NEXUSTAINABILITY AS INSTITUTIONAL BRANDING FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: A TWELVE-MONTH CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH COMMUNICATION IN A PHILIPPINE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

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Higher education institutions increasingly localize the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through institution-specific frameworks, yet little is known about how such frameworks function as recurring social-media brands for research communication. This study examined NEXUStainability as the institutional SDG branding framework used by the Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office of San Pablo Colleges from September 2025 to August 2026. NEXUStainability integrates the SPC Precepts of Virtus, Patria, and Scientia; the SPCian Intended Graduate Attributes; the QUESTS Institutional Research Agenda; and the UN SDGs. An exploratory quantitative and qualitative content analysis was applied to publicly retrievable posts and independently verifiable annual research, publication, conference, and capacity-building evidence. Exact post-level statistics were limited to 10 consecutive posts published from July 20 to August 20, 2026 because the complete platform archive was not publicly accessible. NEXUStainability branding appeared in all 10 posts (100%), while nine posts (90.0%) demonstrated substantive alignment with at least one SDG. Eight of the nine aligned posts (88.9%) integrated two or more goals, producing 21 linkages or 2.33 SDGs per aligned post. SDG 4 dominated the verified subset, followed by SDGs 9, 8, 17, and 3. The wider annual evidence also demonstrated SDGs 5, 13, and 16. The results position NEXUStainability as a consistent institutional signifier that connects research visibility with SPC's values, graduate formation, research priorities, and global sustainability commitments. Its universal presence, however, was not always accompanied by equally explicit explanation of its components or specific SDG pathways. A layered branding and reporting protocol is proposed to strengthen brand meaning, traceability, and institutional accountability.

Keywords: content analysis; higher education branding; NEXUStainability; research communication; Sustainable Development Goals

Introduction

The 2030 Agenda positions the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an integrated and indivisible framework for advancing human well-being, environmental protection, institutional capacity, and shared prosperity (United Nations, 2015). Higher education institutions are central to this agenda because they generate knowledge, prepare professionals, develop innovations, support evidence-informed policy, and convene partnerships across government, industry, and communities (Sustainable Development Solutions Network Australia/Pacific, 2017; UNESCO, 2020). Their contribution, however, depends not only on the volume of research or outreach completed, but also on whether institutional stakeholders can recognize how these activities connect with sustainable development.

Social media has become an important part of this visibility infrastructure by rapidly translating research outputs, conferences, faculty development, student transitions, and partnerships into continuous, searchable public narratives. Organizational social-media research has shown that platforms can support information dissemination, community building, and stakeholder engagement, although institutions often use them predominantly as one-way information channels (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012; Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009). For sustainability-oriented higher education, this creates both an opportunity and a measurement problem: activities may substantively advance the SDGs without explicitly naming them, making institutional impact less visible and difficult to aggregate. Although universities have increasingly incorporated sustainability into teaching, research, campus operations, governance, and external engagement (Aleixo, Leal, & Azeiteiro, 2018; Lozano et al., 2015), integration remains uneven, with education and environmental themes often receiving greater attention than social, economic, and governance dimensions (Leal Filho et al., 2019). Whole-institution approaches therefore require mechanisms that connect academic work, organizational learning, partnership, and reporting rather than treating sustainability as isolated projects (Purcell, Henriksen, & Spengler, 2019).

At San Pablo Colleges (SPC), the Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office (REPO) supports research development, publication, dissemination, evaluation, and institutional knowledge use. Earlier SPC scholarship identified educational innovation initiatives as mechanisms for

institutional development (Lunar & Eala, 2023), linked quality-assurance practices and processes with institutional sustainability (Lunar, Perez, & Eala, 2024), and associated institutional sustainability initiatives with perceived institutional effectiveness (Lunar, Eala, & Perez, 2025). Building on these foundations, SPC localizes the global agenda through NEXUStainability, its institutional framework and sustainability brand harmonizing four elements: the SPC Precepts of Virtus (ethical foundation), Patria (social responsibility and nation-building), and Scientia (knowledge creation and lifelong learning); the SPCian Intended Graduate Attributes (SIGA); the QUESTS Institutional Research Agenda; and the United Nations SDGs (Lunar, 2025a, 2025b; San Pablo Colleges, 2024a, 2024b). Consistent with sustainability competency and educational-outcome scholarship (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019; Rieckmann, 2012), SIGA translates the precepts into graduate formation, while QUESTS organizes scholarship into six research pathways: Quality Management, Accounting, and Business Studies; Universal Education and Healthcare Services; Extension Services and Social Interactions; Sustainability and Environmental Protection; Technology Advancement and Digitalization; and SPCian Studies and Creative Works.

Analytically, the visible appearance of a sustainability brand is distinct from substantive sustainability content, as posts may consistently carry NEXUStainability branding while varying in how explicitly they explain the framework, identify a QUESTS pathway, or demonstrate a specific SDG contribution. The literature consulted for this study addresses university sustainability integration, organizational social-media communication, and institutional quality assurance at SPC, yet it does not examine how a locally developed higher education sustainability framework operates as an umbrella brand across a research office's social-media communication or distinguish brand consistency from substantive SDG alignment.

This study is delimited to REPO's publicly verifiable communication and related institutional research records from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2026, with post-level quantitative analysis confined to 10 consecutive publicly retrievable posts published between July 20 and August 20, 2026, due to platform archival restrictions. Specifically, the study sought to answer six questions: (a) how consistently NEXUStainability appeared as institutional SDG branding; (b) which SDGs were evident in the twelve-month body of REPO-related communication and outputs; (c) what proportion of the verified subset demonstrated substantive SDG alignment;

(d) how frequently the subset demonstrated multi-SDG integration; (e) which SDGs and QUESTS pathways dominated the verified posts; and (f) what branding-depth gaps and institutional implications emerged. Because the study was an exploratory content analysis, no hypotheses were tested. The purpose of the study was to examine how NEXUStainability functioned as an institutional SDG branding and communication framework across REPO's social-media posts and annual research records.

Method

The study employed an exploratory mixed-evidence content-analysis design (Krippendorff, 2019; Neuendorf, 2017) because public platform restrictions prevented a complete census of all Facebook posts within the twelve-month window from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2026. Quantitative coding was applied to the complete set of consecutive posts that could be independently retrieved and verified, whereas directed qualitative analysis interpreted the broader annual evidence through the four-component NEXUStainability Framework and the official descriptions of the 17 SDGs. No independent or dependent variables were manipulated or tested.

The primary unit of analysis was an individual post published on the official REPO Facebook page (San Pablo Colleges Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office, 2026). The quantitative subset comprised 10 consecutive REPO posts dated July 20 to August 20, 2026, reproduced by a publicly accessible page index, encompassing publication alerts, research conferences, research capability-building activities, and one social greeting. Treating these records as a verified consecutive subset avoided extrapolating exact annual percentages from an incomplete archive. The supplementary annual evidence corpus also included publicly indexed REPO-supported research outputs and SPC research events, such as the Research Conference on Transformative Education, Innovation, and Sustainable Futures 2026 (San Pablo Colleges Graduate School, 2026), when their dates, subjects, and institutional relationships were independently verifiable; these records established thematic SDG breadth across the year without being added to the post denominator.

Each item was coded using a five-layer NEXUStainability coding architecture. First, items were coded for NEXUStainability brand presence,

defined as the visible use of the integrative framework name, mark, or institutional sustainability identifier connecting the architectural layers. Second, items were assessed for framework depth by checking explicit references to the SPC Precepts (Virtus as moral excellence, Patria as social responsibility, and Scientia as knowledge creation), SIGA (value-laden individuals, socially responsible citizens, lifelong learners, and divergent thinkers), the six QUESTS pathways, or specific numbered SDGs. Third, substantive SDG alignment was assigned when a post's principal content clearly contributed to one or more official SDGs, regardless of whether the numbered goal was stated, while posts carrying the brand without defensible SDG content were classified as brand-only. Multiple SDG codes were permitted because the goals are integrated and indivisible.

For the verified subset, brand presence and substantive alignment rates were calculated using all 10 posts as the denominator, whereas the nine substantively aligned posts formed the conditional denominator for multi-SDG integration and SDG density (total coded SDG linkages divided by aligned posts). QUESTS pathways were assigned according to each post's principal subject, and the broader annual evidence was summarized using ordinal descriptors based on recurrence, diversity, and centrality to REPO's functions. To ensure trustworthiness and ethical compliance, coding decisions were logged in a post-by-post matrix requiring direct content-based rationales, ambiguous alignments were excluded rather than inferred from institutional affiliation alone, and only publicly available institutional records were analyzed without collecting private account data or analyzing personal names as human-subject data.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the verified subset and twelve-month institutional corpus revealed consistent umbrella branding paired with concentrated thematic alignment across education, innovation, workforce readiness, and partnerships. These findings are presented and discussed below in relation to the six research questions.

Brand Consistency, Substantive Alignment, and Multi-SDG Integration

Within the 10 consecutive verified posts, NEXUStainability appeared in every post, establishing a 100% brand-presence rate. Nine of the 10 posts demonstrated substantive alignment with at least one SDG (90.0%), while

a single post—an August 11 birthday greeting—carried the NEXUStainability mark without substantive SDG content and was classified as brand-only (10.0%). Across the nine aligned posts, coding yielded 21 total SDG linkages, corresponding to 2.10 linkages per total post and a strong cross-SDG density of 2.33 linkages per aligned post. Eight of the nine aligned posts (88.9%) integrated two or three SDGs simultaneously, indicating highly interconnected research communication rather than isolated single-issue reporting.

This integrated pattern is notable because universities frequently compartmentalize sustainability initiatives across separate administrative units, whereas whole-institution scholarship emphasizes mutually reinforcing linkages among teaching, research, governance, and external engagement (Lozano et al., 2015; Purcell et al., 2019). In REPO's communication, a single conference or research dissemination post simultaneously advanced knowledge generation, innovation, and interinstitutional collaboration, demonstrating thematic density grounded in content evidence.

Dominant SDGs and QUESTS Pathways in the Verified Subset

Across the verified subset of social media posts, five Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were represented across 21 total linkages, led overwhelmingly by SDG 4 (Quality Education) in 80.0% of posts, followed by SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) at 50.0%, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) at 40.0%, SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) at 30.0%, and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) at 10.0%, with only one brand-only birthday greeting showing no SDG alignment. Spanning topics from freshmen English proficiency, faculty research writeshops, and science lab exposure to teacher well-being, income-generating projects, and international conferences, these communications organized through the NEXUStainability lens into four thematic clusters: education and research capacity, innovation and digitalization, human-capital and enterprise, and collaborative outreach. Ultimately, the dominance of SDG 4—supported by SDGs 9, 8, and 17—demonstrates how public social-media narratives translate San Pablo Colleges' internal institutional pathways (uniting Scientia, SIGA, and QUESTS) into globally legible contributions toward sustainable higher education.

Twelve-Month SDG Profile Across the Broader Annual Corpus

An ordinal assessment of the wider twelve-month evidence confirms that while the recent subset accurately reflected the Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office's (REPO) core strengths, a full-year view reveals a broader institutional research ecosystem. Across the annual span, SDG 4 (Quality Education) held very high prominence and SDGs 8, 9, and 17 maintained high prominence, joined by moderate representation for SDGs 3 and 16, clear demonstrations of SDGs 5 and 13 (gender mainstreaming and climate-responsive programming), and emerging themes in SDGs 10 and 12. These results demonstrate that short-term post samples can understate annual research breadth—especially when specialized units cross-post initiatives on separate pages—while simultaneously exposing documentation gaps across poverty, hunger, clean water, energy, sustainable cities, and ecological goals, underscoring the need for closer coordination between REPO and community extension or environmental units.

Branding-Depth Gaps and Institutional Implications

While the NEXUStainability framework achieved 100% visual and textual brand presence across the Research, Evaluation, and Publication Office's (REPO) posts, individual communications varied widely in explanatory depth, risking decorative labeling whenever the mark appeared without explicitly naming internal precepts, QUESTS pathways, or numbered Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To convert brand consistency into auditable sustainability evidence for accreditation and quality management, the study recommends a three-level communication protocol and tracking register: retaining the NEXUStainability mark across all posts (Level 1), explicitly naming institutional precepts and QUESTS pathways on substantive posts (Level 2), and specifying one primary and up to two secondary SDGs with a brief evidence statement (Level 3). These recommendations are tempered by the study's main limitations—incomplete public archival access that restricted exact frequency counts to 10 consecutive posts alongside ordinal annual themes, unmeasured audience engagement, and a focus on communicated alignment rather than causal SDG outcomes.

Conclusion

The twelve-month analysis demonstrates that NEXUStainability operates effectively as REPO's umbrella institutional brand for the United Nations SDGs, uniting the SPC Precepts, SIGA, QUESTS, and global sustainability commitments under a coherent public identity. Within the verified subset, universal brand presence (100%) coexisted with high substantive SDG alignment (90.0%), strong multi-SDG integration (88.9%), and an average density of 2.33 SDGs per aligned post, led by SDG 4 and supported by SDGs 9, 8, and 17 alongside broader annual contributions in health, gender equality, climate action, governance, inclusion, and resource efficiency. However, because consistent branding was not matched by uniform explanation of underlying framework pathways, deepening post-level explanatory rigor is essential to preserve semantic integrity. These conclusions characterize communicated alignment and institutional branding patterns within publicly verifiable REPO records; they do not establish platform-wide annual post frequencies, audience reception, or direct societal impact on SDG indicators.

Recommendation

For institutional practice, REPO and higher education communication units should implement a layered posting protocol that pairs the NEXUStainability mark with explicit identification of the corresponding SPC precept, QUESTS pathway, primary SDG, and concise evidence statement, while maintaining a centralized digital register for quarterly and annual reporting. In addition, REPO should strengthen cross-unit coordination with extension, environmental, health, and student-welfare offices so that underrepresented SDGs and cross-posted institutional initiatives are systematically captured in research communication.

For future research, investigators should obtain complete exported platform archives to establish population-wide annual frequencies, evaluate intercoder reliability across multiple raters, and analyze post-level audience engagement metrics. Further studies should also examine stakeholder recognition and comprehension of the NEXUStainability framework to determine whether deeper explanatory branding enhances public understanding, research visibility, and collaborative sustainability action.

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