

Internal Branding Practices and Organizational Citizenship Behavior as Antecedents of Corporate Sustainability Performance: An Empirical Test using a Large Food Processing Company in the Philippines

Miguel Carlos A. Mendoza, Luis Antonio B. Orosa, Raymond D. Paderna, Jose Gabriel S. Recto

De La Salle University

miko.mendoza37@gmail.com

luisantonioorosa@gmail.com

raymond.paderna@dlsu.edu.ph

gaby.recto@gmail.com

Abstract

Experts argue that a bottom-up approach is essential in championing a corporate sustainability agenda since employees who truly believe in a cause are better ambassadors of sustainability compared to those who are merely forced to comply. Studies also show that employees who demonstrate citizenship behaviors genuinely believe in the firm's ethos and will go beyond the call of duty to help the company in its sustainability advocacies. To validate these claims, we polled 279 employees of a large food processing company in order to assess the mediating effect of organizational citizenship behavior on the hypothesized internal branding - corporate sustainability performance nexus. A company executive and a seasoned human resource management practitioner were also invited to cross-validate the survey results through in-depth interviews. After performing a mediation analysis, it was revealed that internal branding practices significantly predicted organizational citizenship behavior and corporate sustainability performance. Results also confirmed that internal branding practices can have either a direct or indirect effect on corporate sustainability performance, an outcome which galvanized the mediating role of organizational citizenship behavior. Since the insights of both interviewees also corroborated survey results, *a priori* knowledge about the constructs was ultimately validated. The company was thus recommended (a) to maintain the high quality of its internal branding practices, (b) to keep the momentum which has so far successfully propelled their corporate sustainability initiatives, and (c) to further intensify employee volunteerism.

Key Words: internal branding; organizational citizenship behavior; corporate sustainability performance

Introduction

Since the Brundtland Report was released in 1987, the concept of *sustainability* has been used by many organizations particularly in their efforts to redesign core business practices that create positive as well as lasting impact across many areas of society and the planet (Dyllick and Muff, 2015). Operationalizing a sustainability agenda into doable business practices which address multiple bottom lines is not easy and companies need all the help they can get in accomplishing the task. Could employees, then, be called upon to help perform this arduous task? This initial query provided the impetus for our team to conduct an investigation where the primary goal was to test whether the internal branding practices of a large food processing company in the Philippines as well as the organizational citizenship behavior demonstrated by its employees can be validated as antecedents of its corporate sustainability performance.

Specifically, the research questions we addressed are the following:

1. Does the organizational citizenship behavior of employees in a large food processing company mediate the link between the firm's internal branding practices and its corporate sustainability performance?
2. What is the quality of internal branding practices performed in the firm?
3. To what extent is organizational citizenship behavior demonstrated by the firm's employees?
4. What is the quality of the firm's corporate sustainability performance?
5. Is the firm's corporate sustainability performance significantly influenced by its internal branding practices?
6. Is the organizational citizenship behavior demonstrated by the firm's employees affected by its internal branding practices?
7. Is the firm's corporate sustainability performance influenced by both its internal branding practices and by the organizational citizenship behavior demonstrated by its employees?
8. What specific recommendations can be offered in order for the company to (a) enhance its internal branding practices, (b) continuously improve its corporate sustainability performance, and (c) heighten organizational citizenship behavior demonstrated by their employees?

Literature Review

Internal Branding

Studies that focus on the internal branding phenomenon prove that its intended outcome is to enhance employee involvement in programs which their employers deem important. It is also a process of ensuring that employees embrace the values embedded in the company's products and services so that they can help in delivering brand promises to the firm's external stakeholders (Biedenbach & Manzhynski, 2016). In order for employees to become natural "brand ambassadors" therefore, their core values must be closely aligned with those espoused by the company through its brand.

There are four dimensions of internal branding initially proposed by Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010) and further refined by Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016): internal brand commitment, brand orientation, internal brand knowledge, and internal brand involvement. *Internal brand commitment* according to Fernandez-Lores, Gavilan, Avello, & Blasco (2015) is reflected in the unwavering involvement of employees towards the realization of organizational goals as well as in the high level of interest they manifest in accomplishing work-related tasks. *Brand orientation* is typified as a strategy which allows the brand to become the center around which the organization's processes are created via thoughtful interactions between all stakeholders (Sepulcri, L., Mainardes, E., & Marchiori, D., 2020). *Internal brand knowledge* consists of a brand node linked with a variety of associations that is in the memory. The organization of brand nodes in an individual's memory is said to determine how the brand is remembered which in effect influences an individual's behavior to decisions relating to the brand (King, 2010). Lastly, *internal brand involvement* refers to the extent at which employees are encouraged to actively participate in brand management because of its perceived "relevance" to their lives. (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010).

Organizational Citizenship Behaviour

Colloquially interpreted as "going above and beyond what is asked of" [an individual], the previously undervalued concept of organizational citizenship behavior is now gaining popularity since its conception by Organ in 1988. Following seminal works by Smith, Organ, & Near (1983), Graham (1991) as well as by Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Moorman, & Fetter (1990), contemporary scholars Naqshbandi, Singh, & Ma (2016) provided a modern discussion on the five classic dimensions of organizational citizenship behavior. Their research not only linked organizational citizenship behavior to innovation but also further cemented the role played by organizational citizenship behavior in inspiring others to voluntarily perform actions that will benefit the whole firm. As referenced by Sharma & Jain (2014), Organ (1988) identified the archetypical measures of voluntary behavior and how each can contribute to organizational success: *altruism* which is voluntary behavior directed towards helping colleagues with work; *conscientiousness* being the thoughtful use of time to enhance the efficiency of oneself and the team; *sportsmanship* refers to an increase in the amount of time spent by employees on organizational endeavors and less time spent on whining, complaining and griping; *courtesy* which prompts employees to give advance notices, timely reminders, appropriate information, and performing thoughtful as well as considerate actions towards one another; and *civic virtue* where employees voluntarily serve on committees and attend functions that will benefit not only themselves but the firm as a whole.

Sustainability Performance

It was John Elkington, founder of the British consultancy group aptly named *SustainAbility*, who built the foundation for the *Triple Bottom Line* concept. The Triple Bottom Line is composed of three varied goals which a company seeks to attain in its journey towards sustainability. The first bottom line is *profit*, the long-established measure for both business success and now sustainability. The second is the *people* account of a company. This measures the extent to which a company takes care not only of its own employees but also of its other stakeholders within the community at large. The third measure *planet* evaluates the sense of

responsibility demonstrated by the company towards its resource consumption, waste disposal, and overall environmental stewardship (Elkington, 2009).

Like many popular business concepts which evolved through time, the dimensions to measure sustainability has also been updated and enhanced by scholars. Brockett and Rezaee (2012) proposed an acclaimed multi-dimensional approach to measure corporate sustainability which has so far been well-received by business owners and fellow scholars alike (Rezaee & Homayoun, 2016). The degree to which the 5 levels of sustainability are attained can be measured through several key performance indicators (KPIs) suggested by the team. Wong, Chong, Chew, Tay, & Mohamed (2018) echoed the importance of selecting the right KPIs since they will become critical yardsticks upon which business sustainability is validated. *Economic sustainability* is concerned with the creation of shareholder value through the firm's performance while practicing sustainability. In a collaborative research between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Boston Consulting Group which was reported during the 3rd annual Sustainability and Innovation Global Executive Study, the collaborators disclosed that sustainable businesses appear to be quite profitable. The study even shows that a business not practicing sustainability may experience a decrease in profits over the long term (Kaye, 2012). The *governance dimension* includes the set of responsibilities and practices exercised by the board and its executive personnel (UN Global Impact & IFC, 2009). Meanwhile, *environmental sustainability* is the long-term commitment of a company to preserve ecosystem quality so that a superior and healthier environment can be left for future generations to enjoy (Brockett & Rezaee, 2012; Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). The *social dimension of sustainability* is concerned with a firm's wherewithal to fulfill its civic duty towards the community where it operates. This can be manifested through practices which foster community involvement and corporate social responsibility (Valdes-Vasquez & Klotz, 2011). Lastly, the *ethical aspect of sustainability* looks at the firm's propensity to incorporate moral principles, best practices, and lawful standards into their business operations (Brockett & Rezaee, 2012).

In closing, Shokravi & Kurnia (2014) argues that there is no approach in the measurement of sustainability performance that tackles the construct as a *whole* but rather a *whole-systems* understanding must be adopted so that the *interconnectedness* of its component parts must be fully appreciated. Only through the presence of all dimensions can true sustainability be reached by an entity (Bueno, Lima, Medina, & Ricohermoso, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The assignment of organizational citizenship behavior as the variable which could explain the internal branding - sustainability performance linkage is the linchpin of this research. Our decision to test mediation through organizational citizenship behavior was reached by reviewing anecdotal evidence gleaned from separate studies. Providing the initial hint were Vallaster and Lindgreen (2012) as well as Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) who closely followed the work of Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010). Both studies highlighted the need for employees to be aware of their employer's values, beliefs, and advocacies so that they can become enthusiastic volunteers in the propagation of such values. However, Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) went further by revealing that effective internal branding practices can also support the implementation of

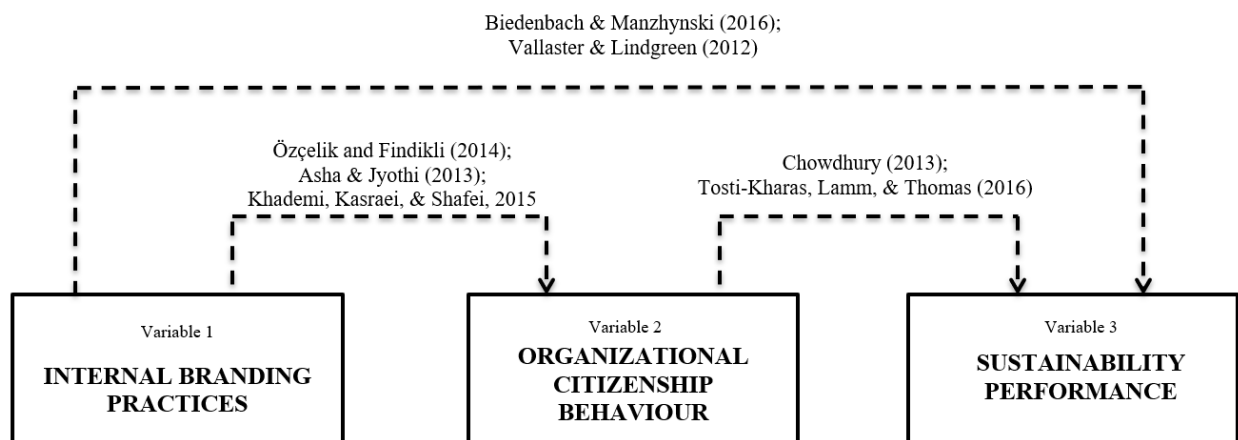
sustainability programs within the company. Employees who are more aware, involved and committed to their corporate brand have been observed to openly participate in championing their employer's sustainability programs. These findings appear to match the results of separate studies conducted by Kotler (2011), as well as by Kumar and Christodouloupoulou (2014).

Additional clues regarding the efficacy of organizational citizenship behavior as a mediator in this case were provided by Özçelik and Fındıklı (2014), Asha and Jyothi (2013), as well as Khademi, Kasraei, & Shafei (2015). Their findings showed that there is a significant association between internal branding and organizational citizenship behavior. It appears then that the more committed the employees are to the brand, the more citizenship behaviors they demonstrated through discretionary actions within the organization.

Finally, separate investigations conducted by Chowdhury (2013) and Tosti-Kharas, Lamm and Thomas (2016) sealed the case for us that organizational citizenship behavior can be tested as a possible mediator to the internal branding – sustainability linkage. The authors argued that a bottom-up approach is essential in successfully pushing for a corporate sustainability agenda since employees who truly believe in a cause are better ambassadors of sustainability than those who were merely forced to comply. They also expressed that employees who demonstrate citizenship behaviors genuinely believe in the company's sustainability ethos and are easily primed to become advocates themselves. Figure 1 is a visual map of the process we went through in identifying the variables and their placement in the study.

Figure 1

Conceptual model to extrapolate the role of Organizational Citizenship Behavior as mediator between Internal Branding and Corporate Sustainability Performance



While the studies mentioned in this section provided the rationale for assigning organizational citizenship behavior as a mediating variable to test the internal branding - sustainability performance nexus, a few more studies were used to ground this research. For instance, the investigation completed by Naqshbandi et al. (2016) managed to capture every nuance of organizational citizenship behavior construct but it did so in the Asian context. Following the seminal work of Organ (1988) and also by Podsakoff et al. (1990), they

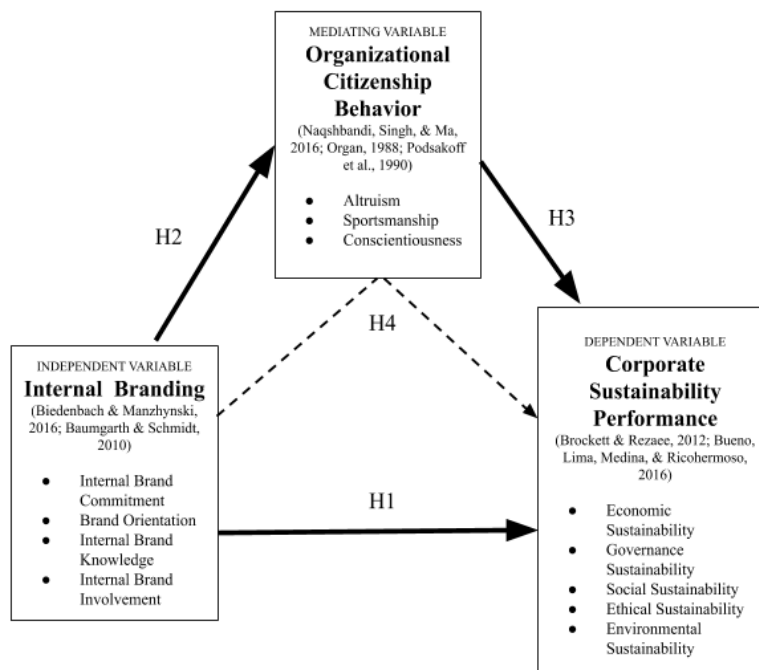
explored the impact of organizational citizenship behavior on open innovation using the Malaysian high-tech sector as a research locale. But it was the study's method of measuring organizational citizenship behavior that caught the team's attention since it was simplified and adapted for use in an Asian context.

Completing our theoretical framework is the sustainability model proposed by Brockett and Rezaee (2012). While both Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) as well as Chowdhury (2013) used excellent models to assess sustainability performance in their respective studies, we believe that the assessment tools recommended by Brockett and Rezaee (2012) to measure sustainability performance are clearer, more practical, and highly adaptable for use in a variety of corporate settings. It is not surprising then that their book entitled "Corporate Sustainability" won the 2013 Gold Award in the Business Ethics Category of the Axiom Business Book Awards and their multidimensional sustainability framework was endorsed by the *Global Reporting Initiative*, the *International Integrated Reporting Council*, and the *Sustainability Accounting Standards Board* (Rezaee & Homayoun, 2016).

The final operational model in Figure 2 shows the most detailed representation of the variables under investigation including the measures to be used in assessing the constructs. In deciding which measures to employ in assessing the variables, the team considered (a) the research questions, (b) current literature regarding the constructs, and (c) the prevailing conditions in the research locale where the primary investigation was conducted.

Figure 2

Final operational model to measure the contribution of Organizational Citizenship Behavior as mediator to the hypothesized link between Internal Branding and Corporate Sustainability Performance



Hypotheses of the Study

For this investigation, we tested four pairs of hypothesis statements which are largely grounded on the results of empirical studies completed by the following scholars: (a) Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) who revealed that effective internal branding practices can potentially support the implementation of sustainability programs within the company, (b) Özçelik and Fındıklı (2014) who suggested that there is a significant association between internal branding and organizational citizenship behavior, and (c) Chowdhury (2013) who argues that a bottom-up approach is essential in successfully pushing for a corporate sustainability agenda since employees who truly believe in a cause are better ambassadors of sustainability than if they were merely being forced to comply.

- H₁*: The firm's internal branding practices significantly influence its corporate sustainability performance.
- H₂*: The company's internal branding practices significantly influence its employee's organizational citizenship behavior.
- H₃*: Internal branding practices and organizational citizenship behavior significantly influence the corporate sustainability performance of the firm.
- H₄*: Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the link between the firm's internal branding practices and its corporate sustainability performance

Methodology

Methods of Data Collection

A sample of 316 employees were the primary respondents for this study and each were given an instrument containing 44 items divided into 3 sections. 18 items are listed in Section 1 of the survey instrument and they were clustered around the 4 dimensions to measure the independent variable *internal branding*. All items and dimensions in this section were adapted from a study completed by Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) who closely followed the work of Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010). A 5-point Likert scale was provided so that survey respondents can choose the extent to which they either agree or disagree with the items. Finally, Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) reported a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.85, 0.86, 0.88, and 0.88 for items under the dimensions of internal brand commitment, brand orientation, internal brand knowledge, and internal brand involvement respectively.

Meanwhile, items under Section 2 of the self-administered questionnaire measure the study's mediating variable *organizational citizenship behavior*. The dimensions of *altruism*, *sportsmanship*, and *conscientiousness* are classic measures of organizational citizenship behavior and they have been adapted by the team from the seminal work of Organ (1988). Further studies conducted years later by Podsakoff et al. (1990), and Naqshbandi et al. (2016) yielded a more concise framework with fewer dimensions and it was eventually adapted by the researchers for this section of the instrument. A 5-point Likert scale was provided so that respondents can indicate the level of their agreement or disagreement to the items listed. Moreover, the items to measure this variable appear to be reliable since the composite reliability was pegged at 0.846 for those

under the altruism dimension, 0.910 for those clustered around sportsmanship, and 0.855 for items under the conscientiousness dimension.

Finally, Section 3 of the survey instrument contains items measuring the five dimensions of corporate sustainability performance developed by Brockett and Rezaee (2012) and adapted for use in the Philippine setting by researchers Bueno et al. (2016). A 5-point Likert scale is again provided to give the survey respondents an opportunity to express their agreement or disagreement to the 15 items appraising the corporate sustainability performance of the company. A reliability test was conducted by Bueno et al., (2016) from whom the researchers adapted the survey items and the aggregated Cronbach's alpha for all items across the 5 sustainability dimensions is 0.86.

In keeping with the protocol required by a sequential explanatory mixed method research design, interviews were conducted after the survey so that the study has one quantitative strand and at least one qualitative strand (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The expert interviews subsequently explained then validated both *a priori* knowledge and survey results (See Appendix B).

Reliability of Primary Research Instrument

In addition to the reliability coefficients provided by the authors who developed the items used in this study's survey instrument, the team also pretested the questionnaire using the employees of a medium-sized accounting firm based in Metro Manila. The site for the pretest is a known provider of excellent accounting services to various businesses throughout the Philippines since 2008. The pretest generated a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96 for items measuring the internal branding practices construct, 0.81 for those assessing organizational citizenship behavior, and 0.93 for items appraising sustainability performance. The overall reliability coefficient when all items are combined was reported to be 0.96.

Discussion of Results

Results of Descriptive Statistics

Out of 316 questionnaires deployed, 279 employees returned forms which were deemed useable for the study. This number represents a response rate of 88% which is considerably higher than the expected norm of 55.6% for internal respondents according to Baruch (1999) and 52.7% suggested years later by Baruch and Holtom (2008).

After performing descriptive statistics, it was revealed that (a) the overall quality of internal branding practices is *excellent* ($\bar{x} = 4.38$), (b) organizational citizenship behavior is manifested to a *great extent* ($\bar{x} = 4.27$), and (c) the overall quality of corporate sustainability performance is likewise *excellent* ($\bar{x} = 4.31$).

The company executive invited to comment on the results was largely unsurprised at these outcomes, citing the company's steadfast efforts to integrate internal branding practices in everything they do. Furthermore, he validated the results pertaining to organizational citizenship behavior with observable instances which prove that the spirit of volunteerism is alive and well in

the company. He was also unsurprised at the perceived excellence of their sustainability performance, alluding to management's serious efforts in converting the company into a truly sustainable food processing conglomerate.

Meanwhile, the seasoned HR practitioner who was also invited to corroborate the survey findings was unfazed by the findings. She believes that large business establishments such as the one used for this study take internal branding seriously since employees are known to be excellent conduits for conveying the brand's value and corporate ethos. Furthermore, she believes that the citizenship behavior manifested by the respondents can be attributed to the sizeable investments made by large companies in keeping their employees motivated which subsequently drives them to do more than what is expected. She also believes that the desire for international certification and global accreditation typically drives large companies to convert traditional business practices into more sustainable ones.

Results of Inferential Statistics

Following the mediation model developed by Baron and Kenny (1986) and refined by Kenny (2018), the following outcomes were generated:

Internal branding practices significantly influenced corporate sustainability performance ($p < 0.001$).

Table 1

Summary of simple regression results with corporate sustainability performance as outcome variable

Model	<i>B</i>	Multiple <i>R</i>	<i>p</i>	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²
Constant	1.339	-	< 0.001	
Internal Branding Practices	0.677	0.681	< 0.001	0.462

After performing a causal test using internal branding practices as the lone predictor of sustainability performance, a significant regression equation was revealed ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, the regression output shown in Table 1 indicates that a sizeable 46.2% of variances in sustainability performance can be explained by the overall quality of internal branding practices. The remaining drivers of sustainability which are unaccounted for by internal branding practices may be waste reduction, innovation, and value-creation (Dyllick & Muff, 2015) as well as a company's genuine mindfulness for the environment, community, society, and the economy (Brockett and Rezaee, 2012).

This significant positive association confirms the study of Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) who closely followed the previous work of Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010). Both studies highlighted the need for employees to be aware of their employer's values, beliefs, and advocacies so that they can become willing partners in the propagation of such values. However, Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016) went further by revealing that effective internal branding practices can potentially support the implementation of sustainability programs within the company. Employees

who are more aware, involved and committed to their corporate brand have been observed to openly participate in championing their employer's sustainability programs. These findings appear to match the results of separate studies conducted by Kotler (2011), as well as by Kumar and Christodouloupoulou (2014).

Internal branding practices significantly influenced organizational citizenship behavior ($p < 0.001$).

Table 2

Summary of simple regression results with organizational citizenship behavior as outcome variable

Model	<i>B</i>	Multiple <i>R</i>	<i>p</i>	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²
Constant	2.626	-	< 0.001	
Internal Branding Practices	0.374	0.465	< 0.001	0.214

When a causal test using internal branding practices as the lone predictor of organizational citizenship behavior was performed, another significant regression equation was obtained ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, the regression output shown in Table 2 indicates that 21.4% of variances in organizational citizenship behavior can be explained by the company's overall quality of internal branding practices. This significant positive association confirms the results of Özçelik and Findikli's (2014) study which revealed that employees who were more committed to their company's brand were also more likely to go above and beyond what they were expected to do for the firm and towards their co-workers.

Both internal branding practices ($p < 0.001$) and organizational citizenship behavior ($p < 0.001$) significantly influenced sustainability performance. Since both remained as significant predictors of sustainability performance, partial mediation is supported in the hypothesized tripartite association between the constructs.

Table 3

Summary of multiple linear regression results with corporate sustainability performance as outcome variable

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>p</i>	Multiple <i>R</i>	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²
Regression Equation	-	< 0.001	0.704	0.492
Intercept	0.689	< 0.01	-	-
Internal Branding Practices	0.584	< 0.001	-	-
Organizational Citizenship Behavior	0.247	< 0.001	-	-

After performing a causal test using internal branding practices and organizational citizenship behavior as predictors of sustainability performance, another significant regression

equation emerged ($p < 0.001$). Moreover, the regression output shown in Table 3 indicates that nearly half of variances in sustainability performance can be explained by the firm's overall quality of internal branding practices as well as the organizational citizenship behavior demonstrated by the employees.

Both interviewees validated the results of the causal analysis. The company executive cited his actual company experience and the HR expert mentioned her long industry practice as anchors for their insights. Both believe that an employee's support for a brand obtained through well-designed branding efforts complements the voluntary behaviors they demonstrate in amplifying the sustainability performance of an organization.

Hypothesis Testing

The table below summarizes the decisions that have been reached by the researchers after subjecting the survey results to the appropriate statistical analysis:

Table 4

Summary of Hypothesis Testing

HYPOTHESIS	<i>p</i> -VALUE	DECISION
<i>H₁</i> : The company's internal branding practices significantly influence its sustainability performance.	$p < 0.001$	Accept hypothesis
<i>H₂</i> : The company's internal branding practices significantly influences its employee's organizational citizenship behavior.	$p < 0.001$	Accept hypothesis
<i>H₃</i> : Internal branding practices and organizational citizenship behavior significantly influence the sustainability performance of the firm.	$p < 0.001$	Accept hypothesis
<i>H₄</i> : Organizational citizenship behavior mediates the link between internal branding practices and sustainability performance of the firm.	$p < 0.001$	Accept hypothesis

Results of the group's hypothesis testing are all consistent with the findings of the following: (a) Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016), Vallaster and Lindgreen (2012) who revealed that effective internal branding practices can potentially support the implementation of sustainability programs within a company; (b) Özçelik and Fındıklı (2014), Asha and Jyothi (2013), Khademi, Kasraei, and Shafei (2015) who suggested that there is a significant association between internal branding and organizational citizenship behavior; and (c) Chowdhury (2013), Tosti-Kharas, Lamm, & Thomas (2016) who argued that a bottom-up approach is essential in successfully pushing for a corporate sustainability agenda since employees who truly believe in a

cause are better ambassadors of sustainability compared to those who are merely being forced to comply.

The mediation model we tested and subsequently validated appears to give some credence to anecdotal evidence discussed earlier in Section 2. Finding a *direct* path for internal branding practices towards sustainability and an *indirect* path through organizational citizenship behavior may be our study's main contribution to the literature.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The outcome of our study proves that the long march towards true sustainability can be made easier if employees become willing partners in maximizing wealth for all stakeholders while co-managing the firm's social and environmental footprint. Results also show that employees who are committed to their company's brand are easily motivated to perform actions beyond the call of duty. They become willing partners in activities and programs which champion the company's advocacies. Employees whose personal values are aligned with the brand they represent can become enthusiastic supporters of and tireless volunteers for company-wide sustainability initiatives. In addition to being consistent with recent literature, our findings can also have stark implications for business owners who may find the administrative and financial costs of building a sustainable business to be prohibitively high (Thompson, 2014). Company retrofitting, information campaigns, and training programs aimed at educating employees about the company's sustainability programs are effective albeit costly ways of getting employees on board (Rubbens, 2018). A less expensive option which we argue is just as effective would be to bolster sustainability goals by aligning employee values with the brand they represent so that their support and commitment can come naturally (Miranda, 2018; Burnes & Jackson, 2011).

Key Recommendations

The company was found to excel in almost all areas of the study. The emerging challenge as they move forward is to *retain their clarity of purpose* and *innate strength* so that the highest standards of sustainability can continuously be upheld either through excellent internal branding practices, or steadfast employee citizenship, or via other sustainability drivers not covered by this study. The implementation of these strategies can be done by devising practical and doable ways of integrating sustainability across all business functions. Doing this will give all organizational members the chance to contribute towards the attainment of sustainability-related goals.

The company's internal branding practices were designed for the purpose of enhancing the level of appreciation employees have over the company's brand value. If this attempt by the firm is successful, then its employees are expected to become willing brand ambassadors who vigorously promote the company and its products to both their social as well as professional networks. The employees are thus encouraged to be more receptive to the significant efforts made by the firm in obtaining their commitment and sharing their values so that both can work towards a common goal. Volunteering their expertise and insider knowledge on how to best communicate the firm's brand to all of its stakeholders customizes the internal branding platform and makes the campaign more appropriate for its targeted recipients. Moreover, broadening the extent and reach of the firm's internal branding practices can further intensify the brand ownership and loyalty

which employees can develop over time. Involving the employees in the corporate branding process by asking what the company brand means to them will allow employees to develop a deeper sense of ownership for the brand; *the next creative branding idea can in fact come from the employees themselves*. Communicating brand initiatives and encouraging employees to talk about their value as well as their best features also creates a brand identity that feels more authentic. It is likewise important to ensure that the values of present and future employees are aligned with the company's so that everyone is driven by a common aspiration. Lastly, employees can be given more opportunities to volunteer and perform random acts of charity or kindness towards others so that their organizational citizenship behaviors can be effectively utilized in attaining, at least, *social sustainability* initiatives.

Areas for Future Study

Literature we reviewed has shown that the seeming complexity of internal brand management makes it a more viable proposition for large, profitable firms. But given the sizable economic contributions made by startups as well as by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the Philippines and beyond, calls for further investigations about their branding strategies (if any) are emerging. Scholarly discourse on this subject however is “unclear, scattered, and relatively scant” according to Odoom, Narteh, and Boateng (2018). This is hardly surprising since small business owners are typically more focused on revenue generation, market share growth, or even just business survival in many instances. Further studies on the development of internal branding strategies for MSMEs is a possible research avenue which can test the propensity of brand-engaged employees to attract better business and increase profits for small businesses.

Additionally, researchers are also encouraged to improve the primary research instrument used in our study by performing either an exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis. An exploratory factor analysis in this case can simplify the data by reducing items clustered around a dimension or variable. A confirmatory factor analysis, on the other hand, can also be done to verify scale construction and validate the factor structure used in this study. Performing either one might reveal new typologies in measuring the constructs of our study.

Research Limitations

Results from the survey and interviews conducted are deemed self-reported and are thus a reflection of the respondents' opinions regarding the constructs investigated. For the survey, there is no guarantee that the answers of employees who were hired after the data collection period will be identical or even similar to answers given by those who actually participated in the survey. In cross-validating the survey results, other experts may offer contrasting opinions compared to those obtained by the team from their chosen respondents. Finally, the outcome of similar studies conducted may differ from those generated by our investigation due mainly to differences in framework and methodology.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Primary Research Instrument

<u>Section 1: INTERNAL BRANDING PRACTICES</u>	<i>1 – Strongly disagree</i> <i>2 – Disagree</i> <i>3 – Neither agree nor disagree</i> <i>4 – Agree</i> <i>5 – Strongly agree</i>				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. I am proud of the company brand's success, and take bad news about it as a personal setback.					
2. I am proud to tell others that I work for the company which owns this brand.					
3. Our top management's commitment to the brand leads me to make an extra effort in promoting the brand.					

4. My attachment to the firm's brand is based first and foremost on the similarity of my values to those represented by the brand.

5. The values represented by the firm's brand are more than just words; they influence my day-to-day behavior.

6. In our company, we have a clear idea of what the company brand stands for; brand identity and brand promise are well defined.

7. We use all our marketing activities to develop the firm's brand and to enhance its strength.

8. We recognize the company brand as a valuable asset and strategic resource, which we continually develop and protect in the best possible way.

9. All business decisions are evaluated with respect to their impact on the firm's brand.

10. I am familiar with our brand communication platforms (e.g. magazines, internet and exhibitions).

11. I am aware of the goals we try to achieve through the company brand.

12. I am well informed about the values represented by the firm's brand.

13. I understand how our customers can benefit from the company brand.

14. I know which attributes of the company brand differentiate us from our competitors.

15. I am aware that the firm's brand significantly contributes to the overall success of our company.

16. I believe that our customers buy more of our products because of the company brand.

17. I believe that the firm's brand accounts considerably for the loyalty of our customers.

18. I am convinced that our customers recommend the company's brand to others.

**Section 2: ORGANIZATIONAL CITIZENSHIP
BEHAVIOR**

*1 – Never
2 – Rarely
3 – Occasionally
4 – Frequently
5 – Always*

1 2 3 4 5

1. I help others who have heavy workloads.

2. I help others who have been absent to catch up with their work.

3. I willingly represent my department/section by participating in different work-related and recreational activities.

4. I voluntarily give my time to help others who have work-related problems.

5. I tend to complain about trivial matters related to this company.

6. I tend to make my work-related problems bigger than they actually are.

7. I talk to others about wanting to quit my job with this company.

8. I arrive punctually at work.

9. I do not take long breaks.

10. I do not take extra breaks.

11. I obey company rules, regulations, and procedures even when no one is watching

**Section 3: CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY
PERFORMANCE**

*1 – Strongly disagree
2 – Disagree
3 – Neither agree nor disagree
4 – Agree
5 – Strongly agree*

1. There is a steady stream of new product developments, improvements in existing product lines, and expansion of customer base in this company.

2. Reducing costs and maintaining good profit margins appear to be important for this firm.

3. Relevant financial information from all departments are given to management in aid of proper financial reporting.

4. Top management is composed of individuals who are highly qualified for their positions.

5. This company is governed by competent leaders who ensure that the firm is accountable, fair, and transparent to all its stakeholders.

6. Information regarding the skills and experiences of top management are documented for all stakeholders to review.

7. Community involvement programs initiated by this firm provide an opportunity for the firm and its employees to improve the lives of others within the community it operates.

8. This company regularly monitors its socially responsible behavior and strives to determine to whom it is accountable for its social performance.

9. Details regarding the firm's corporate social responsibility initiatives are documented and reported to all interested parties.

10. The daily professional conduct of all organizational members is regulated by a clear set of ethical codes which everyone respects and follows.

11. Employees are treated fairly and with dignity in this company.

12. Clear and updated information regarding the firm's ethical performance are documented and reported to all interested parties.

13. Significant efforts are being made in this company to REDUCE generation of waste, to REUSE materials which remain purposeful, and to RECYCLE waste materials into new products.

14. This company adheres to the principles of

environmentally-friendly components, production process, and disposal of all our products.

15. The environmental advocacies of this company and what they have so far achieved in addressing them are documented and available for all interested parties to see.

Appendix B

Pattern Matching Table

VARIABLE	A PRIORI	SURVEY RESULTS	INTERVIEW WITH EXPERT 1	INTERVIEW WITH EXPERT 2	SIMILARITIES/DIFFERENCES IN RESULTS
Internal branding practices	Employees need to be aware of their employer's values, beliefs, and advocacies so that they can become willing partners in the propagation of such values (Biedenbach and Manzhynski, 2016; Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010)	$\bar{x} = 4.38$ Overall quality of internal branding practices is excellent	Expert 1 was unsurprised at the outcome. Branding is apparently inherent to the things they do. It is perceived to be excellent since the employees appreciate the firm's brand value and are satisfied consumers of the products themselves.	Expert 2 was unsurprised with the firm's level of internal branding practices because she said it is normal for big companies to invest heavily on their internal branding because they believe that their employees can help in propagating the brand's values.	Responses were very similar. All in all, primary data corroborated <i>a priori</i> knowledge.
Organizational citizenship behavior	Organizational citizenship behaviors that are demonstrated by employees typically surpass the job requirements expected by their employers so this consequently advances the well-being of the employees	$\bar{x} = 4.27$ Organizational citizenship behavior is manifested to a great extent.	Again, this outcome did not surprise Expert 1. He has first-hand knowledge of the lively sense of volunteerism in the company and employees are given plenty of opportunities to go above and beyond	Expert 2 was again unsurprised at these results because owners of big businesses invest heavily in keeping their employees motivated to do their jobs beyond what is expected of them.	Interview results with both respondents were very similar and are corroborated by <i>a priori</i> knowledge from extant literature regarding the volunteerism of employees due to their manifestation of organizational citizenship behavior.

	and organization as a whole. Simply put, it is “going above and the beyond” or “going the extra mile” (Naqshbandi, Singh, & Ma, 2016)		their normal duties.		
Sustainability performance	Sustainability performance is the ability of firms to attain their organizational goals while not compromising future generations (The Brundtland report, 1987). It can also be divided into 5 dimensions: Economic, Governance, Social, Ethical, Environmental (Brock et al., 2012).	$\bar{x} = 4.31$ Overall quality of sustainability performance is excellent	Expert 1 believes that this outcome is expected. For him, the longevity of the firm’s employees is one example showing its excellent sustainability performance. He also stated that the company is further expanding and also has numerous programs that benefit the community.	Expert 2 believes that most companies, especially the ones in the food manufacturing industry work to achieve high levels of sustainability performance. This is essential for their desire to obtain international certification.	Responses were again very similar. Expert 1 uses the tenure of employees as an example of why he believes the survey results show that the overall sustainability performance of the company is excellent. By and large, the message conveyed by both interview respondents were consistent with <i>a priori</i> knowledge.
Internal branding practices predicting Sustainability performance	The integration of internal branding practices in a firm leads to an improvement in the sustainability performance of the firm (Biedenbach and Manzhynski 2016).	$p < 0.001$ Internal branding practices significantly influence the sustainability performance of the firm.	Expert 1 believes that if the employees believe in your product because of good internal branding, then they will in turn help the company achieve high levels of sustainability performance.	Expert 2 believes that before the company can convince its external stakeholders to buy their products, they must first focus on internal branding so that employees can be helpful in promoting the company’s brand to the public.	Responses are more similar than different with Expert 2 emphasizing the importance of having to focus first on having excellent internal branding practices in order for the employees to contribute to the positive sustainability performance of the company. In

					essence, the message conveyed by both interview respondents were consistent with <i>a priori</i> knowledge.
Internal branding practices predicting Organizational citizenship behavior	Internal branding practices and organizational citizenship behaviour have been found to hold influence against one another simultaneously (Khademi, Kasraei, & Shafei, 2015). The internal branding practices exhibited by an organization affects the level of organizational citizenship behavior as demonstrated by its employees (Özçelik and Fındıklı, 2014; Asha and Jyothi (2013).	$p < 0.001$ Internal branding practices significantly influences organizational citizenship behavior at the firm.	Expert 1 is unsurprised with the results. As part of its internal branding, the firm gives all its employees many opportunities to volunteer in various outreach programs. Sense of employee volunteerism is also high because employees feel a sense of fulfillment and purpose whenever they get an opportunity to give back.	The results are within Expert 2's expectations because the level of ownership employees feel over the brand they represent naturally propels them to perform acts which go above and beyond expectations.	Responses were again similar on all fronts. Essentially, the message conveyed by both interview respondents were consistent with <i>a priori</i> knowledge.
Organizational citizenship behavior mediating the relationship between Internal branding practices and Sustainability performance	Extant literature hints that organizational citizenship behavior can mediate the relationship between internal branding practices and sustainability	Organizational citizenship behavior <i>partially mediates</i> the association between internal branding practices and sustainability performance since both remain as significant	Expert 1 believes that both internal branding and organizational citizenship behavior should both be focused on because you can't have one without the other. Both are essential	Expert 2 believes that the firm should focus on both internal branding and organizational citizenship behavior in its efforts to become more sustainable. Her long experience as an HR executive allowed her to appreciate the role	Interview results with both respondents were very similar. Both interview respondents said the internal branding and organizational citizenship behavior are equally important. By & large, the

performance. (See Figure 1)	predictors of sustainability performance ($p < 0.001$) in a multiple regression analysis.	contributors to the firm's journey towards sustainability	played by committed employees who go above and beyond their duties in attaining true corporate sustainability.	message conveyed by both interview respondents strengthened the mediation model hinted by a <i>priori</i> knowledge.
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