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Business results of enterprises using environmental protection services in Ho Chi Minh City through transaction costs, service quality and relationship quality

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Abstract
Vietnam's economy is growing rapidly, especially in the industrial sector thanks to policies to attract foreign investment. However, the process of industrialization and economic development has caused serious environmental pollution problems in Vietnam, especially in industrial parks in dynamic cities like Ho Chi Minh City. In that context, the government has introduced regulations and promoted businesses to carry out environmental protection work to reduce pollution and increase brand recognition. During their business operations, businesses need to consider environmental protection as a responsibility and obligation, because environmental protection not only brings short-term benefits but also creates long-term benefits for businesses. Therefore, the urgent issue is to conduct research and propose policies to improve business results of businesses using environmental services in Ho Chi Minh City. The objective of the article is to evaluate the impact of transaction costs, service quality and relationship quality on business results of businesses using environmental protection services in Ho Chi Minh City. Chi Minh. From there, the author has a basis to propose management implications for these businesses to improve business efficiency in a sustainable way. The author conducted a survey of 360 industrial customers who are businesses in industrial parks and export processing zones in Ho Chi Minh City. Quantitative analysis results with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient analysis technique, EFA exploratory factor analysis, and SEM linear structure analysis determine the influence of: transaction costs, service quality, and relationship quality on business results of businesses using environmental protection services in Ho Chi Minh City.

Keywords: Transaction costs, service quality, relationship quality, business performance, structural equation modeling SEM

1. Introduction
For any economy, the environment is an important and indispensable factor in the process of sustainable development. Effective environmental management is becoming an increasing challenge for businesses, especially in the industrial sector. From 2022, Vietnam will have a high industrial growth rate, which will make an important contribution to the country's economic development. However, the rapid development of industry and modernization along with commercial and service activities has simultaneously caused environmental pollution problems in Industrial Parks and densely populated areas such as Ho Chi Minh City. In that context, production and business enterprises often limit investment in waste management projects because they consider it an ineffective source of costs. The current practice creates conditions for the environmental protection service industry to emerge and become the focus for developing the national economy.

On the other hand, currently in the world there are many studies on relationship quality (Vieira *et al*., 2008, Athanasopoulou, 2009) [15, 4]. Relationship quality is a topic that comes from the field of marketing, concerned with the wants and needs of businesses to develop mutually beneficial relationships and success with business associates and partners (Athanasopoulou, 2009) [4]. Grasping and in-depth understanding of the relationship between environmental management, businesses and industrial customers is the first step in determining how to optimize both of these important goals: environmental protection and sustainable business development.

However, research on Relationship Quality in Vietnam still has many limitations (Hoang Le Chi, 2013, Nguyen Thi Thanh Van, 2018) [1, 3].

In summary, to further research the nature, influencing factors and results received by partners of relationship quality in the environmental services industry in Vietnam, This study was conducted with the goal of basing on the previously proposed research model, performing quantitative analysis to determine the level of influence of the factors in the model. Quantitative results are the basis for the author to propose management implications to improve business efficiency of businesses using environmental services in Ho Chi Minh City.

2. Research Method

First, the author clearly states the urgency of research in today's context along with the process of reviewing documents on the relationship model between factors, implementation methods and practical results. Next, the article mentions the process and methods to conduct research, including the analytical framework and research contents. Research hypotheses serve as a premise for proposing a model to study the impact of transaction costs, service quality, and the quality of the relationship to business results of businesses using environmental protection services in Ho Chi Minh City. The research process is presented in Figure 1.

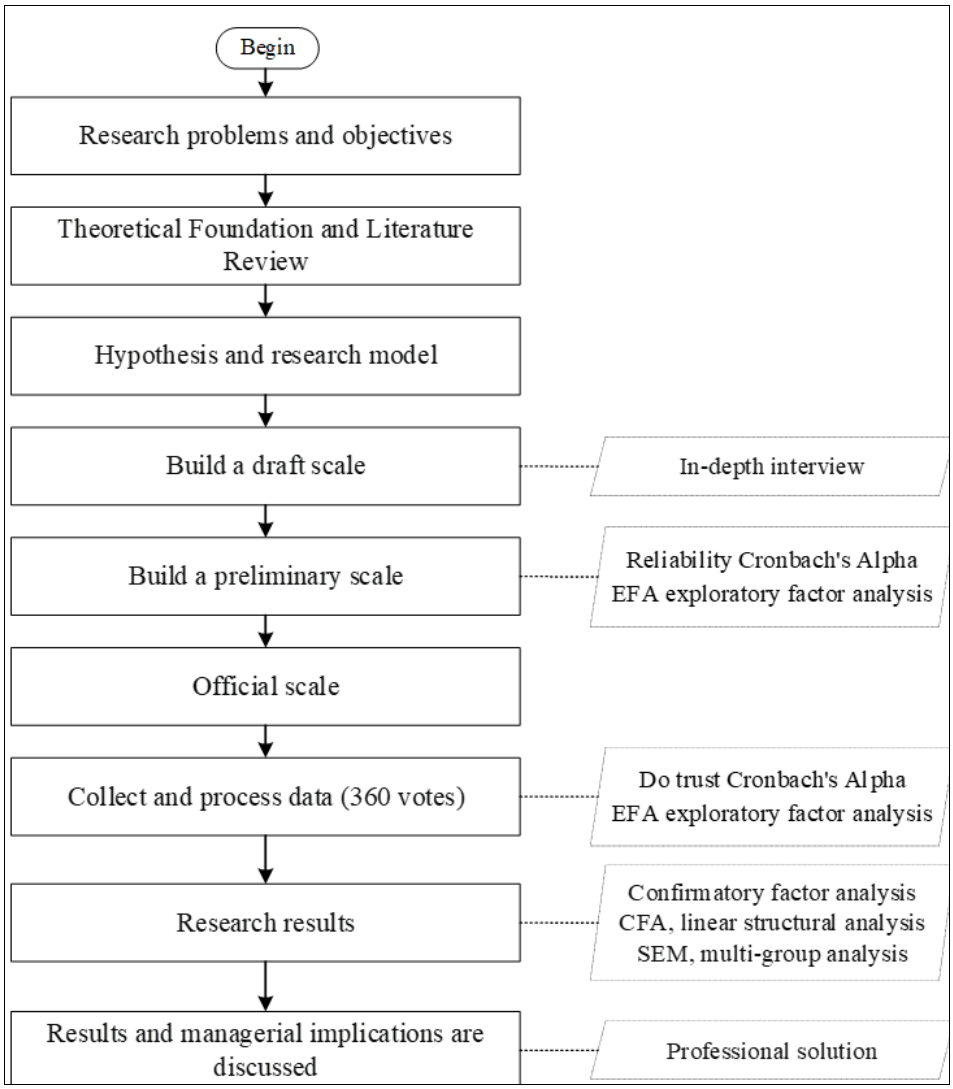


Fig 1: Research process (Source: Suggested author, 2023)

In the qualitative stage, by reviewing documents, the research has inheritance as well as proposed corresponding contents; From there, a draft scale is formed. This scale is the subject of in-depth discussion with highly specialized experts in the field of economic environmental services. The purpose of this process is to edit wording, structure the questionnaire or add questions suitable for the thesis. The proposed research model is sent to experts to interview, discuss opinions and adjust the model with relationships based on individuals' perspectives and research practices. Interview experts included 12 experts in the field of environmental services and economics in Vietnam. From there, the official model will be determined to distinguish it from previously proposed models. Simultaneously with the above process, the author also conducted direct discussions with experts on the contents mentioned in the draft scale. The result is the formation of a preliminary scale to distinguish it from the draft scale proposed previously. Figure 2 presents the analytical framework of the study.

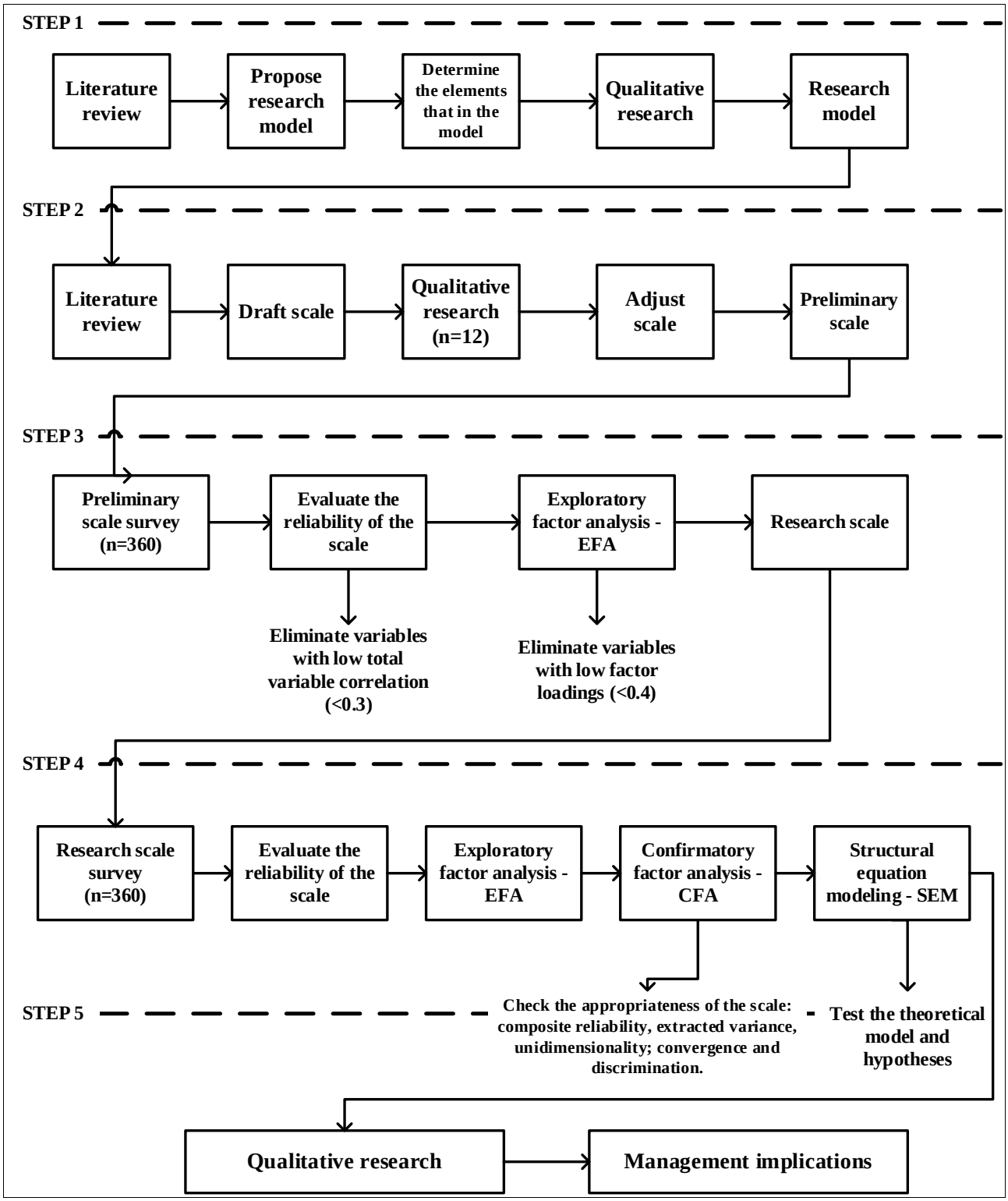


Fig 2: Research analysis framework (Source: Author's compilation, 2023)

3. Hypothesis and research model

The author inherited the research model from the results of the topics and presented it in Figure 3 with the following hypotheses.

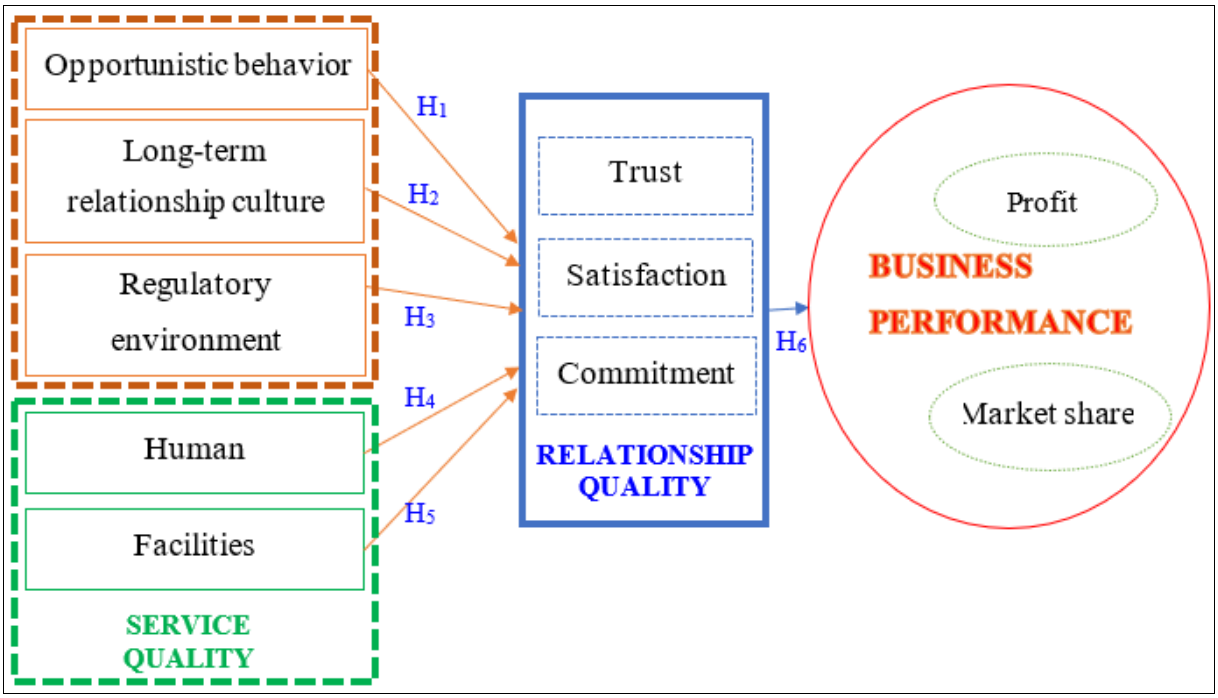


Fig 3: Proposed research model (Source: Proposed author, 2023)

- Hypothesis H1: The less opportunistic behavior, the better the relationship quality.
- Hypothesis H2: The higher the long-term relationship culture, the better the relationship quality.
- Hypothesis H3: The simpler the legal environment, the better the relationship quality.
- Hypothesis H4: The better the person, the better the relationship quality.
- Hypothesis H5: The better the facilities, the better the relationship quality.
- Hypothesis H6: The better the relationship quality, the higher the business results.

4. Research Results

4.1 Sample statistics

The study surveyed customers (n = 360) who are businesses in industrial parks and export processing zones in Ho Chi Minh City to generalize all the characteristics of industrial customers in the field of environmental services. The study will survey 14/14 industrial parks and export processing zones with geographical characteristics spread throughout Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; with a total number of valid survey questionnaires of 360, statistics are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey sample structure

No.	Survey area	Enterprise number/total enterprise	Structure % / total enterprise	Structure % / total number of samples	Structure % /Total number of samples
1	An Ha Industrial Park	15/15	100%	4,2%	Binh Chanh district
2	Le Minh Xuan Industrial Park	64/124	52%	34,4%	Binh Chanh district
3	Vinh Loc Industrial Park	48/88	55%	24,4%	- Binh Chanh district - Binh Tan district
4	Tan Binh Industrial Park	52/120	43%	33,3%	- Tan Binh district - Tan Phu district
5	Tan Tao Industrial Park	29/161	18%	44,7%	Binh Tan District
6	Hiep Phuoc Industrial Park	21/65	32%	18,1%	Nha Be District
7	Cat Lai Industrial Park	13/31	42%	8,6%	Thu Duc City
8	Tan Phu Trung Industrial Park	11/24	46%	6,7%	Cu Chi district
9	Tan Thuan Export Processing Park	22/95	23%	26,4%	District 7
10	Linh Trung Export Processing Park	26/67	39%	18,6%	Thu Duc City
11	Binh Chieu Industrial Park	10/21	48%	5,8%	Thu Duc City
12	Tan Thoi Hiep Industrial Park	21/23	91%	6,4%	District 12
13	Dong Nam Industrial Park	7/14	50%	3,9%	Cu Chi district
14	Northwest Cu Chi Industrial Park	21/29	72%	8,1%	Cu Chi district
	TOTAL	360/877	41%	100%	

(*Source:* Author's compilation, 2023)

4.2 Results of preliminary scale reliability analysis

The results of preliminary scale reliability analysis are presented in Table 2. The alpha coefficients are all greater than 0.6 (Nunnally and Burnstein, 1994), so the scales are retained for subsequent exploratory factor analysis.

Table 2: Results of preliminary scale reliability analysis

Observed variables	Average if variable removed	Variance if variable removed	Variable-total correlation coefficient	Alpha if variable removed
Opportunistic behavior (OB): 0.825				
OB1	10,39	4,534	0,658	0,779
OB2	10,46	3,926	0,699	0,756
OB3	10,41	4,219	0,629	0,789
OB4	10,46	4,227	0,624	0,791
Long-term relationship culture (LRC): 0.828				
LRC1	6,71	2,327	0,682	0,766
LRC2	6,76	2,458	0,693	0,754
LRC3	6,57	2,524	0,682	0,766
Regulatory environment (RE): 0.844				
RE1	6,89	2,184	0,712	0,781
RE2	6,91	2,237	0,698	0,794
RE3	6,93	2,185	0,719	0,773
Human (HU): 0.852				
HU1	10,44	4,058	0,714	0,803
HU2	10,46	3,920	0,718	0,801
HU3	10,43	3,984	0,728	0,797
HU4	10,40	4,704	0,620	0,842
Facilities (FA): 0.865				
FA1	10,42	4,484	0,723	0,825
FA2	10,38	4,498	0,720	0,826
FA3	10,34	4,442	0,703	0,832
FA4	10,45	4,287	0,713	0,829
Trust (TR): 0.851				
TR1	6,51	2,067	0,704	0,809
TR2	6,85	2,098	0,696	0,816
TR3	6,54	2,093	0,766	0,752
Satisfaction (SA): 0.846				
SA1	6,85	2,341	0,725	0,773
SA2	6,83	2,364	0,701	0,796
SA3	6,85	2,367	0,711	0,786
Commitment (CO): 0.867				
CO1	7,01	2,412	0,746	0,815
CO2	7,03	2,300	0,738	0,822
CO3	7,09	2,292	0,757	0,803
Business performance (PER): 0.866				
PER1	10,49	5,420	0,700	0,836
PER2	10,46	5,040	0,734	0,823
PER3	10,50	5,203	0,725	0,826
PER4	10,44	5,333	0,708	0,833

(Nguồn: Tác giả tổng hợp từ phần mềm, 2023)

4.3 Results of exploratory factor analysis – first time

The author performed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using the Principals axis factoring method combined with the Promax rotation method on SPSS20, the results are as shown in Table 3 below. We have: 0.5 < KMO coefficient = 0.911 < 1, so the EFA analysis results are accepted with the collected research data set. The significance level of the Bartlett test reached 0.000 < 0.05, showing that the factor analysis results are consistent with 95% confidence.

Table 3: Results of KMO system and Bartlett's test (1st time)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure coefficient		**0,911**
Bartlett's Test	Approx. Chi-Square	6130,655
	df	465
	Sig.	0,000

(***Source*:** Compiled from research results, 2023)

Table 4 shows that the EFA analysis extracted 9 factors with Eigenvalues of 1.029 greater than 1 and the total variance extracted was 74.478%, meeting the condition compared to theory > 50%. This shows that 9 factors explain 74.478% of the variation in the data.

Table 4: Total variance explained (1st time)

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues criteria			Sum of squares of extracted factor loadings			The sum of the squared loads
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative percentage	Total	% of variance	Cumulative percentage	
1	10,117	32,636	32,636	10,117	32,636	32,636	5,362
2	2,755	8,888	41,524	2,755	8,888	41,524	4,862
3	1,982	6,394	47,918	1,982	6,394	47,918	5,656
4	1,834	5,917	53,834	1,834	5,917	53,834	6,120
5	1,600	5,160	58,994	1,600	5,160	58,994	5,705
6	1,391	4,486	63,480	1,391	4,486	63,480	4,971
7	1,233	3,978	67,458	1,233	3,978	67,458	5,331
8	1,147	3,700	71,158	1,147	3,700	71,158	5,608
9	1,029	3,320	74,478	1,029	3,320	74,478	5,270
10	0,605	1,950	76,428				
11	0,519	1,675	78,103				
12	0,480	1,550	79,652				
13	0,470	1,515	81,167				
14	0,455	1,469	82,636				
15	0,432	1,393	84,029				
16	0,425	1,372	85,401				
17	0,413	1,332	86,733				
18	0,391	1,262	87,996				
19	0,388	1,253	89,249				
20	0,346	1,117	90,366				
21	0,343	1,108	91,474				
22	0,335	1,081	92,555				
23	0,301	0,971	93,525				
24	0,287	0,927	94,452				
25	0,274	0,885	95,337				
26	0,268	0,866	96,203				
27	0,251	0,810	97,013				
28	0,247	0,796	97,808				
29	0,236	0,762	98,570				
30	0,235	0,757	99,327				
31	0,209	0,673	100,000				

(***Source*:** Compiled from research results, 2023)

Table 5 shows that the EFA analysis extracted 9 factors with an Eigenvalue of 1.029 greater than 1 and a total variance extracted of 74.478%, meeting the condition compared to theory > 50%. This shows that 9 factors explain 74.478% of the variation in the data.

Table 5: Rotated component matrix (1st time)

Factor	Observed variables	Element								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Facilities	FA4	0,873								
	FA3	0,848								
	FA1	0,846								
	FA2	0,831								
Business performance	PER2		0,900							
	PER1		0,853							
	PER4		0,822							
	PER3		0,785							
Human	HU2			0,888						
	HU3			0,884						
	HU1			0,871						
	HU4			0,489						
Regulatory environment	RE3				0,920					
	RE1				0,916					
	RE2				0,867					
Opportunistic behavior	OB2					0,910				
	OB4					0,846				
	OB3					0,843				
	OB1					0,454				
Trust	TR3						0,917			
	TR1						0,875			
	TR2						0,808			

Long-term relationship culture	LRC2							0,943		
	LRC1							0,827		
	LRC3							0,821		
Commitment	CO1								0,905	
	CO2								0,848	
	CO3								0,846	
Satisfaction	SA3									0,915
	SA2									0,827
	SA1									0,818

(***Source*:** Compiled from research results, 2023)

The results of EFA analysis suggest eliminating variables HU4 (0.489) and OB1 (0.454) because they have factor loadings less than 0.5. Consider eliminating variable HU4 because the content of this variable, if removed, will have little effect on the meaning, because variables HU1, HU2, HU3 can cover variable HU4, and at the same time the content of this question is also very difficult to evaluate by survey subjects. And eliminating variable OB1 because the content of this variable, if removed, has little impact because the content of variables OB3 can cover the meaning of variable OB1.

4.4 Results of exploratory factor analysis – second time

After eliminating variables HU4 and OB1 because this variable has a loading factor of less than 0.5. The results of the second EFA analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: KMO and Bartlett testing (2nd time)

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure coefficient		**0,898**
Bartlett's Test	Approx. Chi-Square	5448,405
	df	406
	Sig.	0,000

(***Source*:** Author's calculations from SPSS, 2023)

We have 0.5 < KMO coefficient = 0.898 < 1, so the EFA analysis results are accepted with the collected research data set. The significance level of the Bartlett test reached 0.000 < 0.05, showing that the factor analysis results are consistent with 95% confidence.

Table 7: Total variance explained (2nd time)

Factor	**Initial Eigenvalues criteria**			**Sum of squares of extracted factor loadings**			**The sum of the squared loads**
	Total	**% of variance**	**Cumulative percentage**	**Total**	**Total**	**% of variance**	**Cumulative percentage**
1	9,147	31,542	31,542	9,147	31,542	31,542	4,654
2	2,672	9,212	40,754	2,672	9,212	40,754	4,712
3	1,891	6,521	47,275	1,891	6,521	47,275	4,635
4	1,810	6,243	53,518	1,810	6,243	53,518	4,616
5	1,524	5,255	58,774	1,524	5,255	58,774	4,810
6	1,379	4,753	63,527	1,379	4,753	63,527	5,339
7	1,228	4,235	67,762	1,228	4,235	67,762	5,119
8	1,136	3,917	71,679	1,136	3,917	71,679	4,652
9	1,013	3,492	75,171	1,013	3,492	75,171	4,521
10	0,592	2,042	77,212				
11	0,483	1,667	78,879				
12	0,473	1,632	80,511				
13	0,442	1,525	82,036				
14	0,431	1,488	83,524				
15	0,427	1,472	84,996				
16	0,420	1,448	86,444				
17	0,410	1,415	87,860				
18	0,387	1,336	89,195				
19	0,354	1,221	90,417				
20	0,345	1,189	91,606				
21	0,329	1,135	92,740				
22	0,306	1,057	93,797				
23	0,290	0,999	94,796				
24	0,287	0,988	95,784				
25	0,260	0,896	96,680				
26	0,254	0,875	97,555				
27	0,250	0,861	98,416				
28	0,236	0,813	99,229				
29	0,224	0,771	100,000				

(***Source*:** Author's data analysis results, 2023)

Table 8 shows that the EFA analysis extracted 9 factors with an Eigenvalue of 1.013 greater than 1 and a total variance extracted of 75.171%, meeting the condition compared to theory > 50%. This shows that 9 factors explain 75.171% of the variation in the data.

Table 8: Rotated component matrix (second time)

Factor	Observed variables	Element								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Business performance	PER2	0,899								
	PER1	0,851								
	PER4	0,819								
	PER3	0,782								
Facilities	FA4		0,861							
	FA3		0,836							
	FA1		0,829							
	FA2		0,812							
Trust	TR3			0,914						
	TR1			0,871						
	TR2			0,801						
Human	HU2				0,866					
	HU3				0,851					
	HU1				0,850					
Regulatory environment	RE3					0,884				
	RE1					0,868				
	RE2					0,821				
Commitment	CO1						0,910			
	CO2						0,857			
	CO3						0,853			
Satisfaction	SA3							0,924		
	SA2							0,829		
	SA1							0,827		
Long-term relationship culture	LRC2								0,921	
	LRC1								0,816	
	LRC3								0,804	
Opportunistic behavior	OB2									0,849
	OB3									0,820
	OB4									0,815

(***Source*:** Author's data analysis results, 2023)

According to Table 8, the loading coefficients of the observed variables are all greater than 0.5. Thus, these observed variables all contribute meaningfully to the model (Hair & *et al*., 2009) [9]. In summary, the factor analysis model has practical significance, from the initial 31 observed variables, through the first evaluation of the scale, there were 2 observed variables that did not meet the requirements, so the study left a total of 29 important variables. Observations are grouped into 9 meaningful factors: (1) OB, (2) LRC, (3) RE, (4) HU, (5) FA, (6) TR, (7) CO, (8) SA, (9) PER.

4.5 Kết quả phân tích nhân tố khẳng định

The results of the fit analysis of the CFA confirmatory factor model are presented in Table 9. The fit assessment is based on the criteria presented in the next section as follows.

Table 9: Confirmatory factor model fit results

Index	Acceptance threshold	Result	Conclude
Chi-square/df	1 - 3	1,210	H_0 has not been rejected
GFI	> 0,9	0,926	H_0 has not been rejected
CFI[1]	> 0,9	0,986	H_0 has not been rejected
TLI	> 0,9	0,984	H_0 has not been rejected
RMSEA	< 0,05	0,024	H_0 has not been rejected
PCLOSE	> 0,05	0,964	H_0 has not been rejected

(***Source*:** Compiled from research results, 2023)

1) **Overall suitability:** According to the results of Table 11, all indicators are evaluated at a suitable level. Conclusion: The measurement model ensures unidirectionality and is consistent with actual data.
2) **Reliability:** The results of the composite reliability coefficient CR (Composite Reliability) and the average variance extracted AVE (Average Variance Extracted) are summarized in Table 10. All composite reliability coefficients CR are greater than 0.6; and all AVE extracted variance coefficients are greater than 0.5. Conclusion: The model achieves reliability values.

Table 10: Results of testing the discriminant validity of the scale in the critical model

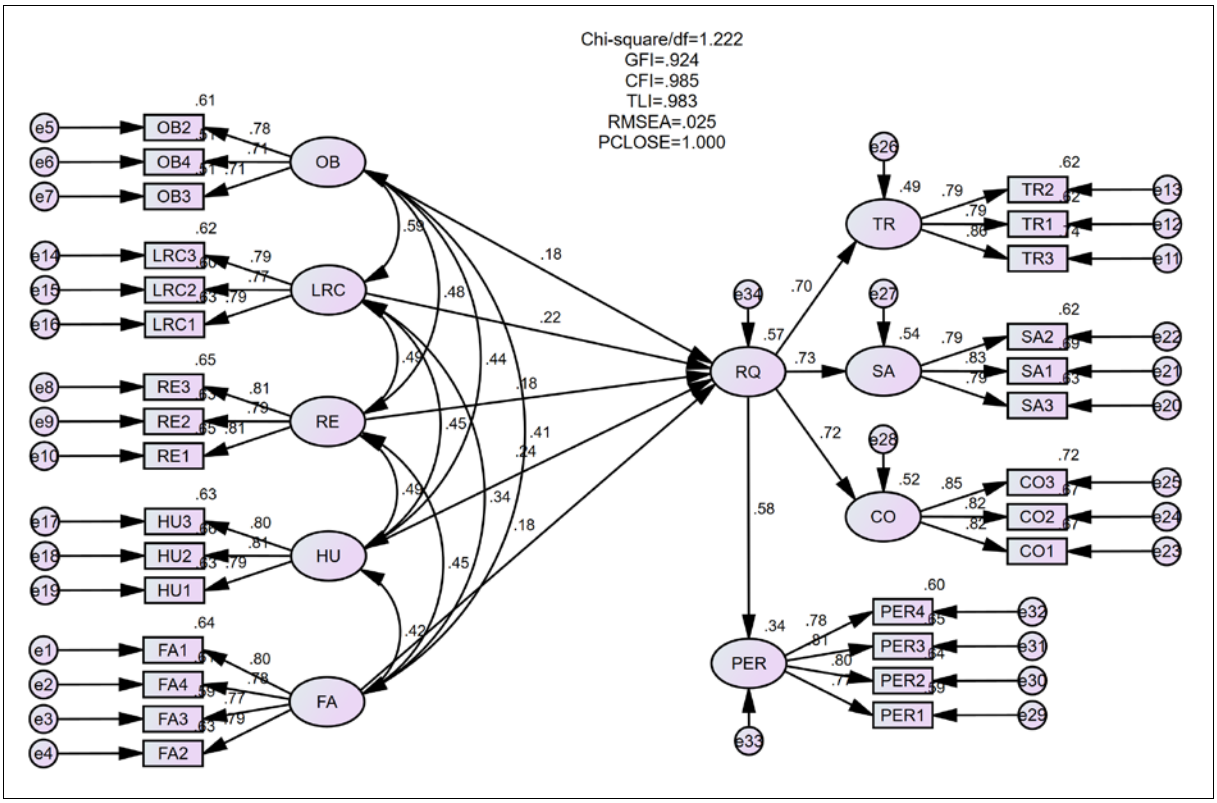
	CR	AVE	MSV	FA	OB	RE	LRC	HU	RQ	PER
FA	0,866	0,617	0,296	0,785						
OB	0,781	0,543	0,350	0,410	0,737					
RE	0,844	0,643	0,336	0,451	0,476	0,802				
LRC	0,828	0,616	0,354	0,343	0,586	0,490	0,785			
HU	0,842	0,640	0,389	0,420	0,436	0,492	0,448	0,800		
RQ	0,751	0,501	0,389	0,544	0,592	0,579	0,595	0,624	0,708	
PER	0,867	0,619	0,387	0,235	0,315	0,355	0,351	0,249	0,622	0,787

(***Source:*** Compiled from research results, 2023)

3) **Convergent validity**: The results of all unstandardized and standardized weights are greater than 0.5 and the results of calculating the average extracted variance (Table 12) are greater than 0.5. Conclusion: The model achieves convergent validity.
4) **Discriminant value:** The results of testing the correlation coefficient r between component concepts show that all CRa values are greater than the critical value, or with 95% confidence, the p-values are all less than 0.05. Conclusion: The correlation coefficient of pairs of concepts is different from the value 1. Conclusion: The model achieves discriminant value.
5) **Unidirectionality:** The model has indicators consistent with testing standards and does not detect correlation between measurement errors. Conclusion: The model is unidirectional.
6) **Theoretical value:** The research model from proposal to official is synthesized and reviewed based on the practice of previous related research for organizations and businesses, so it has theoretical value. theory.

Structural equation modeling result

Results of testing the SEM model on AMOS with ML (Maximun Likehood) estimation to estimate the parameters in the model are presented in Figure 4. The results show that the theoretical model is consistent with physical survey data. Shown through the indexes: Chi-square/df= 1,222; PCLOSE= 1,000; GFI = 0.924; TLI = 0.983; CFI = 0.985 and RMSEA = 0.025.



(Source: Compiled from research results, 2023)

Fig 4: Confirmatory factor model standardized weight results

The structural equation modeling estimation results (Table 11) are used to test hypotheses H_1 to H_6. Since then, the test results show that there is no basis to reject the research hypotheses. In summary, the results of testing the linear structural model show that the theoretical model is suitable for the survey data set.

Table 11: Results of testing the correlation between concepts (Not standardized)

Correlation			Estimated	S.E.	C.R.	P	Hypothesis
RQ	←	OB	0,121	0,054	2,241	0,025	Hypothesis H_1
RQ	←	LRC	0,154	0,054	2,852	0,004	Hypothesis H_2
RQ	←	RE	0,125	0,051	2,458	0,014	Hypothesis H_3
RQ	←	HU	0,170	0,050	3,427	***	Hypothesis H_4
RQ	←	FA	0,131	0,047	2,786	0,005	Hypothesis H_5
PER	←	RQ	0,834	0,108	7,708	***	Hypothesis H_6

(***Source*:** Compiled from research results, 2023)

5. Managerial Implications

5.1 Management implications for businesses providing environmental services.

First, it is necessary to minimize behavioral uncertainty. Contractual control and adaptation play an important role in limiting opportunistic behavior (OB -> RQ = 0.121); and increased long-term relationship culture (LRC -> RQ = 0.154) caused by environmental uncertainty. Therefore, contractual coordination contributes to reducing opportunistic behavior and increasing a long-term relationship culture caused by uncertain behavior. Although contractual control has no effect on the relationship between uncertainty and opportunistic behavior as predicted, it does reflect the limited role of contracts in minimizing transaction risk.

Second, it is necessary to improve service quality. Service quality plays a controlling role in the factors affecting relationship quality (RQ). Therefore, solutions to improve service quality are essential for service providers in today's competitive business environment. Solutions to improve service quality come from customer perceptions through two main aspects: human perception (HU -> RQ = 0.170); and physical conditions of the service environment (FA -> RQ = 0.131).

5.2 Management implications for government policy

The legal environment in Vietnam is complex and constantly changing, affecting relationship-based activities and kickbacks. Businesses need to build quality relationships to operate effectively in uncertain environments. Administrative procedures also increase unwanted costs. Faced with uncertainty, businesses need to strengthen cooperation with partners. Need to improve the legal environment through business connections to enhance security and efficiency (RE -> RQ = 0.125).

5.3 Management implications for businesses using environmental services

To improve business results when using environmental services, it is necessary to strengthen the quality of the relationship with the company providing environmental services, based on factors such as trust, satisfaction and commitment (RQ -> PER = 0.834).

6. Conclusion

The study has identified the components and constituting factors in the relationship between transaction costs, service quality and relationship quality on business results of enterprises using environmental protection services. Furthermore, the author has inherited the scale results; The author constructed a scale and collected official research samples with 360 industrial customers who are businesses in industrial parks and export processing zones in Ho Chi Minh City.

Quantitative analysis results with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient analysis technique and EFA exploratory factor analysis show that the scale reaches the necessary reliability value. The results of confirmatory factor analysis CFA show the appropriateness of the official research model. SEM linear structure analysis shows that all research relationships or hypotheses are accepted; as well as determine the impact of transaction costs, service quality and relationship quality on business results of businesses using environmental protection services in Ho Chi Minh City. Finally, the author used the research results as a basis for the process of proposing management implications to improve business efficiency of businesses using environmental services in Ho Chi Minh City.

However, the research also has some limitations as follows. First, this study focuses on two main theories, transaction cost theory (TCE) and service quality theory (SQ) to identify factors affecting RQ; Further research needs to be conducted to comprehensively determine the factors affecting RQ based on other basic theories. Second, the research model is only applied in the field of environmental industry, so it is necessary to check and confirm the generality of the results in other businesses in Vietnam.

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