

Linking Brand Image, Brand Alignment Towards Sustainable Brand Behavior: Focusing on Brand Resilience in the Context of Indian Educational Institutions

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary higher education landscape, institutions are increasingly required to develop sustainable brand orientations to remain competitive and socially relevant. This study investigates the relationships among brand image, brand alignment, and sustainable brand behavior, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of brand resilience within the context of Indian higher education institutions. Drawing on perspectives from Social Identity Theory, Brand Equity Theory, Resource-Based View, and Signaling Theory, the study proposes a structured model to understand how branding dimensions translate into sustainable institutional outcomes. Primary data were collected from 416 respondents using a structured questionnaire comprising four constructs: brand image, brand alignment, brand resilience, and sustainable brand behavior. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings indicate that both brand image ($\beta = 0.251$, $p < 0.001$) and brand alignment ($\beta = 0.280$, $p < 0.001$) have significant positive effects on brand resilience. In turn, brand resilience demonstrates a strong positive influence on sustainable brand behavior ($\beta = 0.315$, $p < 0.001$). While brand image also shows a significant direct effect on sustainable brand behavior ($\beta = 0.168$, $p = 0.001$), brand alignment does not exhibit a significant direct relationship ($\beta = -0.006$, $p > 0.05$). However, both brand image ($\beta = 0.079$, $p < 0.001$) and brand alignment ($\beta = 0.088$, $p < 0.001$) exert significant indirect effects on sustainable brand behavior through brand resilience, indicating partial mediation in the former and full mediation in the latter. The model explains 17.7% of the variance in brand resilience and 15.9% in sustainable brand behavior. The results highlight brand resilience as a crucial mechanism through which institutional branding efforts are translated into sustainable outcomes. The study contributes to the higher education branding literature by demonstrating that alignment-driven strategies alone are insufficient unless supported by resilience-building capabilities. The findings offer important implications for institutional leaders seeking to design sustainable and resilient brand strategies in an increasingly dynamic educational environment.

Keywords: Brand Image; Brand Alignment; Brand Resilience; Sustainable Brand Behavior; Higher Education; PLS-SEM

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive environment, developing a strong brand image has become essential for ensuring long-term sustainability and institutional growth. Branding plays a critical role in organizational success, and private higher education institutions are increasingly recognizing its importance in attracting and retaining stakeholders (Foroudi et al., 2020). These institutions continuously strive to communicate their value, achievements, and credibility to students, parents, and society at large (Hannan, 2021b).

Over time, the focus has extended beyond building a favorable image to establishing a reputation that reflects sustainability and resilience. Modern higher education institutions are expected to demonstrate responsible

practices, transparency, and stakeholder-oriented behavior, which collectively contribute to sustainable brand development (Minh, Thi & Nguyen, 2025; Sullivan et al., 2024).

In this context, brand alignment has emerged as a key concept, referring to the consistency between institutional values, identity, and stakeholder expectations (Ind et al., 2013). Effective alignment enables institutions to engage multiple stakeholders and foster trust, thereby strengthening their overall brand positioning. At the same time, sustainability-driven branding strategies help institutions differentiate themselves and enhance long-term performance (Bose & Luo, 2011).

Another important dimension is brand resilience, which reflects the ability of an institution to maintain stakeholder

trust and credibility during challenging situations. Factors such as academic quality, institutional reputation, and stakeholder engagement contribute significantly to building resilience in higher education institutions (Charekishvili, 2015). Institutions that consistently deliver value and adapt to changing expectations are more likely to sustain their brand in the long run.

Taken together, brand image and brand alignment serve as important drivers of sustainable brand behavior, with brand resilience acting as a crucial mechanism linking these relationships. This study, therefore, examines the interconnections among these constructs to provide a clearer understanding of sustainable branding in higher education institutions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Brand Image and Brand Resilience

Resilience has become a critical capability in educational institutions, as it supports stability, performance, and long-term stakeholder trust. Prior studies indicate that resilience contributes not only to psychological well-being but also to academic success and institutional effectiveness (Borazon & Chuang, 2023; Redmond et al., 2017). Organizational resilience further strengthens internal brand equity by enhancing brand orientation, commitment, and stakeholder engagement (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010; Kuntz et al., 2017).

At the same time, brand image plays a key role in shaping stakeholder perceptions and reducing uncertainty. A strong institutional image, built through quality education, innovation, and reputation, positively influences stakeholder confidence and engagement (Keller, 2013; Nguyen et al., 2016). Since resilience is largely dependent on stakeholder trust and perception, it can be expected that a favorable brand image strengthens institutional resilience.

H1: Brand image has a positive influence on brand resilience.

2.2 Brand Alignment and Brand Resilience

Brand alignment reflects the consistency between institutional values and stakeholder expectations. In higher education, alignment is strengthened through ethical practices, stakeholder engagement, and value co-creation processes (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). When stakeholders identify with institutional values, it enhances trust, loyalty, and long-term commitment (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2008).

Such alignment not only improves brand relationships but also strengthens the institution's ability to withstand challenges. Therefore, well-aligned institutions are more likely to develop resilience by maintaining consistent stakeholder support and engagement.

H2: Brand alignment has a positive influence on brand resilience.

2.3 Brand Resilience and Sustainable Brand Behavior

Higher education institutions are increasingly integrating sustainability into their policies, curricula, and operations (Lozano et al., 2023). These practices enhance institutional reputation and encourage long-term

engagement among stakeholders (Berchin et al., 2021).

Brand resilience plays a vital role in sustaining such initiatives, as it enables institutions to maintain credibility and stakeholder trust even during uncertain conditions. Institutions with strong resilience are better positioned to implement and sustain responsible practices, thereby fostering sustainable brand behavior.

H3: Brand resilience has a positive influence on sustainable brand behavior.

2.4 Brand Image and Sustainable Brand Behavior

Brand image significantly shapes stakeholder perceptions and influences behavioral outcomes such as loyalty, engagement, and trust (Casidy & Wymer, 2015). In higher education, a strong institutional image enhances attractiveness and supports long-term positioning (Pinar et al., 2014).

Moreover, sustainability-oriented initiatives are often communicated through branding efforts, which further strengthen institutional image and stakeholder confidence (Elfert, 2019). Therefore, institutions with a strong brand image are more likely to promote and sustain responsible and sustainable practices.

H4: Brand image has a positive influence on sustainable brand behavior.

2.5 Brand Alignment and Sustainable Brand Behavior

Sustainable development in higher education requires alignment between institutional strategies, stakeholder expectations, and societal needs. Institutions that integrate sustainability into their curriculum, policies, and stakeholder engagement processes are better able to foster responsible behavior (Hopkinson & James, 2013; Selby et al., 2009).

Brand alignment ensures that sustainability values are consistently communicated and implemented across institutional activities. This alignment enhances stakeholder trust and supports the development of sustainable brand behavior.

H5: Brand alignment has a positive influence on sustainable brand behavior.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a quantitative approach to explore the relationships between brand image, brand alignment, brand resilience, and sustainable brand behavior in the context of higher education institutions. Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire consisting of 16 items measured on a five-point Likert scale, representing the four core constructs of the study. A total of 416 usable responses were collected using a non-probability sampling technique. To validate the measurement structure, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) based on principal axis factoring was first conducted (Hair et al., 2019), followed by the assessment of reliability and validity through composite reliability and average variance extracted (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The study further employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine both the measurement and structural models, given its effectiveness in handling complex predictive relationships (Hair et al., 2017). The evaluation included analysis of

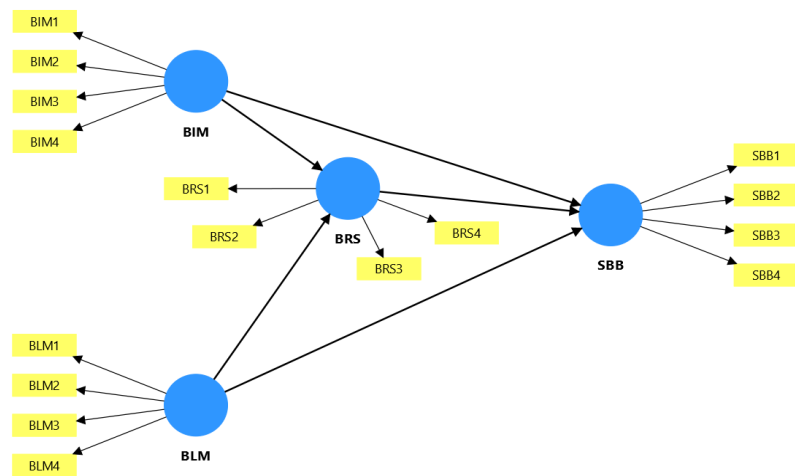
indicator loadings, assessment of discriminant validity using the HTMT criterion (Henseler et al., 2015), and checking for multicollinearity through variance inflation factors. Additionally, bootstrapping with 5000 resamples was applied to determine the significance of the structural paths and to examine the mediating role of brand resilience (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

3.1 Proposed Model

The proposed model investigates the influence of brand image and brand alignment on sustainable brand behavior, considering brand resilience as an intervening mechanism. Brand image and brand alignment are conceptualized as exogenous constructs, brand resilience as the mediator, and sustainable brand behavior as the

outcome. This framework is grounded in branding literature that emphasizes the role of perceptions and value alignment in shaping stakeholder responses (Keller, 2013; Balmer, 2017), as well as in the resource-based and resilience perspectives that highlight the importance of organizational capabilities in sustaining performance (Barney, 1991; Duchek, 2020). The model incorporates both direct and indirect relationships, capturing how branding attributes influence outcomes through adaptive capacity (Ind et al., 2013; Hatch & Schultz, 2003). The constructs are operationalized reflectively with four indicators each and validated through established multivariate techniques, ensuring robustness of the measurement and structural relationships (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016)..

Figure 1. Proposed Research Model



Source: Authors’ compilation based on survey responses

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

4.1 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory factor analysis was first carried out to assess whether the observed items grouped into the intended latent dimensions. Principal axis factoring with Promax rotation was used because the constructs were expected to be conceptually related rather than completely independent. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was 0.882, indicating that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor analysis. Bartlett’s test of sphericity was also highly significant ($\chi^2 = 4834.671$, $df = 120$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that the variables shared sufficient common variance for factor extraction.

The extraction results supported a clear four-factor solution. The first four factors had eigenvalues greater than 1, and together they explained 73.17% of the total

variance. Specifically, the first factor explained 36.80% of the variance, the second 17.29%, the third 14.44%, and the fourth 11.35%. This cumulative variance is strong for social science research and indicates that the item set captures the underlying construct structure adequately.

The communalities were also satisfactory, ranging from 0.673 to 0.778, which suggests that the extracted factors explained a substantial portion of variance in each observed item. The rotated pattern matrix showed that all 16 items loaded strongly on their intended constructs without problematic cross-loadings. BIM items loaded on one factor with loadings between 0.814 and 0.880; BLM items loaded on a separate factor with loadings between 0.818 and 0.886; BRS items loaded on their own factor with values between 0.817 and 0.886; and SBB items formed a distinct factor with loadings between 0.855 and 0.871. These results provided clear empirical support for the four-construct measurement structure

Table 1. KMO and Bartlett’s Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.882
Approx. Chi-Square		4834.671
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Df	120
	Sig.	.000

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 2. Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings ^a
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total
1	5.888	36.801	36.801	5.620	35.125	35.125	3.751
2	2.766	17.287	54.088	2.506	15.662	50.786	3.615
3	2.310	14.435	68.522	2.031	12.694	63.480	4.121
4	1.815	11.345	79.868	1.550	9.690	73.170	3.667
5	.394	2.460	82.328				
6	.346	2.161	84.489				
7	.306	1.912	86.401				
8	.293	1.831	88.232				
9	.284	1.778	90.010				
10	.279	1.746	91.756				
11	.248	1.552	93.308				
12	.234	1.460	94.768				
13	.225	1.405	96.173				
14	.214	1.340	97.513				
15	.206	1.290	98.803				
16	.192	1.197	100.000				

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

a. When factors are correlated, sums of squared loadings cannot be added to obtain a total variance.

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 3. Pattern Matrix

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
BIM1				.844
BIM2				.814
BIM3				.880
BIM4				.841
BLM1		.886		
BLM2		.868		
BLM3		.818		
BLM4		.848		
BRS1			.817	
BRS2			.886	
BRS3			.852	
BRS4			.848	
SBB1	.866			
SBB2	.855			
SBB3	.859			
SBB4	.871			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

After the exploratory phase confirmed the dimensionality of the instrument, confirmatory factor analysis was performed in AMOS to validate the four-factor measurement model. The CFA output you shared indicates that the model achieved a very good fit with the observed data. The chi-square divided by degrees of freedom was 1.403, which is comfortably below the commonly accepted threshold of 3.0. The GFI was 0.960,

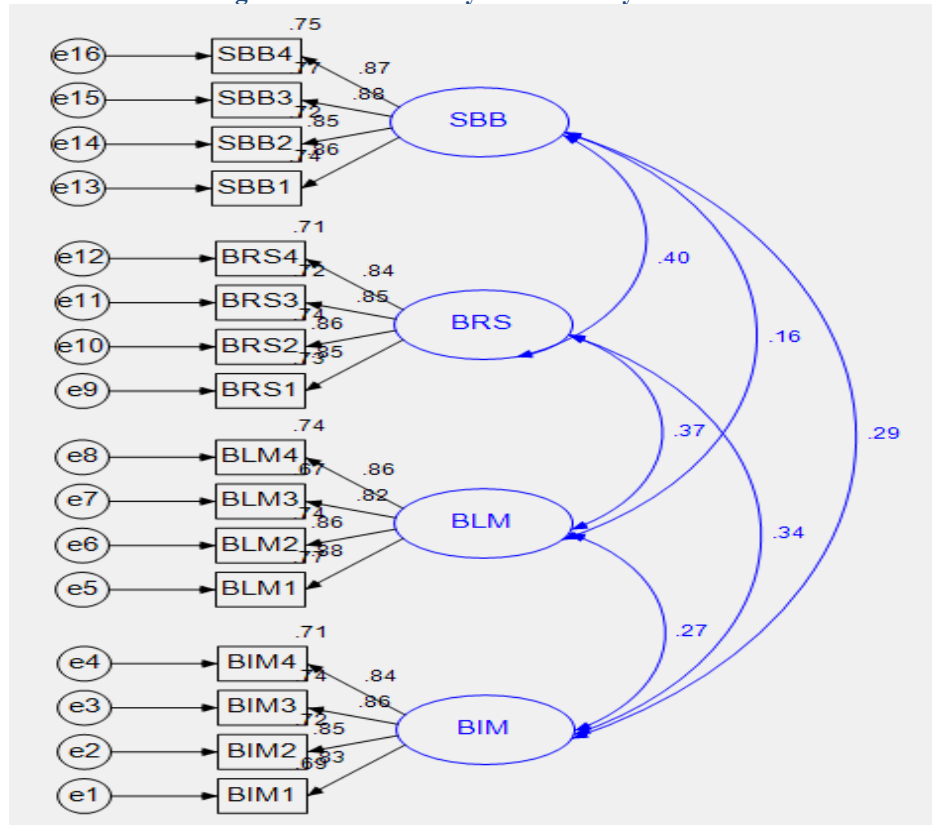
AGFI was 0.944, IFI was 0.992, TLI was 0.990, and CFI was 0.992, all of which indicate a strong fit between the hypothesized model and the sample data. The RMR was 0.056, while the RMSEA was 0.031 with PCLOSE = 0.997, further confirming that the measurement model fits the data exceptionally well.

The standardized factor loadings shown in the AMOS figure were also strong and generally clustered in the acceptable to high range. The BIM indicators loaded

between roughly 0.83 and 0.86, the BLM indicators between 0.82 and 0.86, the BRS indicators between 0.84 and 0.86, and the SBB indicators between 0.85 and 0.88. These values suggest that all indicators were meaningfully associated with their respective latent constructs. In addition, the covariance pattern among the latent variables

was theoretically coherent, with positive inter-construct relationships visible across BIM, BLM, BRS, and SBB. Overall, the CFA results confirmed that the four-factor reflective model possesses adequate factorial validity and can be taken forward for structural testing

Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model



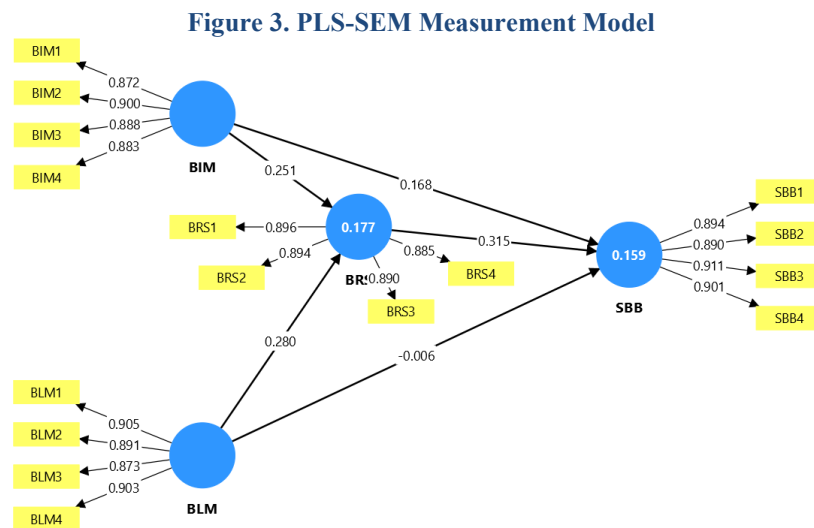
Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 4. CFA Model Fit Indices

Fit Index	Value	Interpretation
CMIN	137.463	—
df	98	—
p	0.005	—
CMIN/df	1.403	Excellent fit
RMR	0.056	Acceptable
GFI	0.96	Excellent
AGFI	0.944	Excellent
IFI	0.992	Excellent
TLI	0.99	Excellent
CFI	0.992	Excellent
RMSEA	0.031	Excellent
PCLOSE	0.997	Excellent

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

4.3 PLS-SEM Measurement Model Assessment



Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Following CFA, the model was examined again in SmartPLS to assess the reliability and validity of the reflective constructs in the variance-based framework. The outer loadings were all strong, ranging from 0.872 to 0.911, indicating that every indicator contributed satisfactorily to its corresponding construct. BIM loadings ranged from 0.872 to 0.900, BLM from 0.873 to 0.905, BRS from 0.885 to 0.896, and SBB from 0.890 to 0.911. These values are well above the minimum acceptable level and confirm indicator reliability.

Internal consistency reliability was established through Cronbach's alpha, rho_a, and composite reliability. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.909 to 0.921, while composite reliability values ranged from 0.936 to

0.944. These results demonstrate a high degree of internal consistency across all constructs. Convergent validity was also confirmed, as the average variance extracted values ranged between 0.785 and 0.808, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50.

Discriminant validity was checked using both the HTMT criterion and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. All HTMT values were well below 0.85, ranging from 0.155 to 0.398, indicating that the constructs were sufficiently distinct from one another. Likewise, the square roots of AVE for BIM (0.886), BLM (0.893), BRS (0.891), and SBB (0.899) were greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity once again. Finally, collinearity diagnostics showed that all VIF values fell between 2.549 and 3.220, suggesting that multicollinearity was not a concern in the model

Table 5. Outer Loadings

	BIM	BLM	BRS	SBB
BIM1	0.872			
BIM2	0.900			
BIM3	0.888			
BIM4	0.883			
BLM1		0.905		
BLM2		0.891		
BLM3		0.873		
BLM4		0.903		
BRS1			0.896	
BRS2			0.894	
BRS3			0.890	
BRS4			0.885	
SBB1				0.894
SBB2				0.890
SBB3				0.911
SBB4				0.901

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 6. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BIM	0.909	0.920	0.936	0.785
BLM	0.916	0.920	0.940	0.798
BRS	0.914	0.917	0.939	0.795
SBB	0.921	0.924	0.944	0.808

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 7. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Construct Pair	HTMT
BIM–BLM	0.27
BIM–BRS	0.346
BIM–SBB	0.288
BLM–BRS	0.372
BLM–SBB	0.155
BRS–SBB	0.398

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 8. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Construct	BIM	BLM	BRS	SBB
BIM	0.886			
BLM	0.249	0.893		
BRS	0.321	0.343	0.891	
SBB	0.267	0.144	0.367	0.899

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Table 9. Collinearity Statistics

Indicator	VIF
BIM1	2.608
BIM2	2.692
BIM3	2.903
BIM4	2.703
BLM1	3.22
BLM2	2.952
BLM3	2.549
BLM4	2.988
BRS1	2.773
BRS2	2.983
BRS3	2.804
BRS4	2.752
SBB1	2.983
SBB2	2.877
SBB3	3.177
SBB4	3.077

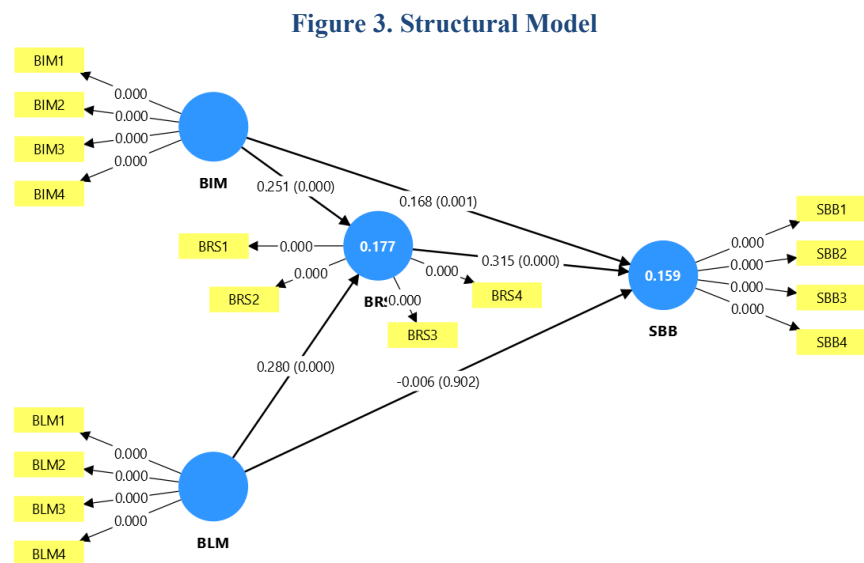
Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

4.4 Structural Model Results

After establishing the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was assessed using bootstrapping with 5000 resamples. The model explained 17.7% of the variance in Brand Resilience and 15.9% of the variance in Sustainable Brand Behavior. The adjusted R^2 values were 0.173 for BRS and 0.153 for SBB, indicating modest but acceptable explanatory power for behavioral research.

The path estimates showed that Brand Image had a significant positive effect on Brand Resilience ($\beta = 0.251$, $t = 5.550$, $p < 0.001$), thereby supporting H1. Similarly, Brand Alignment exerted a significant positive effect on Brand Resilience ($\beta = 0.280$, $t = 6.352$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H2. Brand Resilience also showed a significant positive effect on Sustainable Brand Behavior ($\beta = 0.315$, $t = 6.354$, $p < 0.001$), which supports H3. In addition, Brand Image had a significant direct effect on Sustainable Brand Behavior ($\beta = 0.168$, $t = 3.272$, $p = 0.001$),

supporting H4. However, Brand Alignment did not have a significant direct effect on Sustainable Brand Behavior ($\beta = -0.006$, $t = 0.123$, $p = 0.902$), leading to the rejection of H5



Source: Authors’ compilation based on survey responses

Table 10. Coefficient of Determination

Endogenous Construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²
BRS	0.177	0.173
SBB	0.159	0.153

Source: Authors’ compilation based on survey responses

Table 11. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Path	Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	BIM → BRS	0.251	5.55	0	Supported
H2	BLM → BRS	0.28	6.352	0	Supported
H3	BRS → SBB	0.315	6.354	0	Supported
H4	BIM → SBB	0.168	3.272	0.001	Supported
H5	BLM → SBB	-0.006	0.123	0.902	Not supported

Source: Authors’ compilation based on survey responses

4.5 Mediation Analysis

The mediating role of Brand Resilience was then examined through the indirect effects. The findings showed that the indirect effect of Brand Image on Sustainable Brand Behavior through Brand Resilience was significant ($\beta = 0.079$, $t = 3.885$, $p < 0.001$). Since the direct effect of BIM on SBB remained significant, this indicates partial mediation.

The indirect effect of Brand Alignment on Sustainable Brand Behavior through Brand Resilience was also significant ($\beta = 0.088$, $t = 4.571$, $p < 0.001$). However, because the direct path from BLM to SBB was not significant, this result indicates full mediation. In other words, Brand Alignment does not directly drive Sustainable Brand Behavior; rather, its influence operates entirely through Brand Resilience. This is one of the most meaningful findings of the study.

Table 12. Indirect Effects and Mediation Results

Indirect Path	Beta	t-value	p-value	Mediation Type
BIM → BRS → SBB	0.079	3.885	0	Partial mediation
BLM → BRS → SBB	0.088	4.571	0	Full mediation

Source: Authors’ compilation based on survey responses

Table 13. Total Effects

Path	Beta	t-value	p-value
BIM → BRS	0.251	5.55	0
BIM → SBB	0.247	5.035	0
BLM → BRS	0.28	6.352	0
BLM → SBB	0.082	1.676	0.094
BRS → SBB	0.315	6.354	0

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Predictive Relevance

The model's predictive relevance was assessed using PLS-Predict. The Q^2_{predict} values were 0.167 for Brand Resilience and 0.067 for Sustainable Brand Behavior,

both of which are greater than zero. This indicates that the model has predictive relevance for both endogenous constructs. The associated RMSE and MAE values also remained within acceptable ranges, supporting the model's practical usefulness

Table 14. PLS-Predict Summary

Construct	Q^2_{predict}	RMSE	MAE
BRS	0.167	0.916	0.771
SBB	0.067	0.969	0.828

Source: Authors' compilation based on survey responses

Taken together, the findings offer robust empirical support for the proposed four-construct framework. The exploratory factor analysis confirmed the distinctiveness of the underlying dimensions, while the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated a strong model fit and adequate factorial validity, consistent with recommended measurement validation practices (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). The structural model results further indicate that both brand image and brand alignment significantly enhance brand resilience, which subsequently exerts a meaningful influence on sustainable brand behavior. This aligns with prior research suggesting that positive brand perceptions and value congruence strengthen institutional adaptability and stakeholder trust (Foroudi et al., 2020; Balmer, 2017). In addition, brand image retains a direct effect on sustainable brand behavior, reinforcing its role as a key driver of stakeholder-oriented outcomes (Keller, 2013). However, the absence of a direct effect of brand alignment on sustainable brand behavior, coupled with a significant indirect pathway through brand resilience, highlights a more nuanced mechanism. Specifically, it suggests that alignment alone may not be sufficient unless it is translated into resilience capabilities that enable institutions to sustain their brand value over time (Barney, 1991; Duchek, 2020). Therefore, brand resilience emerges as a central mediating mechanism that converts alignment-based institutional values into sustained behavioral outcomes, thereby reinforcing the strategic importance of resilience in contemporary branding frameworks.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings show that both brand image and brand alignment strengthen brand resilience, which in turn drives sustainable brand behavior. The positive effect of

brand image on resilience supports the idea that favorable brand perceptions reduce uncertainty and build stakeholder confidence (Keller, 2013; Erdem & Swait, 1998). Similarly, the significant role of brand alignment indicates that consistency between institutional values and stakeholder expectations enhances trust and internal coherence (Balmer, 2017; Ind et al., 2013).

Brand resilience emerged as the key mechanism linking branding efforts to outcomes, reinforcing the view that adaptive capability is central to sustaining performance (Duchek, 2020). Notably, while brand image directly influences sustainable brand behavior, brand alignment does not. Instead, its effect is fully mediated through resilience. This suggests that alignment alone is insufficient unless supported by the institution's capacity to respond and adapt. Such a pattern aligns with the resource-based view, where strategic resources must be effectively deployed to generate outcomes (Barney, 1991).

Overall, the results highlight that resilience plays a pivotal role in converting branding efforts into sustainable outcomes within higher education.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reaffirm that sustainable brand behavior in higher education is not solely a function of brand positioning, but is critically shaped by the institution's capacity to remain resilient in a dynamic and uncertain environment. While brand image continues to play a direct and significant role in influencing sustainable outcomes, brand alignment alone does not translate into behavioral impact unless it is effectively channelled through brand resilience. This highlights that alignment, although necessary, becomes meaningful only when supported by adaptive and responsive institutional capabilities.

By positioning brand resilience as a central mechanism, the study extends existing branding literature and offers a more nuanced understanding of how institutional values and perceptions are transformed into sustainable outcomes (Barney, 1991; Ducheck, 2020). The results suggest that resilience operates as a strategic capability that enables institutions to absorb disruptions, maintain stakeholder trust, and sustain their brand value over time. In this sense, resilience moves beyond being a supportive attribute and emerges as a core driver of sustainable brand behavior.

From a practical perspective, the findings underline the need for higher education institutions to adopt a more integrated approach to branding. Efforts aimed at enhancing brand image and ensuring alignment with stakeholder expectations must be complemented by

deliberate investments in resilience-building processes, including adaptive leadership, stakeholder engagement, and continuous innovation. Institutions that successfully integrate these dimensions are more likely to achieve long-term sustainability and competitive advantage in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

Despite its contributions, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design and reliance on perceptual data. Future research may build on these findings by adopting longitudinal approaches, incorporating multi-stakeholder perspectives, and examining additional contextual or moderating factors. Such extensions would further deepen understanding of how branding and resilience interact to shape sustainable outcomes in higher education

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