

## Factors Affecting the University's Image in Student's Perception: Evidence from Vietnam

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### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the factors that influence the image of universities in the perception of students in Vietnam. The image of a university plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining students, as well as establishing its reputation in the competitive higher education market. Employing a mixed-methods approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from a sample of Vietnamese university students. The study found that several key factors significantly affect the university's image in the students' perception. These factors include academic quality, faculty competence, research reputation, campus facilities, student support services, and social and cultural activities. Furthermore, the study revealed that word-of-mouth information, online reviews, and promotional materials also play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions of a university. The findings highlight the importance of delivering high-quality academic programs, maintaining a competent and supportive faculty, fostering a vibrant research environment, and providing well-equipped campus facilities and student support services. Additionally, universities need to pay attention to organizing diverse social and cultural activities to enhance students' overall experience and sense of belonging. This research provides valuable insights for university administrators and policymakers in Vietnam to understand the factors that influence the university's image in the students' perception. By addressing these factors effectively, universities can enhance their attractiveness and reputation, ultimately leading to increased enrollment and improved competitiveness in the higher education sector. Further studies are recommended to explore these factors in different contexts and to validate the findings.*

**Keywords:** *University image, student perception, factors, current students, prospective students, Vietnam.*

### 1. Introduction

In today's competitive higher education landscape, universities strive to establish and maintain a positive image among students. The perception of a university's image plays a crucial role in attracting and retaining students while fostering a sense of pride and loyalty within the student body. Understanding the factors that influence students' perception of a university's image is essential for universities to effectively manage their reputation and enhance their overall appeal. The image of a university plays a crucial role

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in attracting and retaining students in an increasingly competitive higher education landscape. A positive university image not only influences the decision-making process of prospective students but also shapes the perceptions and experiences of current students. Understanding the factors that contribute to the formation of a university's image is essential for universities to effectively position themselves and meet the needs and expectations of their target student population.

According to Nguyen and Tran. (2020), the image of a university encompasses various dimensions, including academic reputation, teaching quality, campus facilities, extracurricular activities, and communication strategies employed by the institution. These factors collectively shape the overall perception of a university among students, influencing their choices and preferences.

In the context of Vietnam, where the higher education sector has witnessed significant growth and competition, it becomes imperative for universities to strategically manage their image to attract and retain talented students. However, there is a limited understanding of the specific factors that influence the university's image in the perceptions of students in Vietnam. This study aims to bridge this gap by investigating the factors affecting the university's image in student's perception in Vietnam. By examining the perceptions and preferences of students, the research will provide valuable insights into the key elements that contribute to the formation of a university's image in Vietnam's higher education landscape.

The theoretical framework of this study draws upon existing literature and research in the field of university image and student perception. Balmer (1998), Pike and Ryan (2004), and Anholt (2007) emphasize the significance of reputation, brand identity, and communication strategies in shaping university image. Kotler and Fox (1995), Yasin et al. (2007), and Han et al. (2019) provide insights into the factors influencing student perception, such as academic quality, campus facilities, and student support services.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 University Image and Reputation**

The concept of university image and its impact on stakeholders, including students, has been widely discussed in the literature. Studies by Balmer (1998), Pike and Ryan (2004), and Anholt (2007) emphasize the significance of reputation, brand identity, and communication strategies in shaping university image.

Pike & Page. (2014) focus on building the image and managing the branding of tourist destinations, but provide valuable knowledge and methods that can be applied to building the image and reputation of universities. Balmer. (2012) concentrates on the role of corporate identity, corporate branding, and corporate marketing in building image and reputation. The principles and concepts in the article can be applied to constructing the image and reputation of universities. Davies et al. (2011) study the relationship between corporate reputation and competitiveness. The article offers insights into the role of reputation in enhancing competitiveness and can be applied to understanding the factors influencing the university's overall image due to its reputation. Hatch & Schultz (2013) argue that applying the concepts and principles of corporate branding to university branding can provide insights into the process and factors influencing the construction of the university's image and reputation.

### **2.2 Student Perception and Decision-Making**

Understanding how students form perceptions and make decisions regarding higher education institutions is vital. Research by Kotler and Fox (1995), Yasin et al. (2007), and Han et al. (2019) offers insights into the factors influencing student perception, such as academic quality, campus facilities, and student support services. According to Kim &

Kim. (2005) assert that students' perceptions of the school environment significantly influence their development and sense of belonging in the learning environment. This can affect students' image and evaluation of the university. Pike & Kuh. (2005) demonstrate that students' decisions and attitudes during the first two years of college have a profound influence on continued education and tuition completion. Satisfaction and positive perceptions on the part of students can create a positive image of the university. Furthermore, Hemsley et al. (2006) confirm that students' decisions and how they perceive the university have a significant impact on the marketing and image building of the university in a globally competitive environment. Yoon & Rowley. (2017) focused on examining the effects of student perceptions and decisions on university image. It presents a systematic review of research on university image and emphasizes the important role of student perceptions and decisions in forming and maintaining institutional image. Also, Kim & Kim. (2018) compared the impact of university image on student loyalty between public and private institutions. The results indicate that students' perceptions and decisions have a significant influence on university loyalty and image.

### 2.3 Quality of Education

The quality of education provided by universities is considered a crucial factor in shaping student perception. The works of Harvey and Green (1993), Harvey and Knight (1996), and Ramsden (1998) discuss the dimensions of educational quality, including teaching effectiveness, curriculum design, and assessment methods. How college affects students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) This book focuses on studying the effects of college education on students. It includes research and analysis on the impact of educational quality on the image of universities. Moreover, according to research by Hemsley & Oplatka. (2006) Universities in a competitive global marketplace: A systematic review of the literature on higher education marketing. This study focuses on evaluating the marketing and management strategies of the university. It identifies educational quality as an important factor in building a school's image and reputation.

In addition, according to a study on Quality of higher education and its impact on student satisfaction, academic performance, and employability. This article presents an assessment of the quality of higher education and its impact on student satisfaction, academic performance, and employability after graduation (Abeysekera, 2017). Also, Kim & Kang. (2018) used multilevel analysis to explore the impact of educational quality on school reputation and student and alumni satisfaction. Yasin et al. (2019) conducted research focusing on the impact of educational service quality on student satisfaction in higher education institutions.

### 2.4 Campus Facilities and Amenities

The physical infrastructure of universities, including classrooms, libraries, laboratories, and recreational facilities, can significantly impact student perception. Studies by Kline and Nadelson (2017), Ringle et al. (2019), and Abdullah et al. (2021) highlight the influence of campus facilities on students' overall satisfaction and perception. According to research by authors Kandampully & Bilgihan. (2015) on Customer loyalty: A review and future directions with a special focus on the hospitality industry. This study focuses on the impact of hotel amenities and services on customer loyalty. Although not focused on universities, the results and concepts can be applied to Campus Facilities and Amenities factors in creating campus image. Additionally, authors Huang & Littrell. (2018) also explored the impact of school environment on international student satisfaction. It identifies that Campus Facilities and Amenities play an important role in creating a positive image of the school. Besides, Turker & Altinay. (2014) conducted a study exploring sustainable supply chain management in the fast fashion industry and its impact on corporate image. Although not university-focused, the concepts of facilities and amenities management can be applied to campus image creation. According to

Söderlund & Rosengren. (2015) proposed a theory of the role of device management in service-based logic. Although not university-focused, it provides a look at the impact of Campus Facilities and Amenities in creating a positive image of an institution. Research by Garg & Rahman. (2019) focused on the impact of school climate on students' satisfaction and their behavioral intentions. It identifies that Campus Facilities and Amenities play an important role in creating a positive image of the university.

## 2.5 Student Support Services

The availability and effectiveness of student support services, such as counseling, career guidance, and extracurricular activities, contribute to students' perception of the university. Research by Tinto (1993), Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), and Desjardins et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of support services in student retention and satisfaction. According to Love. (2018), University student satisfaction: A multilevel analysis of the role of student support services. This study uses multilevel analysis to explore the impact of student support services on student satisfaction and university image. Additionally, Kim et al. (2020) had research focusing on the impact of student support services on student satisfaction and university image, with the mediating role of student engagement. Moreover, Yorke & Longden. (2008) have reported focusing on students' first year experiences in UK higher education. It determined that student support services have a positive impact on student satisfaction and school image. Núñez et al. (2015) stated relationships between perceived parental involvement in homework, student homework behaviors, and academic achievement. This study did not focus on college, but it determined that support from family and school has a positive impact on students' homework behavior and academic achievement. These concepts can be applied to the Student Support Services element in creating a university image. Following to Braxton et al. (2004) has the book *Understanding and reducing college student departure*. This book focuses on understanding and reducing the rate at which students leave college. It identifies that student support services play an important role in student retention and creating a positive image of the institution.

## 2.6 Alumni Success and Engagement

The achievements and engagement of alumni can positively influence student perception. Studies by Braxton et al. (2008), Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), and Trilaksono and Suryanto (2020) explore the impact of alumni success and involvement on students' perception of institutional quality and reputation. Research studies by Braxton et al. (2008), Gallardo-Gallardo et al. (2013), and Trilaksono and Suryanto (2020) have explored the impact of alumni success and engagement on student perception. These studies have found that alumni involvement positively influences students' perceptions of institutional quality, reputation, and overall satisfaction with their educational experience. According to research by Smith et al. (2017) on the effects of alumni engagement on giving, this study focuses on the impact of alumni engagement on contributions from alumni. Although not focused on the image of the university, it provides a look at the impact Alumni Success and Engagement has in creating positive relationships with alumni. Also, Mäläskä & Havila. (2020) developed a conceptual framework on the relationship between alumni relations and university brand image. It highlights the impact Alumni Success and Engagement has on building a positive image of the school. Furthermore, Soria & Stubblefield. (2019) have researched how alumni engagement influences potential students' school choice decisions. It determined that Alumni Success and Engagement had a positive impact on image building and increased ability to attract new students. Lounsbury et al. (2009) had a study investigating the relationship between personal characteristics and contributions from alumni. Although not focused on university image, it provides information about the impact Alumni Success and Engagement has on promoting alumni giving. Lundy. (2016) focused on the impact of alumni involvement on the admission decisions of potential students. It determined that

Alumni Success and Engagement has a positive impact on new students' interest and decisions in choosing a school.

## 2.7 Diversity and Inclusion

The promotion of diversity and inclusion in universities is gaining recognition as an important factor in shaping student perception. Works by Chang (2002), Milem et al. (2005), and DeAngelo et al. (2011) discuss the impact of a diverse and inclusive campus environment on student experiences and perceptions. Milem & Antonio. (2015) explored the impact of diversity and inclusion on university image. It provides an overview of the importance of Diversity and Inclusion and how it affects school success. Additionally, Gurin et al. (2012) focuses on the theory and impact of diversity and higher education. It explores how Diversity and Inclusion affects educational outcomes and student success. The book *How college affects students: 21st century evidence that higher education works* (Mayhew et al, 2016). This book examines the impact of higher education and related factors, including Diversity and Inclusion, on student outcomes and success. It provides a comprehensive overview of the importance and impact of Diversity and Inclusion in higher education. Parker et al. (2016) had this study focusing on the impact of diversity experiences on socially responsible leadership across four years of college. It emphasizes the importance of Diversity and Inclusion in leadership development and creating a positive image of the school. Gurin & Zúñiga. (2013) study the impact of creating dialogue across differences in promoting Diversity and Inclusion. It emphasizes the importance of creating space for conversations across diverse perspectives to foster understanding and connection. Thomas & Willis. (2018) focused on the impact of Diversity and Inclusion training on individual and organizational performance. It synthesizes various studies on the topic and provides an overview of the impact of diversity and inclusion training on individual and organizational success.

## 2.8 Communication and Marketing Strategies

Effective communication and marketing efforts by universities can shape student perception. Research by Balmer and Gray (2003), Kaur and Soch (2012), and Nguyen and LeBlanc (2020) highlight the significance of communication channels, branding, and promotional activities in influencing student perception and enrollment decisions. According to research by Zavattaro & Deale. (2018) on *Understanding the impact of marketing communication on student recruitment, satisfaction, and loyalty within higher education*. This study focuses on the impact of marketing communications on student enrollment, satisfaction, and loyalty in higher education. It determined that Communication and Marketing Strategies can impact admissions decisions, student experience, and school loyalty. Also, Kim. (2019) did research on the impact of higher education advertising on brand image. This study investigates the impact of higher education advertising on brand image. It emphasizes the role of Communication and Marketing Strategies in building brand image and the impact of relevance and credibility of information sources. Furthermore, Guseva & Bennett. (2019) focuses on the role of marketing communications in building university reputation. It studies the impact of Communication and Marketing Strategies on school reputation and emphasizes the importance of building an effective communication strategy to create a positive image of the school. Gee & Nicholson. (2017) explore how university Marketing and Communication Strategies have evolved in the digital era. It focuses on studying the use of digital technologies and social networks to reach and engage with students and how this affects the effectiveness of communication strategies. Besides, Wæraas & Solbakk. (2019) studied the communication of university values through mission statements and web communications. It explores the fit between the mission statement and the message conveyed on the website and the impact this has on the school's image and reputation. Mochalski & Jagielski. (2020) focuses on employer branding in higher education. It explores the role of Communication and Marketing Strategies in building employer image and attracting talented students and employees. According to research by Nguyen

& LeBlanc. (2021) on digital branding in higher education: A systematic literature review. This study focuses on digital branding in higher education. It synthesizes research on Digital Marketing Strategies and identifies important factors in effective branding in the digital environment.

### 2.9 Cost and attractive scholarship program

According to research by Anh & Nguyen. (2021) on the impact of financial aids on university image. This study focuses on the impact of financial support, including Cost and attractive scholarship program, on the image of private universities in Vietnam. In addition, Huyen & Anh (2020) researched on The impact of tuition fees and scholarships on university choice. This study determines the impact of tuition and scholarships, including Cost and attractive scholarship programs, on students' school choice decisions in Vietnam. Furthermore, Nguyen & Nguyen. (2020) investigated factors that influence students' school choice decisions in Vietnam and emphasized the role of tuition and scholarships, including Cost and attractive scholarship programs, in university image. Nguyen & Tran. (2019) Research on the impact of tuition and scholarships, including Cost and attractive scholarship program, on students' school choice decisions in Vietnam. Trinh & Nguyen. (2018). Research Influence of tuition fees and scholarships on students' university choice. Research the impact of tuition and scholarships, including Cost and attractive scholarship program, on students' decision to choose a school in Vietnam. Nguyen & Tran. (2018) explored the factors that influence students' school choice decisions in Vietnam and identified the role of tuition and scholarships, including Cost and attractive scholarship programs, in the image of universities.

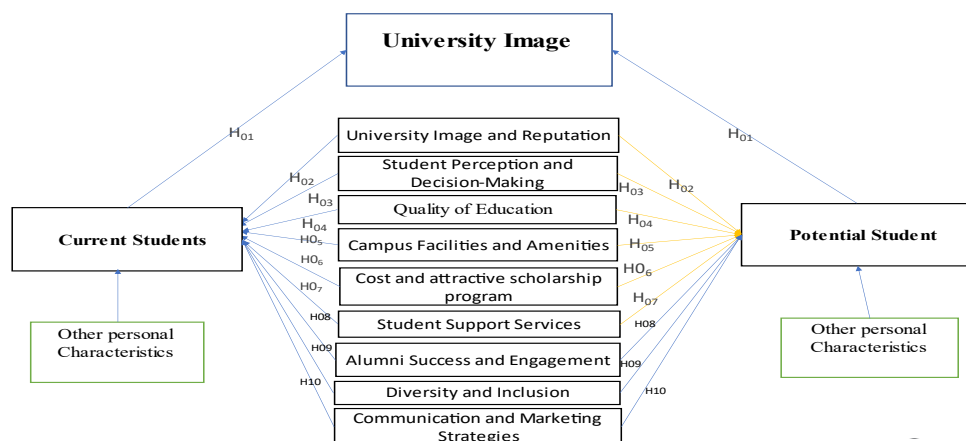


Figure 1. Theoretical model (Constructs of intention to choose an IT program)

Source: Own Research

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Selected processing methods

In this project, quantitative methods are used, which are applicable to all research questions. According to previous literature, quantitative methods help to elucidate phenomena by collecting numerical data and then using it mathematically to analyze the data. It is applied to describe variables, examine the association between variables and see which factors can have a significant impact on university image.

This study was conducted using an online survey questionnaire to examine the factors affecting the university's image in students' perception.

To achieve the result, at least 201 survey participants were needed to participate in this survey. In addition, the survey was distributed to those people who are current students

are enrolled in programs at some universities, Vietnam and potential students are 12th graders at high schools, about to enter university programs at universities and are in the process of finding a suitable university to apply for admission.

### 3.2 Research hypotheses

Based on the literature and discussion on the factors influencing the 's perception of university image, this study put forward the following hypotheses:

H1: There is a relationship between University Image and Reputation and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H2: There is a relationship between Student Perception and Decision-Making and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H3: There is a relationship between Quality of Education and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H4: There is a relationship between Campus Facilities and Amenities and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H5: There is a relationship between Student Support Services and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H6: There is a relationship between Alumni Success and Engagement and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H7: There is a relationship between Diversity and Inclusion and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H8: There is a relationship between Communication and Marketing Strategies and University's Image in Student's Perception.

H9: There is a relationship between Cost and attractive scholarship program and University's Image in Student's Perception.

### 3.3 Sample characteristics

The survey included basic information on current students at universities and potential students at high schools to collect some socio-demographic data. A total of 260 people who fully completed the survey were tabulated and used for further analysis. Overall, 65% of students in the university are female. Women's response to the survey was 60.0%. It is worth mentioning that the university has students from many different provinces, as can be seen in Table 1.

Gender	
Female	65.0% (157)
Male	35.0% (103)
Nationality	
HCM City	31.4% (77)
Other Provinces	68.5% (171)
Education Level	
Potential students	10.2% (28)
Current students	81.3% (208)

Table 1: Students characteristics

#### 4. Analysis and results

The initial phase of the survey aimed to evaluate the competencies and knowledge acquired by both current and potential students during their academic journey. Among the participants, a significant percentage agreed strongly with various factors: 55.8% believed that their academic experience had a positive impact on fostering critical thinking skills, 54.3% expressed confidence in their ability to synthesize and analyze data, 59.9% felt capable of designing and executing research, 53.7% demonstrated proficiency in finding and applying information, 54.3% showcased effective teamwork skills, and 55.4% displayed proficiency in identifying appropriate methodological tools. However, 26.4% strongly agreed that the university could enhance its support in acquiring funding for writing proposals. The subsequent section of the survey focused on exploring the overall perception of the university among both current and potential students. A majority of respondents, 62.7%, strongly agreed that the university's image and reputation align with their expectations and reflect the national identity. Additionally, 51.6% strongly agreed that the university provides high-quality programs, and 52.4% believed that the competence of its alumni is on par with graduates from other universities. The final segment of the survey investigated the practical application of acquired skills in the workplace. Among the graduate alumni, 55.3% strongly agreed that their major positively influenced their job performance. Conversely, 25.7% strongly agreed that their graduate degree played a role in their promotion at work, while 32.4% somewhat agreed with this statement. These findings shed light on the factors such as university image and reputation, student perception and decision-making, quality of education, campus facilities and amenities, student support services, alumni success and engagement, diversity and inclusion, communication and marketing strategies, and cost and attractive scholarship programs that influence the experiences and perspectives of both current and potential students.

The SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) technique, implemented through the Smart-PLS software, was employed to examine the proposed model and hypotheses in this research. Ullman and Bentler (2003) argue that employing a latent variable model helps minimize measurement errors that could lead to biases. Given that the factors in this study were assessed using a questionnaire, the utilization of a latent variable model is suitable.

In this study, the reliability of all items was evaluated by examining the standardized factor loadings. A standardized factor loading exceeding 0.7, as suggested by Hair et al. (2012), was considered appropriate. Two-tailed p-values were employed in this research to verify the validity of the factor loadings.

University Image and Reputation			
SMSK1	involves selecting the trajectory of my profession,	0.833	0.022 37.5090.724 0.845 0.645 2.456
SMSK3	entails involvement in interdisciplinary domains	0.785	0.036 21.825
SMSK4	encompasses participation in intellectual pursuits	0.780	0.031 18.959
Student Perception and Decision-Making			
RAS1	The process of synthesizing and analyzing data	0.788	0.040 19.5490.699 0.831 0.621 1.890
RAS2	The process of synthesizing	0.744	0.040 14.930
RAS3	employing suitable	0.720	0.033 24.631
Quality of Education			



TL1	Collaborate efficiently	0.785	0.042	18.625	0.756	0.860	0.662	2.402
TL2	Develop proficient	0.835	0.020	43.766				
TL3	Effectively engage	0.808	0.043	18.724				
Campus Facilities and Amenities								
PSD2	Exhibit responsible	0.728	0.038	15.437	0.814	0.877	0.641	3.019
PSD3	Utilize information	0.776	0.029	26.764				
PSD4	various functional areas	0.825	0.021	43.751				
PSD5	Account global considerations	0.810	0.030	26.842				
Student Support Services								
IE1	Engage in critical thinking	0.706	0.042	13.415	0.784	0.846	0.609	3.664
IE3	practical scenarios	0.818	0.020	40.934				
IE4	suggest appropriate solutions	0.814	0.035	23.921				
IE5	Making practical challenges	0.794	0.031	25.558				
Alumni Success and Engage								
W1	aligns with the subject area	0.798	0.057	14.086	0.702	0.856	0.749	1.584
W2	gained in my major	0.928	0.018	51.007				
Image								
IM1	offered by other universities.	0.795	0.031	25.379	0.842	0.887	0.612	
IM2	The reputation of the university is on par with other institutions in terms of excellence.	0.773	0.038	20.216				
IM4	The quality standards are consistently improving.	0.709	0.046	15.549				
IM5	The academic programs are recognized as high-quality offerings.	0.839	0.023	36.460				
IM6	The academic programs are tailored to meet the demands	0.790	0.025	31.044				

Table 2. Measurement model results

#### 4.2 Structural model assessment

This study examines the structural model and tests the hypotheses, following the approach outlined by Sarstedt et al. (2021). Before analyzing the results of the structural relationships, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) value was assessed to test for collinearity. The findings of the study indicate that the structural model exhibited minimal collinearity. In fact, after evaluating all potential combinations of constructs, the obtained VIF values were below 5, signifying low collinearity. Moreover, the coefficient of determination, R<sup>2</sup>, which measures the overall effect size and variance, was reported to be 58.5% in this study, indicating a moderate predictive accuracy of the model. Additionally, the predictive relevance of the path model, measured by the Q<sup>2</sup> statistic, was reported as 33.9%, surpassing the threshold of zero. This suggests that the path model's predictive relevance is deemed adequate.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
( Image A )	0.683	0.691	0.749	0.586	0.573	0.721	0.612

( B Reputation )	University Image and	0.627	0.727	0.716	0.577	0.825	0.749	0.832
( C )	Diversity and Inclusion	0.631	0.623	0.814	0.525	0.506	0.673	0.624
( D Marketing Strategies )	Communication and	0.483	0.478	0.410	0.786	0.414	0.713	0.411
( E scholarship program )	Cost and attractive	0.453	0.615	0.412	0.313	0.778	0.718	0.639
( F )	Quality of Education	0.568	0.633	0.531	0.518	0.526	0.813	0.825
( G Amenities )	Campus Facilities and	0.532	0.670	0.532	0.318	0.513	0.629	0.810

Table 3. Discriminant validity results.

4.3 Hypotheses testing

The path coefficients were utilized to exemplify the derived hypotheses, considering their size and significance levels. A PLS-procedure was employed, which incorporated a resampling bootstrapping process with 10,000 bootstrap samples and 260 bootstrap cases, to determine the significance levels of the path coefficients. Table Four presents the path coefficients, standard errors, significance levels, t-values, and 95% bootstrap confidence intervals.

The results indicate that the three alumni characteristic variables and four factors were found to be statistically significant. The education level exhibited the highest effect among the alumni characteristics, with  $\beta_{PT} = -0.173$  and  $\beta_{CR} = -0.110$ . This was followed by nationality, with  $\beta_{Nationals} = 0.104$ , and gender, with  $\beta_{Male} = 0.085$ . Regarding the factors, problem-solving and decision-making skills (PSDS) had the highest effect, with  $\beta_{PSDS} = 0.311$ , followed by initiative and enterprise skills (IES) with  $\beta_{IES} = 0.233$ , self-management and soft skills (SMSK) with  $\beta_{SMSK} = 0.142$ , and the effect of the field of study on the workplace (EFSW) with  $\beta_{EFSW}$ , all of which were significant.

	Path coefficient	Boot S.E	t-value	p- value	95% Confident Interval
Student Characteristics					
Gender (G)					
Male	0.075	0.032	2.053	0.029	(0.005, 0.150)
Female	Ref				
Nationality (N)					
HCM City	0.105	0.038	2.101	0.018	(0.001,

0.101)					
Other provinces	Ref				
Factors					
Campus Facilities and Amenities (CFA)	0.263	0.069	3.003	0.0013	(0.078, 0.386)
Diversity and Inclusion (DI)	0.047	0.051	0.808	0.354	(-0.051, 0.168)
Communication and Marketing Strategies (CMSCMS))	0.301	0.055	4.764	0.001	(0.166, 0.420)
Cost and attractive scholarship program ((CASP)	0.033	0.059	0.405	0.668	(-0.121, 0.149)
Quality Education (QE)	0.141	0.063	1.970	0.038	(0.008, 0.286)
Student Support Services (SSS)	0.109	0.041	2.317	0.030	(0.015, 0.123)

Table 4: Structural model results.

## 5. Discussion

The present study investigated the factors influencing the university's image as perceived by both current and potential students in Vietnam. The findings shed light on several critical factors that play a significant role in shaping students' perceptions and decision-making processes when considering a university. The following discussion highlights key factors and their implications for universities in Vietnam.

The study revealed that the university's image and reputation are crucial factors affecting student perception and decision-making. A positive image and strong reputation can attract prospective students and create a favorable impression among current students. Universities should prioritize building and maintaining a positive image through various means, such as enhancing academic quality, promoting research achievements, and developing a strong brand identity. The quality of education emerged as a significant

factor influencing students' perceptions. Students highly value universities that provide rigorous academic programs, foster critical thinking skills, and offer opportunities for practical application of knowledge. To enhance their image, universities should focus on continuously improving the quality of education, updating curricula to meet industry standards, and promoting experiential learning opportunities. The availability and quality of campus facilities and amenities also impact students' perceptions of a university. Modern infrastructure, well-equipped laboratories, libraries, sports facilities, and a vibrant campus environment contribute to a positive university image. Universities should invest in developing and maintaining state-of-the-art facilities to create an attractive and conducive learning environment for students. The study emphasized the importance of student support services in shaping the university's image. Adequate support services, including academic advising, counseling, career guidance, and extracurricular activities, contribute to student satisfaction and overall perception of a university. Universities should prioritize providing comprehensive and accessible support services to foster student success and wellbeing. The success and engagement of alumni were found to influence students' perceptions of a university. Positive outcomes and achievements of alumni create a sense of pride and confidence among current and prospective students. Universities can strengthen their image by fostering strong relationships with alumni, facilitating networking opportunities, and showcasing alumni success stories. The study highlighted the significance of diversity and inclusion in shaping the university's image. Current and potential students value universities that embrace diversity, promote inclusivity, and create a welcoming environment for students from various backgrounds. To enhance their image, universities should cultivate a culture of diversity and actively promote inclusiveness through policies and initiatives. Effective communication and marketing strategies were found to be crucial in influencing students' perceptions. Universities should employ strategic communication approaches to convey their unique offerings, strengths, and achievements to both current and potential students. Clear and consistent messaging, engaging online presence, and targeted marketing efforts can positively impact the university's image. The cost of education and the availability of attractive scholarship programs were identified as influential factors in student perception. Affordability and access to financial aid options significantly impact students' decision-making processes. Universities should consider implementing competitive scholarship programs and exploring avenues to make education more affordable to attract and retain talented students.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study provides valuable insights into the factors affecting the university's image in the perceptions of both current and potential students in Vietnam. The findings emphasize the importance of factors such as university image and reputation, quality of education, campus facilities, student support services, alumni engagement, diversity and inclusion, communication and marketing strategies, and cost and attractive scholarship programs. By understanding and addressing these factors, universities can effectively manage their image, enhance their attractiveness, and meet the evolving needs and expectations of students in Vietnam's educational landscape.

## **7. Research Contribution**

This study on the factors influencing the university's image in the perception of students in Vietnam makes several significant research contributions:

The research contributes to the understanding of factors that shape the university's image specifically in the context of Vietnamese students. By focusing on this specific demographic, the study provides insights into the unique factors influencing their

perceptions and decision-making processes when choosing a university. The study comprehensively examines a wide range of factors that contribute to the university's image. It encompasses factors such as university image and reputation, quality of education, campus facilities and amenities, student support services, alumni success and engagement, diversity and inclusion, communication and marketing strategies, and cost and attractive scholarship programs. This holistic approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the various dimensions that influence students' perceptions. The findings of this research have practical implications for universities in Vietnam. The study identifies key areas where universities can focus their efforts to enhance their image and attractiveness to current and potential students. The insights gained from this study can inform strategic decision-making, resource allocation, and the development of policies and initiatives to improve the overall student experience. This research contributes to the existing body of literature on university image and student perception. By focusing on the Vietnamese context, it adds to the limited literature available on this specific demographic. The study's findings can serve as a foundation for future research and comparative studies in other cultural and regional contexts. The research provides valuable policy recommendations for educational institutions, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in the higher education sector in Vietnam. The insights gained from this study can assist in developing effective strategies to enhance the university's image, improve the quality of education, and attract and retain talented students.

Overall, this research makes important contributions by deepening our understanding of the factors that shape the university's image in the perception of Vietnamese students. The findings offer practical implications for universities and policymakers, contribute to the existing literature, and provide a basis for further research in this area.

## 8. Limitations and future research

One limitation of this study is the relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the entire population of students in Vietnam. Future research could consider larger sample sizes to increase the representativeness of the study and enhance the generalizability of the results. Moreover, this study adopted a cross-sectional design, which captures data at a specific point in time. A longitudinal design, incorporating multiple data collection points, would provide a more in-depth understanding of how students' perceptions and the university's image evolve over time. Future studies could employ longitudinal designs to capture temporal changes and better assess causal relationships. While this study examined various factors influencing the university's image, there may be additional factors that were not included in the analysis. Future research could explore other relevant factors such as faculty quality, research output, industry partnerships, and global rankings to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the university's image.

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