The Impact of Sustainable Social Media Marketing on Recruitment Brand Building: The Mediating Role of Social Media Brand Experience

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of sustainable social media marketing (SMSM) on the development of recruitment brands (RB) in Vietnam's technology sector, with an emphasis on the mediating role of social media brand experience (BESM). The investigation employs the PLS-SEM method using data from 418 participants. The findings indicate that SMSM exerts both direct and indirect positive effects on RB, mediated through BESM. Notably, BESM is instrumental in converting sustainability messages into brand value, accounting for 28.26% of the relationship between SMSM and RB. This study offers empirical evidence on how businesses can optimize social media strategies to attract talent and suggests management solutions to enhance the efficacy of SMSM and RB.

1. Introduction

In the contemporary context, businesses, particularly organizations within the technology sector, are confronting an intensely competitive labor market. The attraction of skilled candidates is contingent not only upon remuneration but also on the manner in which organizations construct and maintain their recruitment brand image (Al-Romeedy et al., 2024). A robust recruitment brand facilitates talent acquisition and employee retention, which are of particular significance in the rapidly evolving technology industry. One prevalent approach to establishing an effective recruitment brand is the implementation of sustainable social media marketing strategies.

Sustainable marketing, which aims to generate profits and ensure long-term environmental, social, and governance (ESG) development, is emerging as a significant trend in global marketing strategies.

Social media platforms serve a crucial function in communicating an organization's sustainability values to consumers, potential candidates, and the broader community (Kotler & Lee, 2008). However, the intersection of sustainable marketing and social media recruitment brands has not been comprehensively examined, particularly regarding the mediating role of brand experience on social platforms.

While several studies have indicated a relationship between sustainable marketing and branding (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019; Binu Raj & AK, 2022), limited research has elucidated the mediating role of social media brand experience in connecting sustainable marketing strategies to the recruitment brand. Extant studies have predominantly focused on the direct impact of sustainable marketing on brand image (Agarwal el at. 2021), without exploring how brand experience on social media may mediate this process. This presents a theoretical gap, necessitating research

to elucidate the role of online brand experience in influencing recruitment brands.

This study seeks to elucidate the influence of sustainable social media marketing (SMSM) on recruitment brands (RB) within the technology sector in Vietnam, emphasizing the pivotal mediating role of social media brand experience (BESM). In contrast to prior research that primarily examined the direct impact of SMSM on RB (Kotler & Lee, 2008) or considered independent factors in recruitment branding (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019), this study presents an integrated analytical framework in which BESM serves as the intermediary between these two elements. Specifically, we establish three primary objectives: (1) to measure the direct impact of SMSM on RB in the context of technology enterprises, (2) to validate the intermediary role of BESM in this relationship, and (3) to propose governance implications for optimizing social media strategies to attract talent. By integrating the theory of sustainable marketing (Kotler & Lee, 2008) with the theory of brand experience (Schmitt, 1999), this study not only addresses the theoretical gap concerning the mechanism of indirect impact through BESM but also provides empirical evidence on how social platforms (such as LinkedIn and Facebook) can transform sustainability messages into specific brand experiences, thereby shaping candidate perceptions. The findings of the study are anticipated to assist technology businesses in: (1) designing SMSM campaigns that prioritize user experience, (2) enhancing RB's image through a consistent commitment to sustainability conveyed on social media, and (3) establishing a competitive advantage in the "talent war" within the Vietnamese market.

2. Theoretical Overview

2.1. Related concepts

Sustainable Social Media Marketing (SMSM) is a contemporary marketing strategy that leverages social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram to communicate a business's commitment to sustainability across three primary domains–environmental, social, and governance–collectively referred to as ESG (Kotler & Lee, 2008; Khan et al., 2024). Unlike traditional marketing methods, SMSM are characterized by several notable features. First, SMSM are highly interactive and utilize the multidimensional capabilities of social networks, including likes, shares, and comments, to disseminate messages (Schivinski et al., 2020). This interactivity generates a potent viral effect, which facilitates the widespread use of sustainability messages. Second, SMSM enhances transparency through the deployment of visual content, such as videos and infographics, to tangibly demonstrate a business's commitment to

sustainability (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021)
. This strategy helps to establish brand trust and credibility among the public. Third, SMSM are distinctly community-oriented, focusing on fostering an emotional connection with users through authentic and intimate storytelling (Santos et al. 2023). This approach not only enhances brand memorability, but also encourages empathy and support from the community. Consequently, the SMSM embodies a comprehensive approach that integrates sustainable values with the extensive reach of social media, thereby assisting businesses in cultivating a positive brand image and engaging stakeholders effectively.

Recruitment brand (RB) refers to a potential candidate's perception of an organization's values, culture, and working environment, shaped through communication activities and interactive experiences (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019). Robust RB assists businesses in attracting suitable talent and in reducing recruitment costs (Al-Romeedy et al. 2024). According to Aaker (2006), the core components of RB include core values, which encompass the benefits that candidates anticipate, such as remuneration and development opportunities; consistent imagery, which involves uniform communication through websites, social media, and recruitment processes; and differentiation, which enables businesses to distinguish themselves from competitors through sustainability (El-Menawy & Saleh, 2023).

The Social Media Brand Experience (BESM) is conceptualized as the amalgamation of a candidate's multidimensional responses when engaging with a brand on social platforms, encompassing four primary dimensions: (1) sensory—sensory impressions derived from images and videos, (2) affective—positive or negative emotions elicited by the content, (3) cognitive—comprehension of brand value, and (4) behavior-specific actions, such as sharing, commenting, or applying (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt, 1999). In this study, BESM assumes two pivotal roles: Firstly, it serves as an intermediary between Sustainable Social Media Marketing (SMSM) and Recruitment Branding (RB). Campaigns such as #GreenRecruitment not only disseminate sustainability messages but also foster a positive brand experience (e.g., a sense of closeness when viewing a video about company culture), thereby enhancing the recruitment image (Kumar et al., 2022). Second, BESM functions as a critical evaluative metric, assessed through (1) the engagement rate, which reflects the level of candidate participation; (2) the perceived authenticity of the message; and (3) application intention, the ultimate indicator of recruitment brand effectiveness (Ibrahim et al., 2021). Consequently, BESM acts not only as a "catalyst" for transforming messages into brand value but also provides a quantitative measure to optimize communication strategies.

2.2. Related theories

2.2.1. Branding Theory

Branding theory, as articulated by Aaker (2006,2012), is pivotal in examining the determinants that affect the creation and sustenance of brand value, particularly within the recruitment sector. Aaker (2006) posits that a brand encompasses more than merely a collection of products or services; it embodies the core values, image, and distinguishing features that a customer or candidate associates with the organization. During recruitment, a robust brand enables businesses to establish distinct positions in the minds of potential candidates, thereby attracting suitable individuals (Al-Romeedy et al. 2024).

Aaker underscores that brand value is derived not only from the intrinsic nature of the product or service, but also from the public's perception of the brand's unique characteristics. Aaker's theory provides a framework for elucidating the role of sustainable social media marketing in constructing an employment brand image. Specifically, social media platforms facilitate candidates' engagement with, and reception of, messages pertaining to a business's sustainability commitments, thereby enhancing positive perceptions of the recruitment brand.

According to Aaker (2006), a strong brand must not only possess clear core values but also achieve significant differentiation from competitors. This differentiation can be realized through sustainable marketing strategies, particularly on digital platforms, to enhance the appeal to high-quality candidates, which is crucial in the technology sector. Consequently, Aaker's brand theory underpins H1 (Sustainable Social Media Marketing positively impacts the recruitment brand) by demonstrating that Sustainable Marketing on Social Media (SMSM) effectively shapes brand image, such as portraying a socially responsible enterprise. Candidates are inclined to select an organization when the Recruitment Brand (RB) aligns with their personal value system (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019).

2.2.2. Brand Experience Theory

Schmitt (1999) posits that brand experience extends beyond mere products or services to encompass consumer emotions, perceptions, and behaviors throughout their interactions. This experience is influenced by elements such as content (e.g., videos and posts), interaction (e.g., comments and feedback), and perception of brand authenticity, particularly on social media platforms (Brakus et al., 2009). Schmitt's brand experience theory suggests that consumer (or candidate) engagement with a brand occurs not only through products and services but also through emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions during the interaction process.

In the realm of social media, this theory has gained increased significance in the development of employer branding, as it enables candidates to perceive the working environment and the sustainable values of the business authentically. Through online experience, candidates can develop a clear understanding of the recruitment brand, thereby motivating them to apply it. Social media platforms offer a direct interaction environment that allows candidates to connect deeply with the sustainable values of the business, thus fostering long-term engagement and attachment to the brand. This theory underpins the post-H2 research hypothesis (SMSM positively affects BESM) that sustainable social media campaigns generate multidimensional experiences (e.g., a sense of closeness when the company shares CSR activities). H3 (BESM impacts RB): Positive experiences enhance candidates' trust in and commitment to the brand, thereby increasing its attractiveness for recruitment (Baruk & Wesołowski, 2021).

2.2.3. Sustainable Marketing Theory

Kotler and Lee (2008) contend that sustainable marketing extends beyond mere profit generation, necessitating a balance among three critical components: environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. When these values are communicated via social media, they bolster business credibility and forge an emotional connection with potential candidates (Khan et al., 2024). Kotler and Lee's theory of sustainable marketing suggests that such marketing strategies enable businesses to optimize profits while simultaneously achieving long-term ESG objectives.

Within the scope of this study, sustainable marketing through social media is pivotal for establishing a robust recruitment brand that attracts candidates who possess a heightened sense of social and environmental responsibility. Moreover, this theory underscores that businesses with a well-defined and robust sustainable marketing strategy not only cultivate a positive brand image but also nurture enduring relationships with candidates. A business's commitment to sustainable values enhances its credibility and increases the recruitment brand's appeal to socially responsible candidates.

Through the implementation of sustainable marketing strategies on social media, businesses can clearly articulate their values and create a lasting impression on candidates seeking a responsible and sustainable employer. By observing a company's long-term dedication to sustainability goals, candidates are more likely to remain with the company, become loyal employees, and disseminate the brand's positive image on social media. This, in turn, raises awareness and attracts higher-caliber candidates. This theoretical

framework underpins the following research hypothesis: H4 (BESM acts as an intermediary between SMSM and RB): Sustainable commitment expressed through social content (SMSM) will be "personalized" through experience (BESM), thereby enhancing the effectiveness of recruitment branding (RB).

The three theories collectively emphasize brand value, yet each approaches it from a distinct perspective. Aaker (2006) concentrates on output, specifically, recruitment brand image. Schmitt (1999) elucidates the intermediary process, detailing how candidates experience the brand throughout their interactions. Kotler and Lee (2008) provided input by focusing on sustainability messages conveyed by businesses. The integration of these theories not only aids in elucidating the direct impact (H1) but also clarifies the indirect mechanism (H4) through the BESM experience, thereby addressing the question: "How can sustainable social marketing become an advantage in recruitment?

2.3. Hypothesis development

2.3.1. The Relationship of Social Media Sustainable Marketing and Recruitment Brands

In the current context, Sustainable Marketing is not only aimed at profit growth but also assists organizations in establishing a positive image of their social and environmental responsibility (Kotler & Lee, 2008). Particularly in the technology industry, where innovation and sustainable values are becoming increasingly significant, the use of social media as a sustainable marketing tool offers distinct advantages in recruitment branding. According to Kotler and Lee (2008), the adoption of sustainable marketing strategies helps organizations not only enhance their brand image, but also attract talent, especially candidates who are socially and environmentally conscious. Indeed, in the tech industry, where candidates seek a responsible and sustainable work environment, sustainable marketing on social media can create a strong impression that enhances the attractiveness of the recruitment brand. Social media play a crucial role in conveying an organization's sustainable values to the wider community, including potential candidates (Al-Romeedy et al. 2024). Platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are effective tools for helping organizations not only promote their products but also construct an employer brand image. The utilization of social media to disseminate sustainability strategies and CSR (corporate social responsibility) initiatives will help candidates perceive the organization's long-term commitment to these values, thereby attracting highly socially conscious candidates (Bharadwaj & Yameen, 2021; Al-Romeedy et al., 2024). Furthermore, Tanwar and Kumar (2019) demonstrated that social media campaigns can increase candidates' awareness of the values that the organization pursues, especially in building a positive recruitment brand, thereby helping to increase brand awareness and attract candidates. Raj et al. (2022) and Khan et al. (2024) assert that social media plays a significant role in connecting organizations with the community and potential candidates. Communication campaigns on these platforms can create a strong connection between the sustainable values of the organization and candidates seeking an appropriate working environment. Moreover, when applicants observe that an organization shares a commitment to sustainability and social responsibility through social media channels, they tend to appreciate and desire to join the organization. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: Sustainable social media marketing has a positive impact on brand recruitment.

2.3.2. The Relationship of Social Media Sustainable Marketing and Social Media Brand Experience

A social media brand experience is defined as a consumer's feelings, perceptions, and reactions to interactions with a brand through social media platforms, including the emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social factors that a brand creates on these channels (Brakus et al., 2009; Schivinski et al., 2020). According to Schmitt (1999), brand experience is created not only through products or services but also through the interactions and emotions that consumers experience when interacting with brands, particularly through media channels such as social media. Sustainable marketing strategies, when communicated through social media platforms, can drive a stronger brand experience by emphasizing the sustainable values that the business is committed to. This creates experiences not only about the product but also about the social and environmental values that the brand represents. The utilization of social media by businesses to share initiatives and commitments to sustainability assists candidates and customers in perceiving sincerity in the company's actions. When candidates or customers observe that a brand is responsible for and committed to sustainability goals, their experience with the brand becomes more positive (Khan et al., 2024). Moreover, sustainable marketing campaigns contribute to the formation of strong emotional bonds between brands and consumers, which, in turn, affects their satisfaction and engagement with the brand. Baruk and Wesołowski (2021) also demonstrate that sustainable marketing strategies implemented through social media not only increase brand awareness but also deepen user experience by creating emotional connections to promote positive behavior. Ibrahim et al. (2021) further emphasize that social media marketing campaigns, when combined with sustainability factors,

can alter the way consumers interact with and evaluate brands. With businesses now increasingly cognizant of the important role of social media in building brand image, sustainable marketing on these platforms helps create a positive brand image as well as a profound brand experience, thereby improving the engagement and loyalty of candidates and customers (Santos et al., 2023). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Sustainable social media marketing has a positive impact on the brand experience on social media

2.3.3. Relationship of Social Brand Experience and Recruitment Brand

According to Baruk and Wesołowski (2021), the utilization of social media in marketing strategies can positively influence a business's image, including that of the recruitment brand. When potential candidates are exposed to a company's values, narratives, and activities through posts, videos, and live interactions on social media platforms, they not only visualize the work environment but also perceive the company's culture and mission. This creates a favorable and accessible image of the recruitment brand, thereby facilitating the attraction of suitable candidates.

Ibrahim et al. (2021) also demonstrated that online brand experiences, particularly on social platforms, can contribute to the formation of trust and affinity for brands, thereby increasing the level of awareness of recruitment brands. When candidates engage with a brand through social media platforms and perceive the sustainable value that the brand conveys, they tend to view it as an ideal workplace that aligns with their personal value. Al-Romeedy et al. (2024) affirmed that social media and social media branding strategies assist in shaping the image of the business in the perception of candidates, thereby contributing to the development of a robust and attractive recruitment brand. Furthermore, Tanwar and Kumar (2019) observed that social media is a significant factor in recruitment branding, especially when candidates perceive congruence between their personal values and those represented by the brand. These positive experiences reinforce recruitment brand image and enhance the attractiveness of the business to highly qualified candidates. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: Social brand experience has a positive impact on the recruitment brand

### 2.3.4. The intermediary role of Recruitment Brand

In the context of sustainable marketing, brand experience on social media can function as a conduit, conveying the message of sustainable marketing to candidates in a direct and affective manner. Agarwal et al., (2021) posit that through social media platforms, businesses can demonstrate their commitment to

social and environmental issues, and create a positive user experience. Binu Raj et al. (2022) assert that when candidates encounter social and environmental responsibility messages through social media campaigns, they tend to value recruitment brands that clearly demonstrate a commitment to these principles, thereby enhancing the attractiveness and prestige of the recruitment brand in the perception of candidates. Khan et al. (2024) further corroborate that sustainable marketing not only enhances brand image but also improves emotional connections with candidates, particularly through online experiences. Engaging with candidates across social platforms reinforces their sense of sustainable value and creates a consistent and robust brand experience. This experience not only increases visibility but also fosters the interest and intention to apply to the company. El-Menawy and Saleh (2023) also emphasize that brand experience on social media is not only the result of sustainable marketing strategies but also a decisive factor in helping candidates form impressions and perceptions about the company, thereby facilitating a transition from interest to action, specifically the decision to participate in the application process. When social media sustainability marketing is executed effectively, an online brand experience conveys a sustainable message to candidates, enabling them to clearly conceptualize the work environment, company culture, and sustainable values that the company represents, thereby strengthening the attachment and propensity to apply to businesses. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: Recruitment Brand as an Intermediary Between Social Media Sustainable Marketing and Brand Experience on Social Media

2.4. Proposed research model

Based on related hypotheses and theories, the author hypothesizes the research:
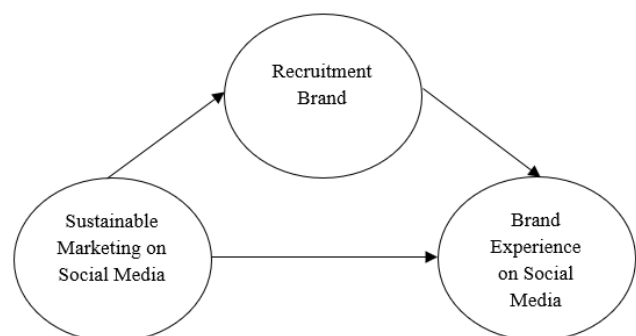
Figure 1. Proposed research model

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative methodology to evaluate a theoretical model of the influence of Sustainable Social Media Marketing (SMSM) on Recruitment Brands (RBs), with a particular focus on the mediating role of Social Media Brand Experience (BESM). The research methodology was systematically structured using the following steps:

3.1. Research Design and Sample Selection

This study targeted experts in the technology sector in Vietnam, including software engineers, IT managers, and technology employers. The selection was based on three primary factors. First, the technology industry exhibits a significant reliance on social media platforms such as LinkedIn and GitHub for recruitment purposes. Concurrently, this sector is at the forefront of implementing sustainability initiatives, as evidenced by CSR reports on ESG from major corporations such as FPT and Viettel (Khan et al., 2024). Second, technology professionals frequently engage with job posts on social media, providing them with sufficient insight and experience to accurately assess brand experience (BESM) (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019). Third, the competitive landscape for talent in the Vietnamese technology industry is intensifying, necessitating businesses to optimize their SMSM strategies to attract high-quality candidates (Al-Romeedy et al. 2024).

The criteria for participant selection included (1) having a minimum of two years of professional experience in the technology industry; (2) interacting with recruitment content on at least one social media platform (LinkedIn, Facebook, or Instagram); and (3) holding positions related to recruitment, human resource management, or product development.

3.2. Data Collection Process

Data collection for this study was conducted through an online survey administered between August and September 2024. The surveys were designed and disseminated through two primary platforms, Google Forms and LinkedIn. Of the 450 distributed surveys, 418 valid responses were obtained, a response rate of 92.9%.

The study variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). Specifically, the SMSM variable was assessed using five items evaluating the level of access to sustainable messages (e.g., "My company regularly shares its environmental activities on social media") (Kotler & Lee, 2008). The BESM variable was evaluated using five items focusing on emotional and cognitive experiences (e.g., "I feel connected to the company's sustainable values through social media") (Schmitt, 1999). The RB variable was measured using five items

related to job image (e.g., 'I am proud to introduce the company to the candidate') (Tanwar & Kumar, 2019).

3.3. Data Analysis Methods

The data were analyzed using the PLS-SEM structural equation modeling method with SmartPLS 3.0. This analysis involved several key steps. First, the reliability and validity of the scale were assessed using the following indicators: factor loadings (FL > 0.7), Cronbach's alpha coefficient (> 0.7), and average variance extracted (AVE > 0.5) (Hair et al., 2019). Subsequently, HTMT analysis was employed to test the discriminant validity of the constructs, with an acceptance threshold of less than 0.9 (Henseler et al., 2015). To evaluate the research hypotheses, the bootstrap method with 2,000 samples was applied to assess path analysis and mediating effects (Kumar et al., 2022). The study also controlled for potential biases by (1) ensuring a variance inflation factor (VIF) of less than 5 to mitigate multicollinearity (Kock, 2015) and (2) designing anonymous surveys to reduce social desirability bias.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Common Method Variance Bias Test (CMB)

The variance inflation coefficient (VIF) values were examined as recommended by Kock (2015). The VIF values reported for the structures ranged from 1 to 1,042 (Table 1), which is well below the recommended limit of 5, confirming the absence of CMB.

Table 1. Inner VIF Value

	BESM	RB	SMSM
BESM		1.042	
RB			
SMSM	1.000	1.42	

Notes: Sustainable Marketing on Social Media – SMSM; Recruitment Brand – RB; Brand Experience on Social Media - BESM

4.2. Reliability Measurement

The partial least squared structure equation model (PLSSEM) was employed to analyze the data. The factor loading values (Table 2) were examined to assess convergent reliability. All factor loading values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al. 2019). Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha values were all above the minimum threshold of 0.7 and below 0.95 (Hair et al., 2019), confirming the internal consistency reliability of the constructs (Table 3). These findings indicate that the model demonstrates high reliability and can be used for subsequent analyses.

Table 2. Factor Loading

Factor	Question	Factor loading	VIF
Sustainable Marketing on Social Media - SMSM	SMSM1: I feel that the company's sustainable marketing strategy on social media is in line with the long-term development goals.	0.746	1.824
	SMSM2: The company uses social media to promote environmentally and socially friendly products/services.	0.715	1.947
	SMSM3: The company's social media marketing campaigns demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.	0.825	1.605
	SMSM4: My company actively participates in environmental and social protection activities through social networks.	0.798	2.011
	SMSM5: I appreciate the company's social media marketing messages about sustainability.	0.794	1.816
Recruitment Brand - RB Brand	RB1: My company's recruitment brand shows a positive image in the eyes of job seekers.	0.789	2.358
	RB2: The company builds strong trust in the community through recruitment campaigns.	0.802	2.502
	RB3: I find the company promotes its core values clearly in its recruitment campaigns.	0.787	1.740
	RB4: The company's recruitment campaigns are designed to attract talent from a variety of sectors.	0.713	1.442
	RB5: My company always maintains a professional and reliable image in recruitment campaigns	0.731	1.582
Experience on Social Media - BESM	BESM1: I have had a positive experience interacting with the company's brand on social media platforms.	0.744	1.824
	BESM2: My company regularly provides useful and valuable information via social media.	0.745	1.947
	BESM3: I feel that the company understands my needs when communicating through social media channels.	0.706	1.605
	BESM4: The company maintains a close and accessible image through social media channels.	0.789	2.011
	BESM5: I feel well connected and supported when participating in activities organized by the company on social media.	0.730	1.816

The aggregate reliability value exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Furthermore, the interpreted mean variance value (AVE) also surpassed the threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019). The criteria of Fornell and Larcker (1981) were applied to establish the discriminant validity (Table 3). Additionally, the researcher conducted a heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) analysis to assess discriminant validity. As presented in Table 4, all the HTMT values were below the threshold of 0.9, as recommended by Henseler et al. (2015).

Table 3. Reliability and value

	CA	CR	AVE	C	RB	SMSM
BESM	0.801	0.862	0.555	0.745		
RB	0.823	0.876	0.586	0.686	0.766	
SMSM	0.837	0.883	0.603	0.200	0.335	0.776

Note: CA = Cronbach's alpha; CR = Composite reliability; AVE = Average variance extracted

Table 4. Heterotrait - Monotrait (HTMT) Analysis

	BESM	RB	SMSM
BESM			
RB	0.849		
SMSM	0.235	0.389	

4.3. Hypothesis testing

In this study, a bootstrapping method with 2000 resamples and a 95% confidence interval was employed, as recommended by Kumar et al. (2022). The results of the intermediary role analysis revealed three significant relationships among the factors in the research model. First, the relationship between BESM and RB demonstrates a strong impact, with an original sample coefficient (O) of 0.658, t-value of 15.832, and p-value of 0.000, indicating a high level of statistical significance. This suggests that brand experience on social media plays a crucial role in shaping a company's recruitment brand image. Second, SMSM exhibits a significant effect on BESM with a root sample coefficient of 0.200, a t-value of 3.615, and a p-value of 0.000. This relationship indicates that sustainable marketing strategies on social media substantially influence consumers' perceptions of a brand on social media platforms. Finally, the results also demonstrate that SMSM has a direct effect on RB, with a original sample coefficient of 0.335, t-value of 6.609, and p-value of 0.000, suggesting that a sustainable social media marketing strategy can directly impact the image of the recruiting brand.

The findings from the intermediary role analysis indicate that BESM serves as a significant intermediary in the relationship between SMSM and RB. This implies that sustainable marketing strategies

Table 5. Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	t-value	p-Value	Supported
H1	SMSM → RB	0.204	0.035	5.754	0.000	Yes
H2	SMSM → BESM	0.200	0.055	3.615	0.000	Yes
H3	BESM → RB	0.658	0.042	15.832	0.000	Yes
H4	SMSM→ BESM→ RB	0.132	0.035	3.709	0.000	Yes
Notes: Sustainable Marketing on Social Media – SMSM; Recruitment Brand – RB; Brand Experience on Social Media - BESM						

on social media influence consumers' perception of the brand through their experiences on social media platforms, subsequently affecting recruitment brand image. According to the VAF analysis, the VAF value was 28.26%, suggesting that social brand experience functions as an intermediary, accounting for 28.26% of the relationship between social media sustainability marketing and recruitment brands. However, the results from the VAF analysis also reveal that BESM only explains a limited portion of the relationship between SMSM and RB, indicating that while BESM plays a significant role, other factors (not analyzed in this study) may also contribute substantially to the formation of the relationship between SMSM and RB. This presents an opportunity for further investigation into additional factors, such as communication strategies, other marketing activities, and influences from alternative social media platforms.
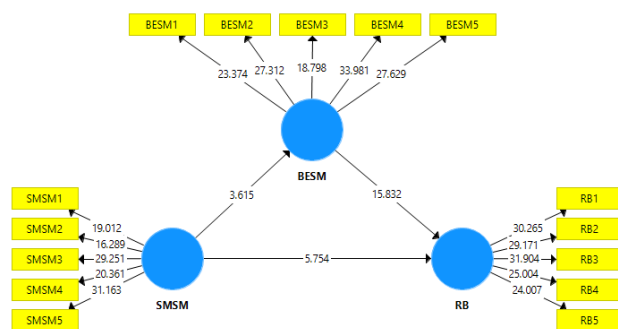
Figure 2. Research results

5. Conclusion and administrative implications

5.1. Conclusion

This study elucidates the role of social media sustainable marketing (SMSM) in recruitment branding (RB) and emphasizes the mediating role of social media brand experience (BESM). The results of the analysis indicate that SMSM exerts a positive and significant impact on RB both directly and indirectly through the BESM. These findings are not only consistent with previous studies, but also contribute new insights to the field of sustainable marketing and

recruitment brand management. Specifically, the study corroborates the important role of SMSM, aligning with the results of Kotler and Lee (2008), who posit that sustainable marketing strategies not only enhance corporate image but also promote awareness of social and environmental values among potential candidates. Concurrently, the research results support the findings of Schmitt (1999) and Santos et al. (2023) regarding the significance of brand experience in influencing the perception and attractiveness of a recruitment brand. In particular, the mediating role of BESM elucidated in this study is also congruent with the studies of Khan, Benhamed, Soliman, and Khalifa (2024), underscoring that brand experience can effectively convey sustainable messages and foster a strong emotional connection between candidates and businesses. However, this study makes a novel contribution by explicitly delineating the mediating role of BESM in the relationship between SMSM and RB. While previous studies, such as those by Agarwal, Arya, and Bhasin (2021), have primarily focused on the direct impact of sustainable marketing on brands, this study delves into the mechanisms of BESM, demonstrating that brand experience on social media is not only an end result but also a crucial intermediary factor connecting SMSM strategies with a recruitment brand. Furthermore, the results of the variance accounted for (VAF) analysis reveal that BESM accounts for a substantial portion (28.26%) of the relationship between SMSM and RB, providing new empirical evidence for the role of brand experience in shaping recruitment brand awareness. This study not only expands the theoretical framework of sustainable marketing and brand management but also provides practical governance implications for businesses, particularly in the technology industry. Organizations can leverage social media not only as a promotional tool, but also as a platform to cultivate a positive brand experience, thereby enhancing talent attraction and retention.

5.2. Administrative implications

Based on the results of the study, the following key governance implications are proposed to support businesses, especially companies in the technology industry, to enhance the efficacy of their social media

sustainability marketing (SMSM) and recruitment branding (RB) strategies:

Establishing a clear and transparent social media sustainability marketing strategy: Organizations should focus on developing SMSM strategies with consistent and unambiguous content, reflecting their commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) sustainability goals. Sustainability messages should be disseminated through prevalent social media platforms, such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram, which emphasize the core values, community contribution, and social responsibility of the organization. This approach not only assists organizations in constructing a sustainable brand image but also attracts candidates who share similar values and objectives.

Optimizing brand experience on social media, Social Brand Experience (BESM) serves as a significant intermediary in the relationship between SMSM and RB; therefore, organizations should invest in the design of social media content and interactions. Online campaigns should be highly personalized and interactive, such as hosting campaigns, polls, and fundraising activities for the community. Furthermore, content should be presented in an approachable manner to foster a sense of connection between the brand and users, thereby increasing trust and empathy.

Strengthen the link between sustainable values and the recruitment brand: The recruitment brand should be constructed based on the sustainable values that the organization is pursuing. Recruitment strategies should not solely focus on communicating financial benefits but also emphasize the organization's commitment to social and environmental values. For instance, organizations can implement employee training programs on sustainable development, environmental protection initiatives in the workplace, and social justice policies. These commitments will enhance the organization's appeal to potential candidates, particularly among the younger generation, with a heightened awareness of social responsibility.

Analyze and measure the effectiveness of the SMSM strategy: Organizations should employ tools to analyze and measure the effectiveness of SMSM strategies to assess their impact on the recruitment brand. Metrics such as the engagement rate, number of shares, and positive feedback from users should be monitored regularly. This approach not only facilitates timely strategy adjustments but also ensures that sustainability messages are effectively conveyed to potential candidates.

Invest in technology platforms and dedicated personnel: The management and implementation of effective SMSM strategies requires investment in appropriate technology platforms and competent personnel. Organizations need to recruit or train experts in digital marketing and sustainability and implement advanced technology tools to optimize the process of managing and executing social media campaigns.

Focusing on sustainable corporate culture: Recruitment brand image is inextricably linked to corporate culture. Therefore, management should prioritize building a sustainable work environment in which values such as social responsibility, human development, and transparency are emphasized. When a corporate culture authentically reflects sustainability commitments, it creates a compelling and enduring impression on candidates, thereby enhancing an organization's ability to attract and retain talent.

In conclusion, organizations should view SMSM not merely as a marketing tool, but as a long-term strategy for building a robust and sustainable recruitment brand. By optimizing brand experience on social media and aligning sustainable values with recruitment strategies, organizations can enhance their competitive position and attract the most suitable candidates in an increasingly competitive labor market.

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