The Effect of Internal Branding on Brand Citizenship Behavior: The Mediating Role of Affective Brand Identification

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of internal branding on employees' brand citizenship behavior and the mediating role of affective brand identification. Internal branding is operationalized through internal brand communication, brand-centered training, and brand-oriented leadership, while brand citizenship behavior is examined through brand compliance brand endorsement, and brand development. Survey data from 132 employees of a state-owned organization were analyzed using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS. The results show that internal brand communication and brand centered training do not significantly affect the three brand citizenship behavior dimensions directly, but both significantly predic taffective brand identification. Affective brand identification, in turn, significantly predicts brand compliance, brand endorsement, and brand development and fully mediates the effects of internal brand communication and brand centered training on all three brand citizenship behavior dimensions. Brand-oriented leadership shows the opposite pattern: it does not significantly predict affective brand identification but has significant direct effects on brand compliance, brand endorsement, and brand development, with no significant indirect effects through affective brand identification. The findings reveal a differentiated dual-pathway structure in which communication and training operate through affective identification, whereas leadership influences brand-supportive behavior directly.

Keywords: *Internal branding, affective brand identification, brand citizenship behavior, employee behavior, PLS-SEM*

İçsel Markalamanın Marka Vatandaşlığı Davranışı Üzerindeki Etkisi: Duygusal Marka Özdeşleşmesinin Aracılık Rolü

Özet

Bu çalışma, içsel markalamanın çalışanların marka vatandaşlığı davranışı üzerindeki etkisini ve duygusal marka özdeşleşmesinin bu ilişkideki aracılık rolünü incelemektedir. İçsel markalama; iç marka iletişimi, marka merkezli eğitim ve marka odaklı liderlik boyutlarıyla; marka vatandaşlığı davranışı ise marka uyumu, marka destekleme ve marka geliştirme

boyutlarıyla ele alınmıştır. Bir kamu kuruluşunda çalışan 132 katılımcıdan anket yoluyla toplanan veriler SmartPLS kullanılarak PLS-SEM yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, iç marka iletişimi ve marka merkezli eğitimin marka vatandaşlığı davranışının üç boyutunu doğrudan etkilemediğini, ancak duygusal marka özdeşleşmesini anlamlı biçimde artırdığını göstermektedir. Duygusal marka özdeşleşmesi üç davranış boyutunun da anlamlı bir yordayıcısıdır ve iletişim ile eğitimin marka uyumu, marka destekleme ve marka geliştirme üzerindeki etkilerini tam olarak aracılık etmektedir. Buna karşılık marka odaklı liderlik duygusal marka özdeşleşmesini anlamlı biçimde etkilememiş, fakat üç marka vatandaşlığı boyutu üzerinde doğrudan anlamlı etkiler göstermiştir. Sonuçlar, içsel markalamanın farklı boyutlarının çalışan davranışına farklı psikolojik ve doğrudan davranışsal yollarla ulaştığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *İçsel markalama, duygusal marka özdeşleşmesi, marka vatandaşlığı davranışı, çalışan davranışı, PLS-SEM*

1. Introduction

In service-intensive and brand-driven environments, employees are central to the delivery of the brand promise because customers frequently experience the brand through employee behavior rather than through formal marketing communication alone. This has contributed to growing attention to internal branding (IB) as an organizational approach for aligning employees with brand values and enabling consistent brand delivery. IB therefore shifts part of brand management attention inward, recognizing employees as a critical internal audience whose knowledge, attitudes, identification, and behaviors may shape external brand experiences (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011).

The IB literature identifies multiple employee-related outcomes, including brand understanding, brand identification, brand commitment, brand loyalty, and brand citizenship behavior (BCB). Barros-Arrieta and García-Cali (2021) identify these employee brand outcomes as central consequences of IB processes. Among them, BCB is particularly relevant because it captures employees' voluntary brand supportive. (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005).

BCB was introduced by Burmann and Zeplin (2005) as a brand-specific behavioral construct within IB management and builds on the foundational concept of organizational citizenship behavior (Organ, 1988). In the present study, BCB is operationalized through brand compliance (BC), brand endorsement (BE), and brand development (BD), following the three-dimensional measurement approach used by Tong and Kang (2025).

Although previous studies provide evidence that IB is associated with employee attitudes and behaviors (Qureshi et al., 2022; Afshardoost et al., 2023; Chhibber et al., 2024) how different IB practices translate into brand-supportive behavior remains important to clarify. Brand identification is one such mechanism because it reflects employees' psychological connection with the brand (Ieong and Hong, 2025), and examines whether ABI transmits the effects of IB to BCB The present study focuses specifically on affective brand identification (ABI), defined as employees' positive emotional connection with the organizational brand (Harquail, 2007), and examines whether ABI transmits the effects of communication, training, and leadership to BCB. In this study, ABI is conceptualized as a unidimensional affective construct, emphasizing employees' emotional identification with the brand (Helm et al., 2016; Tong & Kang, 2025).

By distinguishing among three IB practices and three BCB dimensions, the study tests the hypothesized direct and indirect relationships and compares the mechanisms through which different IB practices are associated with employee behavior.

2. Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Internal branding

IB refers to organizational activities directed at employees to communicate and reinforce brand values and facilitate their internalization, so that employees understand how the brand should be represented and delivered (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011). Barros-Arrieta and García-Cali (2021) further synthesize IB research around organizational antecedents, IB practices, and employee brand outcomes, providing a framework for distinguishing the specific IB practices examined in the present study.

In this study, IB is treated as a multidimensional construct composed of internal brand communication (IBC), brand-centered training (BCT), and brand-oriented leadership (BOL). This approach is consistent with research emphasizing communication, training/human-resource practices, and leadership as central mechanisms of IB management (Buil et al., 2016). IBC concerns the transmission of brand values and brand-related information to

employees; BCT translates brand values into employees' skills and role understanding; and BOL reflects leaders' role in modeling, reinforcing, and encouraging behavior consistent with the brand. (Zhang et al., 2022)

2.2 Affective brand identification

The conceptual roots of brand identification lie in social identity theory (SIT), which proposes that individuals derive part of their self-concept from membership in social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 1979). Organizational identification has subsequently been conceptualized as perceived oneness with and belongingness to an organization (Mael and Ashforth, 1992), and this logic has been extended to the brand context. (Harquail, 2007)

Brand identification has not been conceptualized uniformly. Piehler et al. (2016) distinguish cognitive and affective components, while Tong and Kang (2025) explicitly use a single affective aspect of brand identification. Consistent with this approach, ABI is used here to capture employees' positive emotional connection with the brand. IB practices can facilitate such identification by communicating distinctive brand values, clarifying employees' relationship to the brand, and strengthening perceived alignment between employees and the organization. (Buil et al., 2016; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011)

2.3 Brand citizenship behavior

BCB was introduced by Burmann and Zeplin (2005) as a brand-specific behavioral construct capturing employees' contributions to "living the brand." Its conceptual background is related to organizational citizenship behavior, which concerns discretionary employee behavior that supports effective organizational functioning (Organ, 1988). BCB applies this citizenship-oriented logic to employees' brand-related behavior.

The present study follows Tong and Kang (2025) and measures BCB through three dimensions: brand compliance (BC), brand endorsement (BE) , and brand development (BD). Brand compliance reflects adherence to prescribed brand-related standards and expected behaviors; brand endorsement captures employees' active and positive representation of the brand; and brand development reflects proactive contributions to improving and developing the brand.

2.4 Hypothesis development

IB is expected to influence BCB because communication, training, and leadership provide employees with brand-related direction, capability, and behavioral cues. (Burmann et al., 2009; Buil et al., 2016). Prior research to employee responses and citizenship behavior.

(Güdük, Akdoğan and Akyol, 2021; Qureshi et al., 2022). has linked IB practices.. Accordingly, H1 proposes that the three IB dimensions have positive effects on the three dimensions of BCB, resulting in nine direct hypotheses: H1a IBC → BC; H1b IBC → BE; H1c IBC → BD; H1d BOL → BC; H1e BOL → BE; H1f BOL → BD; H1g BCT → BC; H1h BCT → BE; and H1i BCT → BD.

IB is also expected to strengthen ABI. Communication and training can strengthen employees' awareness and understanding of brand values, while BOL can reinforce brand meaning through managerial role modeling and interaction (Buil et al., 2016). Prior research has also identified brand identification as an important mechanism linking IB to employee brand-related outcomes (Punjaisri and Wilson, 2011; Ieong and Hong, 2025). Thus, H2 proposes positive effects of IBC (H2a), BCT (H2b), and BOL (H2c) on ABI.

ABI is expected to influence BCB because employees who experience stronger affective identification with the brand are more likely to support brand-related objectives and act in ways that protect, represent, and develop the brand. Piehler et al. (2016) place brand identification within the process leading to brand-supportive behavior, and Helm et al. (2016) demonstrate a positive relationship between brand identification and BCB. H3 therefore proposes positive effects of ABI on BC (H3a), BE (H3b), and BD (H3c).

Finally, the model proposes that IB may influence brand-supportive behavior indirectly by strengthening employees' affective identification with the brand (Piehler et al., 2016; Ieong and Hong, 2025). H4 therefore proposes that ABI mediates the relationships between the three IB dimensions and the three BCB dimensions, resulting in nine indirect hypotheses (H4a–H4i).

Table 1. Research questions and hypothesis groups

Research question	Relationship	Hypotheses
RQ1	IB practices → BCB dimensions	H1a-H1i
RQ2	IB practices → ABI	H2a-H2c
RQ3	ABI → BCB dimensions	H3a-H3c
RQ4	IB practices → ABI → BCB dimensions	H4a-H4i

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design and sample

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 132 employees of a state-owned organization in which IB practices were implemented. Participation was voluntary. The study is cross-sectional because the data were collected at a single point in time rather than from the same participants across multiple time periods.

The single-organization setting limits the generalizability of the findings across industries and organizational settings. Similarly, the cross-sectional design means that the findings show relationships among the variables but do not establish causal relationships.

3.2 Measures

IB is assesed through IBC, BCT, and BOL, following the multidimensional IB management approach used by Buil et al. (2016). ABI is measured as a unidimensional affective identification construct, consistent with the affective approach discussed by Tong and Kang (2025). BCB is assessed through BC, BE, and brand BD. The BCB measure contains five indicators for each dimension (BC1-BC5, BE1-BE5, and BD1-BD5), consistent with the 15-item operationalization used by Tong and Kang (2025).

3.3 Data analysis

The proposed model was analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) in SmartPLS. The measurement model was first evaluated using indicator loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and collinearity diagnostics. The structural model was then assessed using path coefficients, bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, coefficients of determination (R^2), and specific indirect effects. Reliability and convergent validity were evaluated according to the criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2019), while discriminant validity was examined using both HTMT (Henseler et al., 2015) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Mediation patterns were interpreted by comparing direct and indirect effects in line with Nitzl et al. (2016).

4. Findings

4.1 Measurement model

Initial collinearity diagnostics identified three BOL indicators (BOL2, BOL3, and BOL5) with VIF values above the adopted threshold of 5. These items were removed, and the model was re-estimated. Because this reduced the BOL scale from seven to four indicators, the possibility that the retained items provide narrower conceptual coverage of BOL is acknowledged when interpreting the results.

In the refined model, all retained indicators had outer loadings above 0.60, ranging from 0.635 to 0.908, and all VIF values were below 5, ranging from 1.427 to 4.876. Reliability and convergent validity were satisfactory across all seven constructs. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.790 to 0.918, rho_A from 0.802 to 0.932, rho_C from 0.875 to 0.939, and AVE from 0.569 to 0.763. These results indicate adequate internal consistency reliability and convergent validity.

Table 2. Measurement model assessment

Construct	Indicators	Loading range	VIF range	α	rho_A	rho_C	AVE
ABI	ABI1-ABI8	0.635-0.876	1.858-4.641	0.896	0.932	0.912	0.569
BC	BC1-BC5	0.803-0.844	2.082-2.460	0.881	0.904	0.912	0.675
BCT	BCT1-BCT3	0.851-0.903	1.964-2.121	0.847	0.873	0.906	0.763
BD	BD1-BD5	0.758-0.903	1.742-4.876	0.918	0.918	0.939	0.756
BE	BE1-BE5	0.635-0.863	1.693-2.550	0.826	0.862	0.875	0.586
BOL	BOL1, BOL4, BOL6, BOL7	0.837-0.908	2.036-3.633	0.896	0.901	0.927	0.762
IBC	IBC1-IBC3	0.765-0.891	1.427-2.085	0.790	0.802	0.878	0.706

Discriminant validity was largely established, but not without qualification. Under the conservative HTMT criterion of 0.85, most construct pairs were acceptable; however, IBC–BCT was marginally above the threshold (0.851), and BC-BE showed a clear discriminant validity concern (0.956). Using the more liberal 0.90 criterion, BC-BE remained the principal concern. The Fornell-Larcker assessment produced two marginal exceptions involving BC: the ABI diagonal value (0.754) was slightly below the ABI-BC correlation (0.760), and the BE diagonal value (0.766) was below the BC-BE correlation (0.807). Taken together, the two criteria identify BC and BE as the main source of concern. Accordingly, discriminant validity was largely established, but the empirical distinctiveness of BC and BE should be interpreted cautiously.

4.2 Structural model and direct effects

The The model explained 33.1% of the variance in ABI (adjusted $R^2 = 0.316$), 63.2% in BC (adjusted $R^2 = 0.621$), 63.1% in BD (adjusted $R^2 = 0.619$), and 59.0% in BE (adjusted $R^2 = 0.577$). The bootstrapping results reveal a differentiated pattern across the internal branding dimensions. IBC significantly predicted ABI ($\beta = 0.308$, $t = 2.671$, $p = .008$), but none of its direct effects on BC, BE, or BD were significant. BCT also significantly predicted ABI ($\beta = 0.254$, $t = 2.179$, $p = .029$), while its direct effects on all three BCB dimensions were non-significant. In contrast, BOL did not significantly predict ABI ($\beta = 0.098$, $t = 1.218$, $p = .223$), but it had significant direct effects on BC ($\beta = 0.178$, $t = 2.557$, $p = .011$), BE ($\beta = 0.313$, $t = 3.947$, $p < .001$), and BD ($\beta = 0.336$, $t = 5.560$, $p < .001$).

ABI significantly predicted all three BCB dimensions: BC ($\beta = 0.618$, $t = 12.751$, $p < .001$), BE ($\beta = 0.520$, $t = 7.418$, $p < .001$), and BD ($\beta = 0.515$, $t = 7.805$, $p < .001$). Thus, H1 and H2 were partially supported, whereas H3 was fully supported.

Table 3. Direct effects and hypothesis decisions

Hypothesis	Path	β	t	p	Decision
H3a	ABI → BC	0.618	12.751	< .001	Supported
H3c	ABI → BD	0.515	7.805	< .001	Supported
H3b	ABI → BE	0.520	7.418	< .001	Supported
H2b	BCT → ABI	0.254	2.179	.029	Supported
H1g	BCT → BC	0.100	1.269	.205	Not supported
H1i	BCT → BD	0.058	0.727	.467	Not supported
H1h	BCT → BE	-0.049	0.552	.581	Not supported
H2c	BOL → ABI	0.098	1.218	.223	Not supported
H1d	BOL → BC	0.178	2.557	.011	Supported
H1f	BOL → BD	0.336	5.560	< .001	Supported
H1e	BOL → BE	0.313	3.947	< .001	Supported
H2a	IBC → ABI	0.308	2.671	.008	Supported
H1a	IBC → BC	0.045	0.618	.537	Not supported
H1c	IBC → BD	0.068	0.887	.375	Not supported
H1b	IBC → BE	0.147	1.727	.084	Not supported

4.3 Indirect effects and mediation

The indirect-effects analysis shows that ABI fully mediates the effects of IBC and BCT on all three BCB dimensions. The indirect effects of IBC were significant for BC ($\beta = 0.190$, $t = 2.555$, $p = .011$), BE ($\beta = 0.160$, $t = 2.518$, $p = .012$), and BD ($\beta = 0.159$, $t = 2.497$, $p = .013$), while the corresponding direct effects were non-significant. BCT displayed the same pattern:

its indirect effects on BC (β = 0.157, t = 2.130, p = .033), BE (β = 0.132, t = 2.014, p = .044), and BD (β = 0.131, t = 2.001, p = .045) were significant, whereas the corresponding direct effects were not.

BOL showed the opposite pattern. None of its indirect effects through ABI were significant for BC (β = 0.060, t = 1.240, p = .215), BE (β = 0.051, t = 1.276, p = .202), or BD (β = 0.050, t = 1.239, p = .215). Because BOL had significant direct effects on all three BCB dimensions but no significant indirect effects through ABI, the relationship is best characterized as direct-only rather than mediated. H4 was therefore partially supported: H4a–H4f were supported, whereas H4g–H4i were not supported.

Table 4. Specific indirect effects and mediation decisions

Hypothesis	Indirect path	β	t	p	Mediation type	Decision
H4a	IBC → ABI → BC	0.190	2.555	.011	Full mediation	Supported
H4b	IBC → ABI → BE	0.160	2.518	.012	Full mediation	Supported
H4c	IBC → ABI → BD	0.159	2.497	.013	Full mediation	Supported
H4d	BCT → ABI → BC	0.157	2.130	.033	Full mediation	Supported
H4e	BCT → ABI → BE	0.132	2.014	.044	Full mediation	Supported
H4f	BCT → ABI → BD	0.131	2.001	.045	Full mediation	Supported
H4g	BOL → ABI → BC	0.060	1.240	.215	No mediation (direct-only)	Not supported
H4h	BOL → ABI → BE	0.051	1.276	.202	No mediation (direct-only)	Not supported
H4i	BOL → ABI → BD	0.050	1.239	.215	No mediation (direct-only)	Not supported

5. Discussion

The findings reveal a differentiated dual-pathway structure. IBC and BCT do not directly predict any of the three BCB dimensions, yet both significantly predict ABI, which in turn significantly predicts BC, BE, and BD. The mediation results show that this is not simply a pattern of isolated associations: ABI fully mediates all six IBC/BCT indirect pathways. In substantive terms, communication and training appear to influence brand-supportive behavior by first strengthening employees' affective connection with the brand.

BOL follows the opposite pattern. It does not significantly predict ABI but directly predicts all three BCB dimensions, with the strongest direct BOL effect observed for BD. Within this model, leadership therefore appears to shape brand-supportive behavior through a route other than affective identification, potentially through behavioral modeling, supervisory

expectations, reinforcement, or accountability. These mechanisms were not directly measured and should therefore be treated as plausible explanations rather than established mediators.

This dual-pathway structure explains why H1 is only partially supported. A reading of the direct-effect hypotheses alone could suggest that IB has limited behavioral influence because six of the nine IB-to-BCB paths are non-significant. The mediation results provide a different interpretation: IBC and BCT are associated with BCB indirectly through ABI, whereas BOL is associated with BCB directly.

A secondary finding concerns measurement. BC and BE show a notable discriminant-validity concern (HTMT = 0.956), and the Fornell-Larcker criterion also raises a discriminant-validity concern for this pair. Because BC, BE, and BD are conceptually related dimensions of the same higher-order BCB domain, some overlap is theoretically understandable; nevertheless, the finding should temper claims about the empirical distinctiveness of BC and BE in this sample.

5.1 Comparison with previous studies

The results are consistent with Burmann and Zeplin's (2005) conceptualization of brand commitment as a key psychological driver of BCB. Although the present study examines ABI rather than brand commitment, ABI also emerges as a significant predictor of brand-supportive behavior across all three BCB dimensions.

Punjaisri and Wilson (2007) show that IB, particularly through internal communication and training, positively influences employees' brand-related attitudes and behaviors. This is broadly consistent with the role of communication and training observed in the present study, although their effects here operate through ABI. Buil et al. (2016) likewise report that IBC and BCT positively influence organizational identification, which in turn predicts organization-directed citizenship behavior. The present findings extend this logic by showing that ABI predicts all three BCB dimensions and fully transmits the effects of IBC and BCT to those behaviors.

Piehler et al. (2016) also demonstrate the importance of affective mechanisms in the route to BCB. In their model, brand commitment fully mediates the relationship between brand identification and BCB, while the broader effect of brand understanding on BCB is only partially mediated through identification and commitment. This is broadly consistent with the

present emphasis on an affective mechanism, although the present study finds full mediation through ABI specifically for IBC and BCT.

Helm et al. (2016) find that brand identification positively predicts both brand pride and BCB, which is consistent with the significant positive effects of ABI on BC, BE, and BD in the present study. Adamu et al. (2020), however, find that both brand training and brand leadership directly affect BCB. The current results are only partially consistent with that pattern: leadership also has significant direct effects here, whereas training operates indirectly through ABI rather than directly.

A similar contrast appears in Güdük, Akdoğan and Akyol (2021), who find significant direct effects of IB dimensions, including internal communication and training, on BCB. In the present study, the corresponding IBC and BCT direct effects are not significant; their effects on BCB are instead transmitted through ABI. Qureshi et al. (2022) provide a useful bridge between these patterns: IB management affects BCB both directly and indirectly through brand commitment, indicating partial mediation. The present study suggests that such aggregate partial mediation may mask dimension-specific mechanisms, because communication and training operate through full affective mediation while leadership follows a direct-only path.

5.2 Theoretical and managerial implications

Theoretically, the study highlights the value of examining IB as a multidimensional construct rather than as a single behavioral driver. The three IB dimensions exhibit distinct structural roles: IBC and BCT are associated with BCB indirectly through ABI, whereas BOL is directly associated with all three BCB dimensions. This distinction helps reconcile previous studies that report direct IB effects with research emphasizing attitudinal or identification-based mechanisms. It also supports the value of disaggregating both IB and BCB rather than relying only on global composite relationships.

Managerially, the results suggest that the effects of communication and training on brand-supportive behavior may depend on whether these practices foster employees' affective connection with the brand. Organizations should therefore design communication and training not only to convey information and develop brand-related capabilities but also to help employees understand why the brand is personally and collectively meaningful. Leadership requires a somewhat different emphasis: because BOL directly predicts BC, BE, and BD

without a significant indirect effect through ABI, leaders may influence behavior through visible role modeling, clear expectations, reinforcement, and consistent brand-oriented management practices.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Several limitations should be considered. First, the cross-sectional design captures relationships at a single point in time and therefore limits temporal and causal interpretation. Moreover because, all variables were collected from the same respondents through a self-report questionnaire at the same point in time, common method bias cannot be ruled out. Longitudinal designs using data collected at different time points or from multiple sources could examine whether IB practices precede changes in ABI and BCB over time while reducing the potential influence of common method bias.

Second, the relatiely modest sample size (N=132), particulary in relation to the scope of PLS-SEM model, may limit the stability and precision of the estimates. In addition, the sample is restricted to employees in one state-owned organization in which IB practices were implemented. These sample characteristics limit the external validity of the study and the extent to which the findings can be generelized beyond the specific organizational context. Replication with larger and more heterogeneous samples, including employees from private-sector organizations and different industries and ownership structures, would strengthen generalizability.

Third, the model focuses on selected IB dimensions and psychological variables and does not include potentially relevant factors such as organizational culture, brand commitment, brand understanding, or employee tenure.

A measurement-related limitation should also be noted. BOL2, BOL3, and BOL5 were removed because of excessive VIF values, reducing the BOL scale from seven to four indicators. Although reliability and convergent validity remained satisfactory, the shorter scale may narrow the conceptual coverage of brand-oriented leadership. In addition, the BC-BE discriminant-validity concern (HTMT = 0.956) indicates that future studies should continue to examine the empirical distinctiveness of BCB sub-dimensions, potentially using larger and more heterogeneous samples.

6. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that internal branding practices do not show a single uniform pattern in their relationships with brand citizenship behavior. IBC and BCT are indirectly associated with BC, BE, and BD through affective brand identification, whereas BOL is directly associated with the same behaviors without a significant ABI-mediated pathway. ABI therefore plays a central but selective role: the effects of communication and training on BCB are transmitted through ABI, whereas ABI does not mediate the effects of leadership on BCB.

The findings partially support H1, H2, and H4, while fully supporting H3, which proposes the effects of ABI on all three BCB dimensions. Overall, the study advances a differentiated view of internal branding in which organizational practices are associated with brand-supportive employee behavior through distinct pathways. For practice, this implies that communication, training, and leadership should be managed as complementary but not interchangeable levers of internal brand management.

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