

# Perceived Organizational Purpose and Brand Loyalty: Explicating the intervening roles of Consumer- Company Identification and Sustainability orientation

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Received on: April 06, 2026 | Accepted on: June 19, 2026 | Published on: June 30, 2026

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## Abstract

*Organizations that focus their efforts on a central purpose can effectively inspire, engage, and energize their stakeholders, thereby securing their trust and loyalty. Grounded in social identity theory, consumer-company identification (CCI) posits that consumers can align themselves with firms by resonating with the firm's values and ideologies, thus fostering loyalty towards the firm. This study examines an individual's sustainability orientation (SO), which reflects the degree to which individuals prioritize sustainable practices in their daily lives, consumption patterns, and lifestyle choices. Building on this framework, this study aimed to investigate the positive relationship between perceived organizational purpose (POP) and brand loyalty (BLY), with CCI serving as a mediating variable. This study also explored whether SO functions as a moderator between POP and brand loyalty (BLY). Two major publicly listed companies were selected as stimuli for testing our model. We collected 260 usable responses from Indian residents via a web survey to conduct Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and assess the robustness of the proposed structural model, followed by construct validity tests. Subsequently, the PROCESS model was employed to test the effect of POP on BLY, considering CCI as a mediator and SO as a moderator. The results indicate that CCI fully mediates the relationship between POP and BLY. Additionally, the moderating role of SO was found to be insignificant. Subsequently, we discuss the findings, and the theoretical and managerial implications are outlined.*

**Keywords:** *Organizational purpose, Perceived organizational purpose, Sustainability orientation, Brand loyalty.*

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## 1. Introduction:

Corporate brands are increasingly integrating purpose-driven initiatives into their business strategies (Mayer, 2021). An organization's purpose encapsulates its fundamental reason for

existence and relevance in the marketplace (Williams et al., 2022). More specifically, it reflects the impact that an organization has on its stakeholders and society at large (Thaichon et al., 2022). In this hyperconnected world, firms operate in a globally polarized landscape

characterized by pressing social and political challenges, including capitalism, climate change, LGBTQIA+ rights, social injustice, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (Blocker et al., 2024). Industry reports and business analyses consistently reveal that consumers are becoming more discerning regarding corporations and brands' purpose-driven actions (Edelman, 2023). Modern consumers increasingly expect brands to be vocal and demonstrate genuine concern for complex societal issues (Podnar and Golob, 2024). This shift underscores the evolving dynamics of consumer-brand interactions, necessitating a reassessment of traditional brand roles within contemporary society that extend beyond their functional value (Swaminathan et al., 2020). Furthermore, consumers increasingly seek a sense of purpose and fulfillment, aspiring to embrace a sustainable and gratifying way of life (Rennollet et al., 2020; Giertz et al., 2022).

Organizations that integrate their operations with a core purpose can inspire and engage their stakeholders, thereby cultivating trust and authenticity. (Rudeloff & Michalski, 2023). Such purpose-driven strategies are particularly appealing to socially conscious consumers whose purchasing decisions are significantly influenced by an organization's foundational values and principles (Goedertier et al., 2024). Research indicates that a clearly defined organizational purpose can enhance brand reputation and image while cultivating a larger and more loyal consumer base (Williams et al., 2022). Brand loyalty, regarded as one of the most significant and desirable outcomes of purpose-driven branding, underscores the strength of consumer-brand relationships (France et al., 2024).

The extant literature on brand purpose has primarily examined its associations with employees and firms, with insufficient focus on consumer perspectives (Hajdas and Kłeczek

2021; Williams et al. 2022; Fernandes et al. 2024). However, these studies have not been validated empirically. Therefore, the present study aims to empirically investigate the impact of consumers' perceived organizational purpose on brand loyalty, thereby addressing the existing research gap.

Consumers' perceptions of firms can be enhanced when brands and organizations act as relationship partners (Fournier, 1998), thereby fostering stronger consumer-company identification (CCI) (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Grounded in social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), CCI posits that consumers can identify with firms through their social identity by aligning themselves with the firms' values and ideologies (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Furthermore, consumers' social identity and heightened identification with brands and organizations contribute to increased brand loyalty towards these entities (He and Harris, 2012). However, the values and ideologies that drive this identification are not uniform across all consumers. For individuals who prioritize environmental responsibility and sustainability initiatives (Fatma & Khan, 2023), a brand's commitment to sustainability becomes a central criterion for deeper alignment. Thus, when a brand's purpose visibly reflects sustainability orientations, identification deepens (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003).

Sustainability orientation (SO) represents an organization's dedication to embedding sustainability principles within its core business operations. SO evaluates the extent to which an organization's mission extends beyond mere rhetoric and is actively pursued through measurable initiatives (Hansen et al., 2015). This study investigates an individual's sustainability orientation, which encompasses a mindset, values, and behaviors oriented towards environmental conservation, social equity, and

long-term well-being. It evaluates the extent to which individuals prioritize sustainable practices in their daily activities, consumption patterns and lifestyle choices (De Groot and Steg, 2008; Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010).

Building on the preceding discussion, this study investigates the positive correlation between perceived organizational purpose (POP) and brand loyalty (BLY), with consumer–corporate identification (CCI) serving as a mediating variable. Furthermore, this study examines whether individuals' sustainability orientation (SO) moderates the relationship between POP and BLY. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: initially, the theoretical background, literature review, and hypothesis development are presented. Subsequently, the research methodology section delineates the study design and sampling procedures, followed by the results section, which reports the findings from the hypothesis testing and provides model fit indices. The discussion section elaborates on the study's theoretical and managerial contributions. Finally, the limitations of the study and scope for future research are discussed.

## **2. Theoretical Background:**

The influence of perceived organizational purpose on brand loyalty can be elucidated through the application of self-congruity and social identity theories. Self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1985) posits that individuals are inclined to establish strong connections with brands that align with their personal values, beliefs, and self-concepts. This theory suggests that consumers are likely to develop favorable attitudes and deeper affiliations with brands when they perceive an alignment between their values and the brand's purpose and values, such as sustainability or social justice, which extend beyond mere functional benefits. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

(Tajfel and Turner, 1979) proposes that consumers derive a sense of identity from the social groups with which they associate, including brands. It further posits that an individual's self-esteem is influenced by multiple group memberships, with a positive social identity enhancing self-esteem and vice versa. Consumers may resonate with purpose-driven brands by identifying with their values, fostering an emotional attachment that strengthens loyalty. This identification can promote loyal behavior, as consumers perceive ongoing brand patronage as reinforcing their social values. Drawing on the principles of self-congruity theory and SIT, we propose that perceived organizational purpose significantly influences brand loyalty. When there is perceived congruence between corporate brand values and individual personal values, consumers are likely to exhibit enduring loyalty towards the organization.

## **3. Literature review and hypothesis development**

### **3.1. Perceived Organizational Purpose and Brand Loyalty**

POP reflects the shared understanding of stakeholders (e.g., consumers, employees, and shareholders) views on a company's commitment to addressing broader societal needs beyond profit maximization (Jasinenko and Steuber, 2023). From a consumer perspective, organizational purpose demonstrates a company's commitment to creating values that transcend financial gain, aligning instead with meaningful social, ethical, or environmental contributions (Henderson and Van den Steen, 2015). Prior studies suggest that purpose-oriented branding strategies can affect consumer behavior by resonating with consumers' aspirations for an improved world (Hajdas and Kłeczek, 2021). Many organizations and brands have actively defined, communicated, and implemented their

purpose, moving beyond the traditional scope of corporate social responsibility (CSR) frameworks and practices (Fatma & Khan, 2023). These initiatives, driven by evolving societal expectations, reflect a more profound commitment between consumers and organizations (Williams et al. 2022). For instance, the social impact company 'Too Good To Go' (TGTG) consistently demonstrates strong integrity and moral character by translating its purpose into tangible actions and communication through a warm and empathetic tone (Kjeldsen and Schmeltz, 2023). Research suggests that purpose-driven efforts can significantly influence consumer attitudes and behaviors, fostering brand loyalty in ways that traditional marketing tactics cannot achieve (France et al., 2024). When consumers perceive an alignment between a brand's values and their personal beliefs, their emotional attachment to the brand and organization is enhanced (Fernandes et al., 2024). We thereby propose that,

**H1:** Perceived organizational purpose has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

### **3.2. Perceived Organizational Purpose and Consumer-company Identification**

Grounded in Social Identity Theory (SIT) as proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), Consumer-Company Identification (CCI) represents the extent to which consumers perceive themselves as psychologically affiliated with a corporate brand, viewing it as an extension of their identity, and consequently engaging in behaviors that enhance the brand's status (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). When consumers perceive a company's purpose as authentic and closely aligned with their personal values, they are more likely to identify with that company, culminating in consumer-company identification (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Ashforth and Mael (1989) posited that organizations significantly

influence the formation of individuals' social identities, thereby conceptualizing the person-organization relationship as a sense of "oneness" or "belongingness" with the organization.

Employing social identity theory, the relationship between POP and CCI is described as being symbiotic. Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) argue that organizations with objectives extending beyond mere profit generation are more proficient at attracting consumers who seek alignment with entities that reflect their values. Grey et al. (2024) found that companies articulating their socially responsible objectives experience enhanced consumer identification, loyalty, and favorable word-of-mouth behavior. Brands perceived as genuinely committed to social causes, particularly those aligned with environmental values, witness increased consumer behavior that is advantageous to the firm (France et al., 2024). Individuals prioritize brands that exemplify social responsibility, making authenticity essential (Park, 2024). Consumers identify with reputable and distinguished companies because of social motivations and the social signals associated with such reputations (Wolter et al., 2021). Hence, we propose that

**H2:** Perceived organizational purpose has a positive impact on consumer company identification.

### **3.3. Consumer-company identification and Brand loyalty**

Consumers frequently exhibit heightened loyalty through improved evaluations of the company and increased identification with it (Deng and Zu 2017). This relationship is characterized by the consumer's commitment to repurchase the brand despite situational influences, willingness to pay a price premium, and responsiveness to marketing efforts, thereby fostering stronger

brand loyalty (Uikey et al., 2025). Bhattacharya and Sen (2003) also assert that when consumers express a positive attitude towards a company and its values, it results in loyalty to that organization. A positive image associated with the company leads to stronger brand loyalty, including repeat purchases and extra-role behavior (Rather et al., 2018). Research has also demonstrated that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation can influence the relationship between Corporate Citizenship Initiatives (CCI) and loyalty (White and Yu, 2024).

Self-congruity theory, as proposed by Sirgy (1985), suggests that individuals are inclined to select products and services that are congruent with their self-image, thereby reinforcing their self-concept and achieving self-consistency in their choices. Brand loyalty is influenced by various factors, among which Corporate Consumer Identification (CCI) is significant (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). We propose that consumer identification with companies enhances loyalty towards brands and organizations, and the resultant alignment with the values and beliefs of the organization cultivates a positive attitude towards consumer behavior (Reitsamer et al., 2024). These favorable sentiments are readily transferred to the brands and organizations with which consumers engage in transactions (Sirgy et al., 2008; Rather et al., 2018). Hence, we hypothesize that

**H3:** Consumer-company identification has a positive impact on brand loyalty.

### **3.4.Moderating effect of Sustainability Orientation**

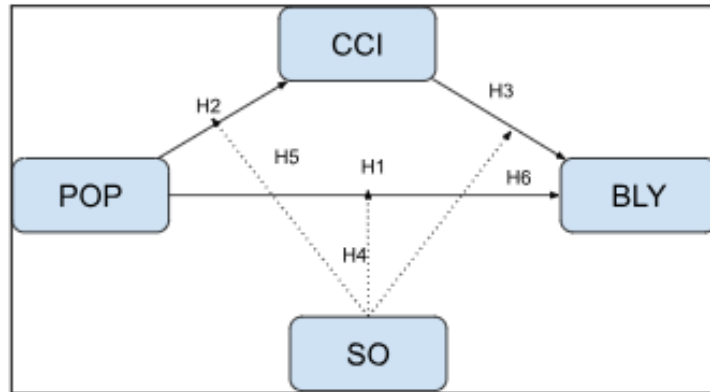
This study examines an individual's sustainability orientation (SO), characterized by their

awareness of environmental protection, social responsibilities, and personal values influencing these concerns (Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010). Prior research has investigated various personal factors affecting individual SO, including self-identity, values, sustainability perceptions and social awareness (Khizar et al., 2022). The existing literature suggests that brands that consistently promote sustainability values cultivate stronger emotional connections with customers, leading to increased loyalty (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001). When a company's sustainability initiatives align with consumer values, it enhances identification and loyalty, particularly when environmental goals and progress are communicated authentically and transparently, fostering trust (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). Organizations with sustainability-focused missions inspire sustainable behavior among stakeholders, serving as moral and ethical guides that shape consumer perceptions. Sustainability-oriented customers are more inclined to support companies that align with ethical, environmental, and socially responsible practices (Liang et al. 2020). Therefore, we posit that

**H4:** Sustainability Orientation positively moderates the relationship between perceived organizational purpose and brand loyalty.

**H5:** Sustainability Orientation positively moderates the relationship between perceived organizational purpose and consumer-company identification.

**H6:** Sustainability Orientation positively moderates the relationship between consumer-company identification and brand loyalty.



**Figure 1** Conceptual model of the study

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1. Stimuli selection

To ensure the selection of suitable brands, we consulted industry practitioners and academic experts. We focused on identifying brands with which respondents were likely to be well-acquainted, allowing them to offer objective survey responses. Initially, 15 brands were chosen based on their consistent societal contributions, environmental impact, trustworthiness, and ability to deliver consumer

values. Ultimately, two brands, TATA and Hindustan Unilever, were selected for this study. These corporate brands operate across diverse product categories, including consumer goods, durables, and automobiles.

### 4.2. Measurement Instruments

The proposed model was tested by adapting relevant scales from the literature (see **Table 1**). Refer to the annexure for the list of items used. The list of items of the survey questionnaire can be found in *Appendix 1*.

**Table 1** Measurement Scales

SI No.	Constructs	Scales	No of Items
1.	Perceived organizational purpose	Jasinenko and Steuber (2023)	6
2.	Consumer-Company Identification	Deng and Xu (2017)	5
4.	Brand Loyalty	Yoo and Donthu (2001)	3
4.	Sustainability Orientation	Kuckertz and Wagner (2010)	3

**Table 2** Respondents' Profile (Demographic details of the respondents)

S.N.	Demographic Variable	Group	Frequency	%
1	Age (In Years)	Up to 25	51	20
		26-35	82	32
		36-50	81	31
		51 and above	46	18
2	Gender	Male	144	55
		Female	116	45
3	Educational Qualification	UG	98	38
		PG	113	43
		Others	49	19
4	Monthly Household Income (INR Per Annum)	Upto INR 5,00,000	84	32
		Upto INR 5,00,000	71	27
		Upto INR 6,00,000 - 10,00,000	62	24
		Upto INR 11,00,000 - 15,00,000	43	17

### 4.3.Sampling

The sampling frame for the present study comprised Indian citizens aged 18–51 years who possessed a minimum educational qualification of an undergraduate degree and had a reasonable understanding of the corporate work ecosystem. Data were collected through an online survey administered between October 2024 and December 2024 using convenience sampling. A total of 300 survey forms were distributed, resulting in 280 responses being received. After excluding incomplete forms, the final count of usable responses was 260 participants. Please refer to *Table 2* presents the respondents' profiles.

## 5. Analysis and Findings

The analysis commenced with reliability testing and descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS v.21. Harman's single-factor test was employed to

assess common method bias. Subsequently, IBM AMOS v.21 was used to validate the measurement model, confirming the factor structure and ensuring alignment with the data. The structural model was estimated to test the hypotheses. Finally, moderation analysis was conducted using the PROCESS model (Hayes, 2018). Descriptive and reliability analyses involved running a reliability test for each construct.

### 5.1.Descriptive and Reliability analysis results

Each construct underwent a reliability test, revealing Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.855 to 0.916. When all measures were considered collectively, Cronbach's alpha was 0.933, confirming the reliability of the measures (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The standard deviations ranged from 0.919 to 1.146, while the average values were between 5.14 and 5.62 (*see Table 3*).

**Table 3** Reliability analysis results of the items

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
<b>Perceived Organizational Purpose (POP)</b>			
POP1	5.62	1.042	0.916
POP2	5.29	1.108	
POP3	5.22	.919	
POP4	5.35	1.107	
POP5	5.51	.984	
POP6	5.43	1.146	
<b>Consumer-Company Identification (CCI)</b>			
CCI1	5.33	0.969	0.889
CCI2	5.24	0.986	
CCI3	5.32	1.134	
CCI4	5.14	1.00	
CCI5	5.45	1.014	
<b>Brand Loyalty (BLY)</b>			
BL1	5.52	1.042	0.853
BL2	5.50	.927	
BL3	5.31	1.085	
<b>Sustainability Orientation (SO)</b>			
SO1	5.47	1.063	0.857
SO2	5.47	.952	
SO3	5.27	1.075	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>0.933</b>

### 5.2. Common method bias

To check for common method bias (CMB), Harman's single-factor test was employed (Podsakoff et al., 2012). This analysis revealed that there was no significant CMV, as the first factor explained 44.30% of the variance, falling below the 50% threshold level.

### 5.3. Measurement model test

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using IBM AMOS 21.0 was performed to confirm the factor structure. All variables exhibited significant factor loadings (Fig 2). The measurement model fit met all the required threshold levels (see Table 4) recommended by (Hu and Bentler, 1999)

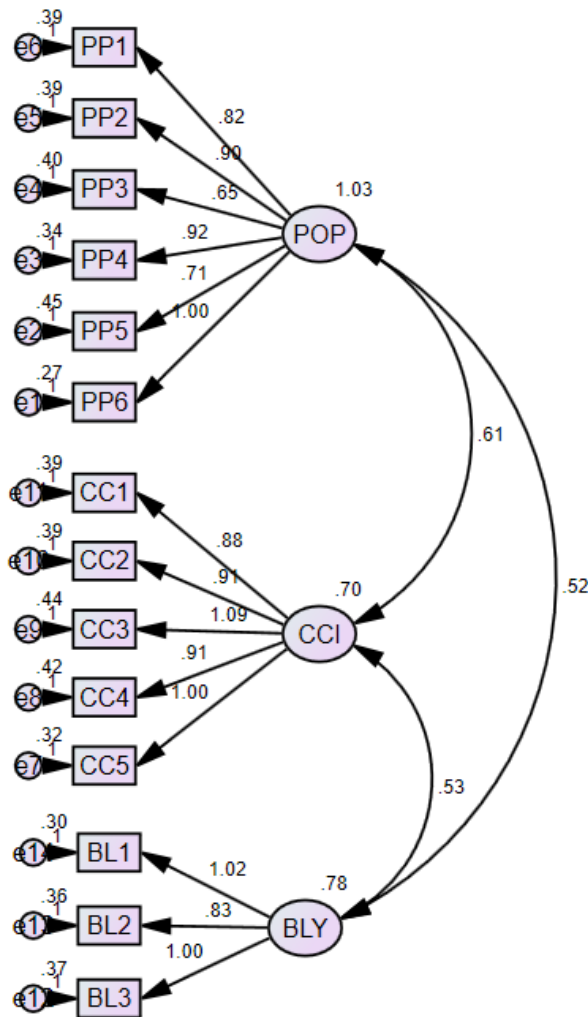


Figure 2 Measurement Model

**Table 4** Model Fit Indices. Source: Hu and Bentler (1999)

S.N.	Measure	Finding	Threshold
1	$\chi^2$	156.159	---
2	Degrees of freedom	70	---
3	$\chi^2$ / Degrees of freedom	156.159/70= 2.231	< 3 Good
4	p-value	<0.000	> 0.05
5	Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI)	.923	> 0.90
6	Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	.965	> 0.90
7	Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	.955	> 0.90
8	Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	.965	> 0.90
9	RMSEA	.069	< 0.08
10	Expected Cross Validation Index (ECVI)	ECVI value for Saturated Model =.811 ECVI value for Independence Model = 9.901	The independence model's ECVI value should be the highest of all Indices

**Table 5** Analysis of Validity

	CR	AVE	POP	CCI	BLY
POP	.850	.641	<b>.801</b>		
CCI	.881	.638	.722	<b>.799</b>	
BLY	.860	.671	.580	.697	<b>.819</b>

#### 5.4. Convergent and Discriminant Validity

All constructs met the threshold levels of AVE variance extracted (>0.05) and composite reliability (>0.60) (Hair et al., 2013). Hence, convergent validity was established. Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square roots of the AVE values to the inter-factor correlations, as suggested by (Fornell and Larcker (1981) and Hair et al. (2013). All the

square roots of the AVE values exceeded the corresponding correlations, confirming discriminant validity (see Table 5).

#### 5.5. Hypothesis test:

The structural model (Fig.3) was used to test H1–H4. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6.

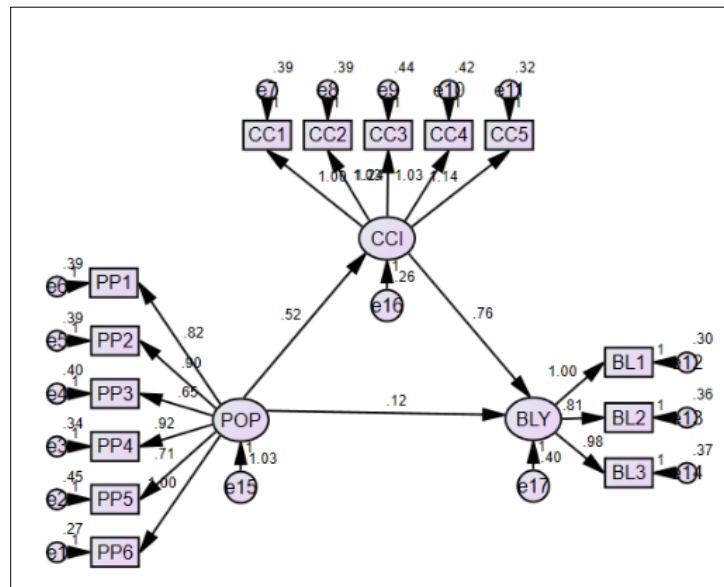
**Table 6** Hypothesis test results

Relationship	Unstandardised Estimate	Standardised Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p-value	R-Square	Result
POP→ CCI	0.539	0.725	0.051	10.483	0.000	0.002	Supported
POP→ BLY	0.144	0.158	0.080	1.814	.070	.503	Not Supported
CCI→ BLY	0.723	0.587	0.117	6.180	0.000	.526	Supported

The structural model demonstrated a significant relationship between POP and CCI ( $\beta = 0.725$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). Similarly, significant associations were identified between CCI and BLY ( $\beta = 0.587$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). However, the relationship between POP and BLY was not found significant ( $\beta = 0.158$ ,  $p < 0.000$ ). Therefore, CCI positively mediates the relationship between POP and BLY which means POP→CCI→BLY is a full mediation path.

### 5.5. Moderation analysis

The moderating effects of sustainability orientation on the relationships between POP, CCI, and BLY were tested using Hayes' (2018) PROCESS macro (Model 59). None of the interaction terms were found significant in the proposed relationships (see Table 7) suggesting a lack of the intervening effect of sustainability orientation.



**Figure 3** Structural Model

**Table 7** Moderation Analysis

Path	Moderator	Coefficient	p-value	Decision
POP→ BLY	SO	.0096	.2868	Not Significant
POP→ CCI	SO	-.0134	.1727	Not Significant
CCI→ BLY	SO	.0036	.7238	Not Significant

## 6. Discussion and Implications

The discovery that Customer-Company Identification (CCI) fully mediates the relationship between Perceived Organizational Purpose (POP) and Brand Loyalty (BLY) is theoretically consistent. Consumers do not directly translate their perception of a firm's purpose into loyal behavior; rather, identification precedes this process. This finding is in alignment with Bhattacharya and Sen's (2003) foundational argument, which posits that consumers engage with companies in ways that fulfill their need for self-definition and self-enhancement. An organization's purpose serves as the anchor for its identity, and when consumers perceive this identity as resonant with their own values, they internalize it as part of their social self.

This full mediation model indicates that CCI functions not as a supplementary mechanism but as the crucial psychological link between purpose and loyalty. In the absence of identification, perceived purpose remains a cognitive assessment rather than forming an emotional connection. Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) elucidates this phenomenon: group membership, including organizational identification, fosters positive affect and in-group favoritism, which is ultimately manifested in behavioral loyalty. The study by Urde (2013) where the author conceptualized corporate identity as the core of the organization's existence validates this perspective by suggesting organization purpose as the central element of identity that further extends to stakeholders and shareholders.

The non-significant direct path of POP on BLY supports this interpretation. Value congruence alone does not motivate consumers toward loyal behavior. What is crucial is whether the organization's identity resonates sufficiently with the consumer's self-concept to foster identification. This finding is consistent with Fernandes et al. (2024), who contend that the emotional dimension of brand relationships, rather than mere cognitive alignment, drives loyalty-related outcomes. TATA and HUL, the two brands examined in this study, possess strong and long-established reputations for social responsibility in the Indian market. Consumers may recognize their purpose without directly acting on it, with loyalty instead being mediated through the more affective mechanism of CCI.

Self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1985) also validates this pattern. When consumers discern a strong alignment between their actual self and the identity projected by the firm, the psychological comparison engenders positive affect, which subsequently enhances CCI and, through it, brand loyalty. The implication is that organizational purpose must be communicated in a manner that fosters identification, rather than merely awareness. Consequently, managers should design purpose-driven communication that directly addresses consumers' identities and self-concepts, as opposed to employing broad societal messaging that informs but fails to establish a connection.

### The Non-Significant Role of Sustainability Orientation

The lack of significance of SO across all three moderated paths necessitates thorough investigation. The coefficients of the interaction terms were not only small but also negligible, ranging from .0036 to .0134, with p-values reaching as high as .72. SO did not exert a meaningful influence on any of the tested relationships, and several explanations may account for this observed pattern.

The SO scale employed in this study (Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010) was initially designed to assess entrepreneurial intentions, focusing on general attitudinal dispositions toward sustainability rather than SO as a specific criterion for consumption. A respondent who strongly concurs with the statement that "environmental problems are one of the biggest challenges for our society" may not necessarily apply this concern when evaluating a corporate brand for purchase. Research differentiates between global environmental concern, which reflects broad values, and domain-specific SO, which predicts behavior within a particular consumption context (Dickel and Eckardt, 2020). When assessed at the trait level, SO tends to predict general lifestyle orientations rather than specific brand-level outcomes. Future research should consider employing narrower, consumption-specific measures of SO to more accurately capture its moderating potential.

Second, the brands selected for this study are intricately woven into the Indian socio-cultural fabric. Notably, TATA is strongly associated with national identity, ethical practices, and community welfare, associations that precede contemporary sustainability discourse. For such brands, consumers may depend on established reputational cues rather than assessing sustainability-specific indicators. Sustainability orientation (SO) may exert a more significant influence when consumers encounter newer brands or product categories where sustainability acts as a genuine differentiating factor, rather than

a baseline expectation already integrated into brand perception (France et al., 2024).

Third, the well-documented intention-behavior gap in sustainability research is particularly pertinent in this context (Khizar et al., 2022). Within India's diverse social and economic landscape, consumers may possess strong pro-environmental values yet make decisions influenced by factors such as price, familiarity, or social norms. The cultural diversity across regions, generations, and income groups implies that SO is influenced by significantly different contextual pressures, which can attenuate its moderating effect when considered as a uniform variable across a pooled sample.

It is imperative to consider the potential for consumer skepticism. In contexts where sustainability messaging is ubiquitous, consumers with high SO may exhibit skepticism rather than increased engagement, particularly if they perceive a discrepancy between a brand's professed purpose and its actual behavior (Ahmad et al., 2024; Vredenburg et al., 2020). Walter et al. (2024) demonstrated that perceived inauthenticity in purpose-driven branding significantly undermines consumer outcomes. Among respondents with higher SO, this skepticism may have partially mitigated any amplifying effect, thereby attenuating the interaction rather than enhancing it.

These patterns collectively suggest that SO, when evaluated at a general dispositional level, does not consistently affect the relationship between perceived organizational purpose and consumer behavior. It should be considered a domain-sensitive variable, with its impact dependent on measurement specificity, brand category, cultural context, and perceptions of authenticity. Future research that investigates these dimensions will be better positioned to identify the conditions under which SO effectively moderates the relationship between purpose and loyalty.

## 7. Limitations and Future research scopes

The present research is not out of limitations. The study did not account for the potential impact of gender. Future research could investigate the direct effects of respondent characteristics, such as age groups (e.g., 25–35 years) (Pfund et al., 2020), generational cohorts (e.g., Gen Z, Generation Alpha), and gender (e.g., male vs. female). We utilized SO as a personality trait. Future scholars should examine the role of gender in moderating the effects of SO and whether SO

differs across gender types. Our study was based in India, and the findings were influenced by the specific cultural context of Indian respondents. Future research could also explore how individuals from different countries, with their unique cultures, project their SO, particularly between short and long-term goal orientations and entrepreneurial intentions. Finally, while we used SO as a moderator in this study, future research could test the model using other intervening variables and examine their effects on the direct relationship.

## Appendix 1: List of items in the questionnaire

Perceived Organizational Purpose	
POP1	This organization aims to contribute to the common good
POP2	This organization seeks to create a positive change in the world.
POP3	This organization aims to achieve something that goes beyond its own benefit.
POP4	This organization remains true to its core values even when conflicts occur.
POP5	This organization's higher goals guide decisions and actions
POP6	This organization inspires by providing a higher cause

Consumer-Company Identification	
CCI1	The principles of this organization are similar to my values.
CCI2	When this organization gets praised, it feels like a personal compliment to me.
CCI3	When this organization gets criticism, it feels like a personal insult to me
CCI4	I am very interested in what others think about this organization
CCI5	I will spread positive information about this organization to others and resist negative information

Brand Loyalty	
BL1	I consider myself to be loyal to this organization's brand.
BL2	This organization's brand would be my first choice.
BL3	I will not buy other brands if this organization's brand is available at the store.

Sustainability Orientation	
SO1	I think environmental problems are one of the biggest challenges for our society
SO2	I think purpose-driven corporate brands should address larger social responsibilities.
SO3	I think each company's foundations should be based on purpose-driven business philosophies.

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### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

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The author/s declare/s no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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