responsiveness, and innovation despite limited resources (Singh *et al*., 2020) [21].

Empirical studies have shown that stakeholder engagement can foster a culture of innovation by promoting knowledge sharing, learning, and openness to change (García-Morales *et al*., 2008) [10].

Thus, when stakeholders demand higher quality, sustainability, or responsiveness, firms are incentivized to enhance their innovation capacity to maintain legitimacy and competitiveness.

H1: Stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on innovation capacity.

Stakeholder Theory suggests that firms are accountable to a broad set of stakeholders whose expectations extend beyond financial performance. When stakeholders exert pressure—through demands for ethical behavior, transparency, sustainability, or responsiveness—firms are motivated to align their practices accordingly (Helmig *et al*., 2016) [11]. By responding proactively to these expectations, firms can enhance their legitimacy and build a positive reputation in the eyes of stakeholders (Baah *et al*., 2021) [4].

In the context of Textile and Garment company, which often rely heavily on external relationships for survival and growth, maintaining a strong reputation is especially critical. Meeting stakeholder expectations can improve public perception, increase customer loyalty, and attract business partnerships or funding opportunities. Prior studies have indicated that stakeholder engagement and responsiveness are positively linked to reputational outcomes (Walker & Dyck, 2014) [22].

Therefore, stakeholder pressure is expected to have a significant and positive influence on firm reputation.

H2: Stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on firm reputation.

The existing literature consistently indicates that stakeholder pressure exerts a positive influence on sustainable performance across various organizational contexts. Ekwueme *et al*. (2013) [7] highlight that sustainability reporting, which is often driven by stakeholder expectations, correlates with improved corporate performance, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder engagement in sustainability initiatives.

Similarly, Helmig *et al*. (2016) [11] demonstrate that stakeholder pressure can motivate companies to implement CSR activities, which in turn enhance market performance, suggesting a direct link between stakeholder influence and positive business outcomes. Further supporting this notion, Zhan *et al*. (2018) [23] find that green and lean practices, which are often responses to stakeholder demands, positively affect organizational performance. The study emphasizes that effective management of stakeholder relationships can amplify these performance benefits. Chen *et al*. (2020) [5] extend this understanding by showing that stakeholder pressure fosters employee involvement and the adoption of green practices within lean manufacturing frameworks, ultimately leading to better environmental performance.

The role of stakeholder pressure is also evident in the context of proactive environmental strategies. Seroka-Stolka and Fijorek (2020) [20] reveal that pressure from various stakeholder groups influences firms to adopt proactive environmental strategies, which are associated with enhanced sustainable development. The moderating effect of firm size suggests that larger organizations may be more responsive to stakeholder demands, further reinforcing the positive impact of stakeholder influence.

H3: Stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on sustainable performance.

Firms that demonstrate strong innovation capabilities are often viewed as forward-thinking, adaptive, and competitive—qualities that contribute to a positive organizational reputation. Innovative firms are more likely to respond effectively to customer needs, introduce socially or environmentally responsible solutions, and differentiate themselves in the market. These efforts can enhance stakeholder trust and reinforce a firm's image as a leader in its field (Hur *et al*., 2014) [12].

In the case of Textile and Garment company, building a reputation for innovation is particularly important, as it can compensate for limited resources by attracting partnerships,

talent, and customer loyalty. Moreover, consistent innovation signals commitment to improvement and responsiveness, which are valued by both internal and external stakeholders.
Therefore, it is expected that higher innovation capacity will contribute positively to the firm's reputation.

H4: Innovation capacity has a positive effect on firm reputation.

Innovation capacity—the ability of a firm to generate and implement new ideas, technologies, or processes—is widely recognized as a key driver of competitive advantage and long-term success. Firms with strong innovation capabilities are better positioned to adapt to market changes, respond to customer needs, and create differentiated products or services (Rajapathirana & Hui, 2018) [16].
In the textile and garment context, innovation is particularly critical given their need to remain agile and responsive despite resource limitations. By continuously improving processes, developing new offerings, or adopting new technologies, Textile and Garment company can improve productivity, enter new markets, and enhance value creation. Empirical research has consistently shown a positive link between innovation and sustainable performance indicators such as profitability, market share, and customer satisfaction (Cuong *et al*., 2025; Minh *et al*., 2025; Rosenbusch *et al*., 2011) [6, 15, 18].
Thus, firms that invest in and strengthen their innovation capacity are more likely to achieve superior performance outcomes.

H5: Innovation capacity has a positive effect on sustainable performance.

Firm reputation reflects stakeholders' overall assess Textile and Garment company of an organization's credibility, reliability, and value. A strong reputation can serve as a powerful intangible asset, enhancing trust among customers, investors, and business partners, which in turn supports long-term sustainable performance (Lee & Jungbae Roh, 2012) [14].
Reputation influences sustainable performance through multiple channels. Externally, it attracts new customers, retains existing ones, and increases perceived value, allowing firms to command premium pricing or secure favorable contracts (Afum *et al*., 2020; Alon & Vidovic, 2015) [1, 2]. Internally, a good reputation boosts employee morale, attracts talent, and fosters a sense of pride and commitment. This is particularly important for Textile and Garment, where stakeholder trust and relational capital often substitute for financial or operational scale (Iwu-Egwuonwu, 2010) [13].
Prior studies have demonstrated that firms with better reputations tend to outperform their peers in terms of financial returns, customer satisfaction, and resilience to market shocks (Roberts & Dowling, 2002; Sehgal *et al*., 2023) [17, 19]. In competitive markets like Hanoi, a positive reputation may be a key differentiator for Textile and Garment enterprises striving for growth and survival.

H6: Firm reputation has a positive effect on sustainable performance.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research model

Research model is presented below (see Fig 1)

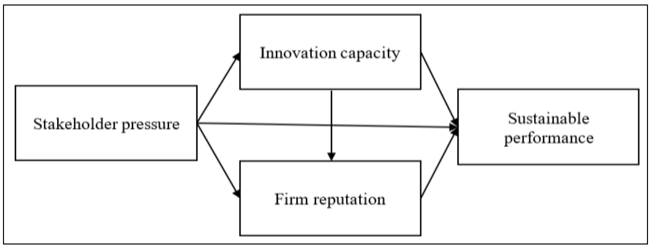

Fig 1: Research model

Based on Stakeholder Theory and the proposed research model, the study formulates the following hypotheses:
- **H1**: Stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on innovation capacity.
- **H2**: Stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on firm reputation.
- **H3**: Stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on sustainable performance.
- **H4**: Innovation capacity has a positive effect on firm reputation.
- **H5**: Innovation capacity has a positive effect on sustainable performance.
- **H6**: Firm reputation has a positive effect on sustainable performance.

These hypotheses collectively aim to examine the direct and indirect effects of stakeholder pressure on firm performance, highlighting the mediating roles of innovation capacity and firm reputation in the context of Textile and Garment enterprises.

3.2 Scales Development

To ensure reliability and adopt validated scales from previous studies, all measurement items were adapted from existing research. Additionally, the scales were slightly modified to better fit the Vietnamese context. The measurement items are presented in the Table 1 below. All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree.

3.3 Data Collection

Data for this study were collected from Textile and Garment enterprises operating in Hanoi, Vietnam. The survey targeted 154 Textile and Garment company, with three to four questionnaires distributed to each enterprise, aiming to capture multiple perspectives within the same organization. A total of 362 responses were initially collected. After screening for completeness and validity, 176 valid responses were retained for data analysis. The data collection process was carried out over a four-month period, from January 2025 to April 2025.
The final dataset included 176 valid responses from employees, managers, and owners representing 154 Textile and Garment enterprises in Hanoi. These Textile and Garment operate across various sectors, including manufacturing, services, trade, and technology.
Regarding respondent profiles, the majority held middle to senior management positions or were business owners, ensuring that the information provided reflected strategic

and operational insights. In terms of firm size, the sample included micro, small, and medium enterprises based on the Vietnamese government's classification, with the number of employees ranging from fewer than 10 to up to 200.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Sample (n = 176)

Category	Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Respondent Role	Owner/Director	79	45%
	Manager	62	35%
	Employee	35	20%
Firm Size (Employees)	Less than 10	35	20%
	10–49	70	40%
	50–200	71	40%
Years in Operation	1–5 years	53	30%
	6–10 years	70	40%
	Over 10 years	53	30%

Source: Author owns' work

4. Results

4.1 Measurement Model

The results of the measurement model evaluation are summarized in the table above. The outer loadings of all items range from 0.728 to 0.862, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory indicator reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values for all constructs range from 0.888 to 0.910, showing high internal consistency. Composite Reliability (CR) values range from 0.913 to 0.935, which further confirms the reliability of the constructs. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.600 to 0.650, surpassing the recommended minimum of 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. These results indicate that the measurement model achieves acceptable levels of reliability and convergent validity, supporting its suitability for further structural analysis.

Table 2: Measurement model

S. No	Construct	ID	Outer loading	CA	CR	AVE
1	Stakeholder pressure	SP1	0.820	0.910	0.928	0.650
		SP2	0.807			
		SP3	0.789			
		SP4	0.785			
2	Firm reputation	FR1	0.800	0.904	0.924	0.637
		FR2	0.776			
		FR3	0.862			
		FR4	0.862			
3	Innovation capacity	IC1	0.861	0.888	0.913	0.600
		IC2	0.809			
		IC3	0.802			
		IC4	0.774			
		IC5	0.728			
		IC6	0.741			
		IC7	0.772			
4	Sustainable performance	SU1	0.804	0.908	0.935	0.645
		SU2	0.755			
		SU3	0.762			

Source: Author owns' work

The table presents the Fornell-Larcker criterion, used to assess discriminant validity among the constructs in the study: Stakeholder Pressure (SP), Firm Reputation (FR), Innovation Capacity (IC), and Firm Performance (FP).

The diagonal values (in bold in the original table) represent the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct: SP = 0.775, FR = 0.829, IC = 0.798, and SU = 0.806. These values are all higher than the corresponding correlations between constructs in their respective rows and columns. For example, the square root of AVE for Firm Reputation (0.829) is greater than its correlation with SP (0.661), IC (0.366), and FP (0.629). Similarly, Innovation Capacity has a square root of AVE (0.798), which is greater than its correlations with SP (0.336), FR (0.366), and SU (0.216).

These results indicate that all constructs meet the Fornell-Larcker criterion, confirming good discriminant validity in the measurement model.

Table 4: Fornell-Larcker criterion

	SP	FR	IC	SU
SP	0.775			
FR	0.661	0.829		
IC	0.336	0.366	0.798	
SU	0.452	0.629	0.216	0.806

Source: Author owns' work

4.2 Structural Model

The table presents the results of the structural model analysis, showing the path coefficients (β), standard deviations (SD), t-values, p-values (**ρ**), effect sizes (f^2), and the decision for each hypothesis.

The results indicate that all hypothesized relationships are statistically significant and accepted. Specifically, stakeholder pressure has a positive effect on innovation capacity ($\beta = 0.216$, $t = 4.713$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.049$) and firm reputation ($\beta = 0.398$, $t = 10.026$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.205$). Innovation capacity also positively influences firm performance ($\beta = 0.214$, $t = 5.136$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.047$). Additionally, firm reputation has a smaller but still significant positive effect on firm performance ($\beta = 0.091$, $t = 2.694$, $p = 0.007$, $f^2 = 0.016$).

These findings support all proposed hypotheses and highlight the importance of stakeholder pressure, innovation capacity, and firm reputation in enhancing the performance of Textile and Garment enterprises.

Table 5: Hypotheses testing

Relationship	β	SD	t	ρ	f²	Decision
SP → IC	0.216	0.046	4.713	0.000	0.049	Accepted
SP → FR	0.398	0.040	10.026	0.000	0.205	Accepted
SP → SU	0.214	0.042	5.136	0.000	0.047	Accepted
IC → FR	0.091	0.034	2.694	0.007	0.016	Accepted
IC → SU	0.216	0.041	5.268	0.000	0.052	Accepted
FR → SU	0.192	0.036	5.333	0.000	0.067	Accepted

Source: Author owns' work

5. Discussion

He results of this study offer a nuanced understanding of how stakeholder pressure enhances sustainable performance in Textile and Garment enterprises in Hanoi. Drawing on Stakeholder Theory, the findings confirm both the direct and indirect effects of stakeholder pressure, mediated through innovation capacity and firm reputation, on organizational outcomes.

First, stakeholder pressure was found to exert a significant and positive influence on innovation capacity ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$). This aligns with prior studies suggesting that when firms are subject to the expectations of diverse stakeholders—such as customers, regulators, or community groups—they are more inclined to adopt innovative strategies to maintain competitiveness and legitimacy. For Textile and Garment company in particular, this responsiveness to pressure encourages dynamic capability building, which is crucial in a resource-constrained environment.

Second, stakeholder pressure significantly contributes to firm reputation ($\beta = 0.398$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that stakeholder engagement not only pushes firms toward compliance and ethical behavior but also facilitates the development of intangible assets such as credibility, visibility, and trust. In the Vietnamese textile and garment context, where reputation can substitute for scale in accessing resources or markets, this relationship is particularly meaningful.

Third, stakeholder pressure also has a direct positive impact on sustainable performance ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the idea that stakeholder expectations act as a catalyst for long-term performance improvements. This is consistent with research showing that sustainability outcomes often follow from external pressure to meet higher environmental and social standards.

In terms of indirect pathways, innovation capacity contributes positively to both firm reputation ($\beta = 0.091$, $p = 0.007$) and sustainable performance ($\beta = 0.216$, $p < 0.001$). These findings support the view that innovation enables firms to differentiate themselves and meet evolving demands, thereby strengthening stakeholder perceptions and driving better outcomes.

Likewise, firm reputation significantly enhances sustainable performance ($\beta = 0.192$, $p < 0.001$). This confirms that a positive image fosters stronger relationships with customers, employees, and partners, which in turn improves organizational resilience and adaptability. For Textile and Garment companies in transitional economies, reputation serves not only as a social license to operate but also as a performance-enhancing mechanism.

Collectively, these findings emphasize the interconnected roles of stakeholder pressure, innovation, and reputation. Rather than viewing stakeholder demands as external constraints, Textile and Garment companies can treat them as strategic levers that foster internal development and external legitimacy. This research contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing the value of stakeholder-oriented strategies in achieving sustainable business outcomes, particularly in emerging markets like Vietnam.

6. Conclusion and Implication

This study investigated the role of stakeholder pressure in promoting sustainable performance among Textile and Garment enterprises in Hanoi, with a particular focus on the mediating effects of innovation capacity and firm reputation. Drawing on Stakeholder Theory and using SmartPLS for structural analysis, the research provides empirical evidence that stakeholder pressure serves not only as an external force but also as a strategic driver of internal capability development.

The findings confirm that stakeholder pressure positively influences innovation capacity and firm reputation, both of which, in turn, contribute to improved sustainable performance. Additionally, stakeholder pressure also exerts a direct and significant effect on performance outcomes, underscoring its multifaceted role in shaping organizational behavior.

These results suggest that stakeholder engagement should be viewed as an opportunity rather than a constraint. Textile and Garment companies that proactively respond to stakeholder expectations by fostering innovation and cultivating a strong reputation are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability. In emerging economies such as Vietnam, where Textile and face institutional and resource-related challenges, this stakeholder-oriented approach offers a viable path toward enhanced competitiveness and resilience.

The study contributes to the literature by clarifying the mechanisms through which stakeholder pressure impacts performance, particularly in the underexplored context of transitional economies. It also offers practical implications for managers and policymakers aiming to improve textile and garment company performance through stakeholder collaboration and strategic capability building.

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