UNIVERSITY BRANDING AND STUDENT SATISFACTION: THE EMERGING LANDSCAPE OF UNIVERSITIES IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

It gives higher education a competitive landscape brand-building for an educational institution. Adopting strategies that give them a viable advantage in the educational institute is fundamental for the universities. This study aims to understand how a university's reputation is shaped by its heritage, trustworthiness and service quality. It also investigates their relationship with students' satisfaction by using signaling theory. It also examines the impact of the university's reputation as a mediator. The data is collected from different university students in Pakistan through a questionnaire and then analyzed their results on Smart PL. Findings indicate an essential role of the university's brand image in students' minds, directly affecting the satisfaction level of students across Pakistan. Findings also indicate that university reputation plays a partial mediating role between the university's brand image Implications of findings for theory and practices were discussed in the study.

KEYWORDS

Brand Image, University Heritage, Trustworthiness, Service Quality, University Reputation and Student's Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

The extensive development process contributes significantly to emerging a nation through the higher education industry(Orji & Maekae, 2013). Quality education is one of the significant agendas of UN's sustainable development goals 2030. As a result of this expansion, universities now compete with one another to be seen as far more reputable and well-known than their opponents(Bang Nguyen, 2019). As a result of this expansion, universities now compete with one another to be seen as far more reputable and well-known than their opponents(Balaji, 2016). In public relations and marketing, the concepts of image and reputation were gradually emphasized, and it is also be followed in the higher education sector(Hemsley-Brown, 2016; Jane Hemsley-Brown, 2007). Potential Decision-making students are drawn to universities that can generate strong brand images during the selection process; today, universities are spending millions of dollars to enhance their brand image(Plungpongpan, 2016). A university will benefit from having a reputable image, Increased enrollment, increased funding opportunities, top-tier recruiters and alumni donations(Davies, 2008; Hemsley-Brown, 2016)

However, students are the essential stakeholders in managing the brand image of higher education institutes, although the image affiliated with an institution's brand is referred to as its brand reputation, and it is based on the perceptions of the stakeholders of the organization(Mary Jo Hatch, 2003). In this era, students are very concerned about their studies because their future is dependent on their education. Students attract well-known or well-reputed universities to get benefits in the future(Charles Belanger, 2002). The top criterion for students while selecting the university was stated job opportunities, career predictions, ranking and authorization issues of the higher education institutions, and the consent is that internationally recognized, high-ranked universities would provide good education, high-paid job prospects and viable student careers(Aysegul Tas, 2012). For the universities, it is essential to understand the techniques by which they can attract the students to choose their university for higher education. However, acquiring the students is not enough. The real achievement is to keep their students satisfied. Students who are pleased with their studies are a vital topic of research in the competitive environment of university settings(Alam, 2018). Students who graduate with high satisfaction levels are a source of affirmative university endorsements. Students who are contented with their education make a tangible or intangible contribution to the university, spread positive word of mouth, promote it to others, and remain loyal. Students who are loyal and happy can help promote a positive image of the university.(Swati Pand, 2019).

This research is now being carried out in the Pakistani university context. According to the higher education commission (HEC), a total of 132 institutes in Pakistan, 73 are public, and 59 are private universities responsible for higher studies. Higher Education

Commission (HEC) established the Quality Assurance Agencies (QAA) for policy making and monitoring higher education quality and systematically implementing quality enhancement procedures and criteria to improve international competitiveness(Alam, 2018). These criteria were resulting competition among them. It becomes more difficult for the universities to compete with other universities, for this university must adopt different strategies (i.e., quality education, good faculty, responsible administration, different curriculum and non-curriculum activities) to attract the students. One of the strategies is building a brand image of the university that will attract the students more(Swati Pand, 2019) , There are many types of research which have been done on the brand image of universities and how it plays a role in student satisfaction, In order to transform effective teaching techniques, ensure that your staff is readily accessible for student coordination, that you provide good library services, computing facilities, amusing facilities, that your class sizes are appropriate for the level and complexity of subject content, and that your students have a reasonable amount of work to complete(Adee Athiyaman, 1997). By using these components positively, a university can build an image in the mind of students(Chapleo, 2010)

LITERATURE REVIEW
According to research, a positive brand image can assist businesses in differentiating themselves and gaining a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Based on research into how organizational, personal, and environmental factors influence the public's opinion of the university's image, one study discovered that receiver-oriented and audience-specific corporate images can differ from one another(Minjung Sung, 2008). A University brand, in reality, is the image and university reputation established in the minds of the people. After hearing or seeing the name of one of these institutions, people's minds go into overdrive (Muhammad Jawad Iqbal, 2012) . Previous studies showed a vital role of the brand image of universities in students' minds which develops the competitive advantage for universities. If students are satisfied with their university, it is a significant achievement for the universities in terms of a positive reputation, so universities must actively work to create a constructive brand image(Swati Pand, 2019). University brand image is also enhanced by providing sound online learning systems. A previous study also gave the model to implement an e-learning system(Sidra Shehzadi, 2020). University heritage (UH) is a critical aspect of the brand the university's image. According to the Cambridge dictionary, heritage is "features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, which come from the past and are still important".UH can be divided into material and social heritage. Material heritage can be included physical things like fixed assets like buildings. Moreover, social heritage includes non-physical attributes like values and cultural norms() .Some researches show that the size of the institute and the location, appearance, diversity of students, campus morale and the visibility of

the institute plays a vital role in UH or brand image of the university (Swati Pand, 2019) . Universities must work to create their traditions specifically, for example, graduation ceremonies, convocations, and different types of events, which allow students to learn more and enhance and develop more skills. In short, to create those traditions which distinguish you from another(Laura M. Arpan, 2003; Swati Pand, 2019). Universities must continue these traditions for a long because it shows the heritage of universities which gives the strong feelings about the traditions of the universities that followed them. The value and the assessment of education are pretty tricky, so brand heritage plays an intangible role that will benefit the universities in the future.

H$_1$. University heritage has a significant impact on student satisfaction.

Another critical factor in branding for the university is university trustworthiness. UT is a vital aspect that can build an explicit image of the university in students' minds, leading to positive word of mouth(Claes Fornell, 1981). Trust is that factor by which a consumer is willing to consume the product. Consumer trust in a brand's capacity to carry out its best practices and standards is a criterion of consumer confidence. In addition, customers have faith in the institution to act in their best interests. Three factors of trust-building are proposed: consumer perceptions of safety, perceived reputation, and perceived quality. Trust, the joint affirmation that neither party will take advantage of the other's weakness, is widely regarded as a necessary condition for competitive success in the modern era () . Trust plays a significant role in a dynamic environment where the world faces uncertainties. Trust is the phenomenon that gives confidence that the institution will behave in an anticipated way in case of any susceptible condition. Skilled administration, robust procedures, cooperative staff and faculty, and a compelling track record will give a university trust in the students(Balaji, 2016). In organizational studies, trustworthiness has received prominent attention because it is the most common phenomenon which practices the most inhuman exchanges.

H2. University trustworthiness has a significant impact on student satisfaction.

Service quality is another factor that plays a significant role in building the brand image of a university. Service quality frameworks provide a snapshot of the factors affecting an organization's performance and offerings. Additionally, they support basic comprehension, specify how quality deficiencies build, and serve as a framework for launching quality improvement programs(Sabel, 1993). Service quality can also be measured by reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness(Swati Pand, 2019). Previous research suggested that the critical components for increasing service quality are a specified market and customer, concentration, and motivated employees. Knowledge of service quality concepts and the factors that influence the precise, effective measurement and feedback system, practical implementation, and efficient

customer care system(Katsia M. Cadeau, 2020). Universities must ensure that everything is in order in their organization and that everyone appropriately performs their duties. They have an administration whose primary responsibility is to confirm that the university operates effectively and that faculty and students have access to all necessary resources for intellectual capital. Any dispute, unease, considerations, or issues must be resolved quickly, ensuring a high level of service quality(Alam, 2018).

H3. University service quality has a significant impact on student satisfaction.
An organization's reputation has always received ample attention from researchers for several years. The organization's identity can understand corporate reputation branding techniques, how they communicate, and the organization's image in the world(Hyuk Jin Lee, 2020; Nitin Seth and S.G. Deshmukh, 2005). In previous research, the researcher developed the reputation quotient (RQ), which has six dimensions: clear vision and leadership, the financial performance of the organization, how they take social responsibility, quality of their products and services, which type of workplace environment they maintain and the emotional appeal(Swati Pand, 2019). Education is the product of students, so universities must design their education according to the need of students. Universities must actively build their reputation (John M.T. Balmer, 2006) . Students are constantly on the lookout for a reputable university. Existing research indicates that highly regarded universities offer a wide range of economic and uneconomical advantages, a more diverse faculty and student body, increased talent from ex-students, and industry support, all of which contribute to the university's brand and image(Pantea Foroudi, 2020). It monitors its reputation among the stakeholders, including current students, ex-students, future students, teachers, staff, alumni and employers(Charles J Fombrun, 2002). Some researches show that the size of the institute and the location, appearance, diversity of students, campus morale and the visibility of the institute plays a vital role in UH or brand image of university with student satisfaction (Jamie Ressler, 2009).

Universities must work to create their traditions, such as graduation ceremonies, convocations, and different types of events, which deliver opportunities for students to learn more and improve and advance more skills. In short, to create those traditions that distinguish you from others(Abdullah, 2020). Universities must continue these traditions for a long because it shows the heritage of universities, which gives the strong feelings about the universities' traditions followed by them. The value and the assessment of education are pretty tricky, so brand heritage plays an intangible role that will benefit the universities in the future(Jamie Ressler, 2009). Research showed that the feelings of your relatives who studied at the same university could significantly impact the university's traditions(Laura M. Arpan, 2003). Expected future benefits due to the university's heritage also positively impact student satisfaction(Swati Panda, 2019).

H4a. University reputation plays a significant mediating role between university heritage and student satisfaction.

Trustworthiness is a critical factor in developing a positive image of a university in students' minds, which results in a positive buzz. Trust, the belief that neither party to exchange will take advantage of the other's sensitivity, is widely regarded as a necessary condition for competitive success in the modern era (M.S.Balajia, 2016). Trust is the phenomenon that gives confidence that the institution will behave in an anticipated way in case of any susceptible condition. Skilled administration, robust procedures, cooperative staff and faculty, and a compelling track record will give a university trust in the students(Elliott, 2002). In organizational studies, trustworthiness has received prominent attention because it is the most common phenomenon which practices the most inhuman exchanges (Sharifah Alwi, 2020) . Universities have revealed their commitment to student satisfaction through their mission statements, and then they provide as they promised then, which creates trust in students' minds(Sabel, 1993).

H4b. University reputation plays a significant mediating role between university trustworthiness and student satisfaction.

Previous studies suggest a transparent market and customer focus, an engaged workforce, a complete sense of the quality of service concepts and factors affecting the exact measurement and feedback system, implementation system, and customer service system(Swati Pand, 2019). Universities must ensure that everything is in order in their organization and that everyone appropriately performs their duties. Managing the university effectively and providing faculty and students with all necessary resources is a top priority for the administration. The previous study supports the dispute that perceived quality is a sign of customer satisfaction. Although it is conceivable that technique difference is the reason for the enormous fulfilment impact on perceived quality, the hypothetical contentions introduced above propose that apparent quality is an element of fulfilment(Katsia M. Cadeau, 2020).

H4c. University reputation plays a significant mediating role between university service quality and student satisfaction.

SUPPORTIVE THEORY

In reality, a university's "brand" refers to the public's perception of the university and its academic programs; to them, it is a signal that they have arrived at the right place(Elliott, 2002). it shows that this branding image could be identified by its stakeholders. Current and passed-out students are the primary stakeholder for university branding. This research is based on the 'signaling theory(Nitin Seth and S.G. Deshmukh, 2005)**,** which reduces information asymmetry between the university and its numerous stakeholders. This information asymmetry has a negative impact on

stakeholders' ability to make rational decisions about the university while it is in existence(Adee Athiyaman, 1997). This signaling theory is a component of the university's attractiveness and provides insights into what variables influence individuals' perceptions of a university and how these understandings affect a person's willingness to become a part of that university(Muhammad Jawad Iqbal, 2012) . In conclusion, this study examines how the prospective stakeholders (i,e Students) interpret these signals provided by the university to form an opinion about the institute's intentions and actions for students' satisfaction and future orientation better. Because students are drawn to universities that meet their specific future needs, university administrators can take advantage of this information if they are alert and deliberate(Spence, 1974).

Theoretical Framework
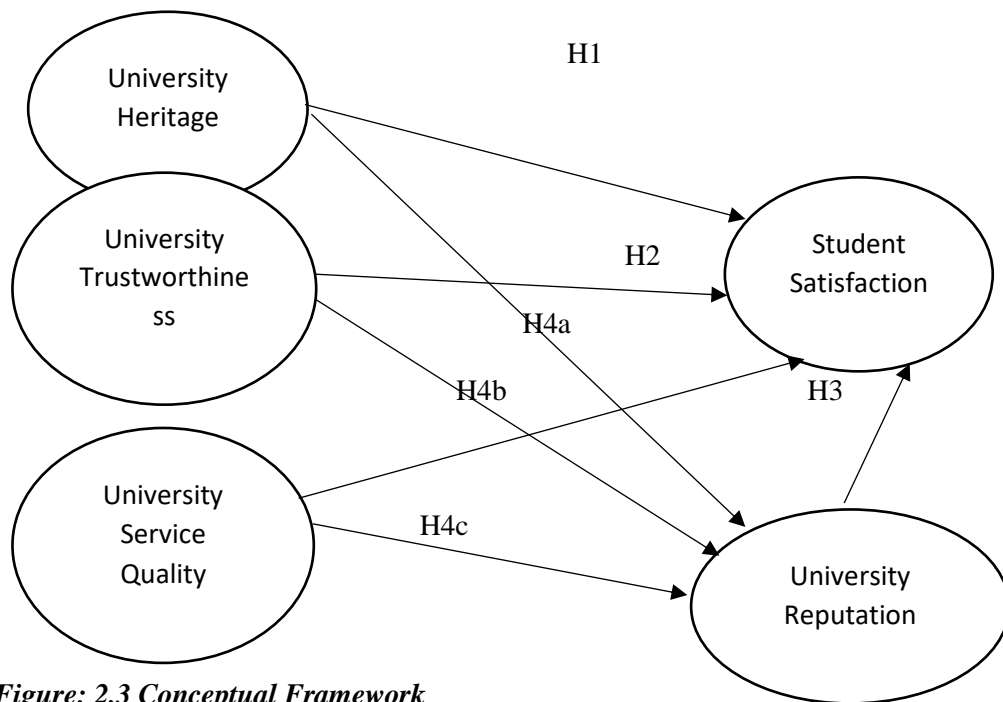
Figure: 2.3 Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
1. To explore and identify the dimension of university brand images that can help improvise the positioning of the university brand in the eyes of stakeholders.

2. To explore the effect of university reputation on the satisfaction of the students.

RESEARCH QUESTION
1. What are the key antecedents for creating student satisfaction in university branding?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES
1. University heritage has a significant impact on student satisfaction.
2. University trustworthiness has a significant impact on student satisfaction.
3. University service quality has a significant impact on student satisfaction.
4. University reputation plays a significant mediating role between university heritage and student satisfaction.
5. University reputation plays a significant mediating role between university trustworthiness and student satisfaction.
6. University reputation plays a significant mediating role between university service quality and student satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
The application and selection of a research methodology are dictated by the context of the study being conducted(Plungpongpan, 2016). Students' satisfaction levels with the university's brand image are the focus of this study, which aims to measure the effects of the university's brand image on those levels. Because of the focus of this study, the quantitative methodology will assist the researcher in estimating the estimated potential contribution. If we consider our study, the research approach suggests that it follows a deductive research approach. When designing the hypothesis for this study, in-depth consideration was given to the research variables and an examination of the previous literature, while the strategy for testing the hypothesis, they were tested using PLS-SEM. The design of the study may be explanatory because this phenomenon has already been investigated in another country. It is now being tested in Pakistan as a result of this research. In addition, an explanatory research design makes it easier to select the quantitative research methodology that is the best fit for the research question.

Data Collection
The research population for this research is university students of Pakistan. In this population, all university students either are under-graduated or graduated. The population of this research will focus on all the current male and female students of all disciplines of the universities of Pakistan. The total number of respondents for this study is 384 people. All of the respondents are current or former students at universities in Pakistan. Due to unspecified population frame we used convenience sampling technique because it is less expensive and allows the researcher to collect the data

whenever the respondents are available.

Measurements
All the variables included in this study have been measured using previously established instruments. It is shown in Table 3.1. However, the questionnaire is based and designed on a Likert Scale basis.

Table 1:

Variable Name	Number of Items	References
University Service Quality	8 Items	(Ray Karasek, 2012)
Students Satisfaction	4 Items	(Alwi, 2020)
University Reputation	4 Items	(Brannen, 2017)
University Heritage	4 Items	(Mostafa, 2005)
University Trustworthiness	3 Items	(Athiyaman, 1997)

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS
Demographic characteristics
As shown in Table 3, there is no significant difference in the ratio of males and females. There is a slight difference, with 51.8% female and 48.17% male respondents. Of the respondents, 30.9% are between 18 to 21, 36.45% are between 22 to 25, 19.5% are between the age of 26 to 30 and 13.1% are above 30. 57.55% of respondents are undergraduates, and the rest of 42.44% of respondents are graduates. The data is collected from different universities in Pakistan according to the provinces. 31.25% of respondents belong to different universities in Sindh, 28.38% of respondents belong to different universities in Punjab, 18.48% of respondents belong to different universities in Baluchistan, 15.88% respondents belong to different universities of NWFP and 5.99% respondents belong to the universities of Jammu & Kashmir.

Table 2: *Respondent Profile*

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	199	51.8%
	Male	185	48.17%
Age	18 to 21	119	30.9%
	22 to 25	140	36.45%
	26 to 30	75	19.5%
	Above 30	50	13.1%
Education	Undergraduate	221	57.55%
	Graduate	163	42.44%
Provinces of Pakistan	Sindh	120	31.25%
	Punjab	109	28.38%
	Baluchistan	71	18.48%

NWFP	61	15.88%
Jammu & Kashmir	23	5.99%

Respondent Profile

Measurement Model

In PLS-SEM, at first, we evaluated the measurement (outer) model by examining its content, convergence, and discriminant validity. Internal consistency of the model was be checked by Cronbach's alpha. When Cronbach's alpha value is above 0.7, the questionnaire data reliability is higher. However, if a given construct produces reliable results for its measurements and produces a value of 0.7, the scale is generally reliable(sung, 2008). Table 4.1, Cronbach's alpha of all the five constructs is above 0.7, which means that there is reasonable agreement between the items of each scale. Convergence validity indicates a high correlation between all items, and AVE is the indicator of convergent reliability; its value is considered reliable if it is >0.5 and our values are higher than the recommended value, which is >0.5(Brendan j. Gray, 2003). Another measure of reliability is the coefficient rho_A, and its value must be > 0.7, which is considered reliable, and in our case, all the values are >0.7. Another indicator is the Composite Reliability test, and its value is considered reliable if the value is >0.7 (Deepak sirdeshmukh, 2002) , and in our case, its value is also > 0.7. These all values showed the model is fit for measurement, as shown in table 4.1.

Table 3: *Summary of Reliability Analyses*

Construct	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Student Satisfaction	4	0.978	0.978	0.984	0.938
University Heritage	3	0.972	0.972	0.982	0.947
University Reputation_	4	0.987	0.987	0.990	0.962
University Service Quality_	8	0.991	0.991	0.992	0.940
University Trustworthiness	4	0.975	0.976	0.982	0.931

Reliability Analyses

Discriminant validity is used to assess the specific structure construct in the model is not allied to any other construct, so the correlation of items of the different constructs should be below.

Table 4: *Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

	Student Satisfaction	University Heritage	University Reputation_	University Service Quality_	University Trustworthiness
Student Satisfaction	*0.969*				
University Heritage	0.917	*0.973*			
University Reputation_	0.966	0.964	*0.981*		
University Service Quality_	0.912	0.971	0.971	*0.970*	

Discriminant Validity - Fornell-Larcker Criterion

The Fornell-Larcker Criterion is the method for assessing the discriminant validity of the construct. It establishes a relationship between the square root of the AVE value and the construct's correlation. Each construct's AVE square root should be greater than its maximum correlation with other constructs in the model(Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Compared to any other construct in the model, the difference between the construct with its indicator is higher. Table 5 shows that the results of the Fornell-Larcker standard and the values in italic diagonal line represent the square root of AVE, which is the highest value of the correlation between the square root of each structure and its relationship to other constructs.

Structural model
A structural model is likely to analyze the relationship between the construct. The path coefficient values among the arrows while finding the relationship through algorithm techniques using the bootstrapping technique used in PLS-SEM. In Table 4.4, the range of R-square values is from 0 to 1. If the values are closer to 1, the variance of the dependent variable explained by the independent variable is better. The results in Table 4.4 show that the R square value of Student Satisfaction is 0.987 and the R square value of University Reputation is 0.965, which means the predictive capacity of both the constructs is high.

Table 5: *R – Square & Adjusted R Square*

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Student Satisfaction	0.987	0.987
University Reputation_	0.965	0.965

Square & Adjusted R Square

This test creates significant values that explain the relationships between variables to assess structural models or the research. By using T-statistics and p-values, we check the significance of the model. To support the hypothesis, the p-value should be less than 0.05, and the T value should be greater than 1.96, which means that the relationship is significant among the variables.

Table 6: *Total Effects*

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
University Heritage -> Student Satisfaction	0.272	0.274	0.035	7.679	0.000
University Heritage -> University Reputation_	0.177	0.178	0.051	3.454	0.001
University Reputation_ -> Student Satisfaction	0.825	0.823	0.037	22.587	0.000
University Service Quality_ -> Student Satisfaction	0.833	0.830	0.036	23.377	0.000
University Service Quality_ -> University Reputation_	0.170	0.172	0.070	2.447	0.015
University Trustworthiness -> Student Satisfaction	-0.108	-0.108	0.033	3.299	0.001
University Trustworthiness -	0.642	0.640	0.074	8.626	0.000

| > University |
| Reputation_ |

Total Effects

Here we check the direct impact of UH, UT and US on Student Satisfaction. The result of these hypotheses is shown in Table 7. The P-value for this hypothesis is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, showing that our Independent variable, UH, significantly affects our Dependent Variable, Student Satisfaction. Its mean H_1, H_2, and H_3 are accepted.

Table 7: *Specific Indirect Effects*

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
University Service Quality_ -> University Reputation_ -> Student Satisfaction	0.339	0.344	0.041	8.230	0.000
University Trustworthiness -> University Reputation_ -> Student Satisfaction	0.265	0.266	0.037	7.138	0.000
University Heritage -> University Reputation_ -> Student Satisfaction	0.177	0.178	0.051	3.454	0.001

Specific Indirect Effects

Here we check the indirect impact of UH, UT, US on Student Satisfaction through a reputation mediator. The result of this hypothesis is shown in Table 4.6, the P-value for the indirect effect is 0.001, less than 0.05, and the direct effect is shown in Table 8, and its P-value is also less than 0.05, and the total effect is shown in Table 7 which

is also less than 0.05. Here indirect and the direct effect are significant, showing Partial mediation; its mean H4a is accepted. Investigating the performance of public sector secondary school teachers based on performance indicators of instructional planning & strategies as stated in the professional standards.

DISCUSSION

The current study investigated the impact of the brand image of universities on student satisfaction. Results indicate that a university's brand image plays a critical role in developing a different picture in students' minds, resulting in strategic advantage. The university's reputation is also enhanced due to the beneficial brand image, and it is favorably related to student satisfaction, which results in tangible and intangible benefits for the university(Claes Fornell, 1981). This study provides a detailed conceptual model for universities to develop branding strategies that stimulate students' interest. Universities must work diligently to establish their brand identity and differentiate themselves from competing brands(Theo K. Dijkstra a, 2015). The study will help the universities create their brand image by maintaining better traditions, providing better quality than competitors, creating a better relationship of trust with the students and then marketing themselves accordingly(Claes Fornell, 1981).

The study's first hypothesis clearly shows a significant impact of university heritage on student satisfaction (Altaf Merchant, 2015). University heritage is defined as characteristics of a particular native culture, such as traditions, languages, or structures that date from the past but remain significant (Qazi et al., 2021). First, universities must pay attention to their tradition, which belongs to them only. For example, their convocation style, how they arrange graduation ceremonies for their students, and how they maintain relationships with alumni, which arrange events to give opportunities(Bang Nguyen, 2019). These opportunities utilize a tradition that defines your distinctiveness from your competitors. Universities must use it and market themselves accordingly(Swati Pand, 2019).

Our second research hypothesis has shown a significant impact of university trustworthiness on student satisfaction. It means universities must build a trustful relationship with their students to satisfy them. Satisfied students lead a positive word of mouth(Altaf Merchant, 2015). Trustworthiness is a vital aspect that can create a positive image of a university in a student's mind, and it leads to positive word of mouth. Trust is that factor by which a consumer is willing to consume the product(Swati Pand, 2019). The ordinary consumer's willingness depends on the brand's capacity to execute the stated function. Additionally, it is believed that the university will work for the students' benefit and that the university will be dependable, safe, and honest(Rosabella Boswell, 2022).

Trust plays a significant role in a dynamic environment where the world faces uncertainties. Trust is the phenomenon that gives confidence that the institution will behave in an anticipated way in case of any susceptible condition(D. Harrison McKnight, 2002). Skilled administration, robust procedures, cooperative staff and faculty, technology adaptation (Deepak sirdeshmukh, 2002) (and a compelling track record will give a university trust in the students(Swati Pand, 2019). In organizational studies, trustworthiness has received prominent attention because it is the most common phenomenon which practiced the most inhuman exchanges(Emma Bell, 2018). Universities must report their selves as they are in actuality. If they are over-promising and under-delivering, they may lose their trust, leading to unsatisfied students.

3rd hypothesis finding of the research shows a significant impact of university quality on student satisfaction. Service quality is another factor that plays a significant role in building the brand image of a university. Service quality models provides an overview of factors that affect the quality of the organization and its offerings like taking feedback from learners and professors each semester, and include faculty in developing quality enhancement process and programs as these   facilitate understanding, help clarify how quality shortfalls develop, and provide a framework for launching quality improvement initiatives(Uzma Haleem, 2021). Service quality can also be measured by reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness(Swati Pand, 2019). Universities must ensure that everything is in order in their organization and that everyone appropriately performs their duties. They have an administration whose primary responsibility is to assure students that the university operates effectively and that students and teachers have access to all necessary resources for knowledge development(Katsia M. Cadeau, 2020; Mahmood M, 2021).

The study indicates that university reputation significantly influences the relationship between UH and student satisfaction. According to the findings, University Reputation appears to intervene as a partial mediator between UH and student satisfaction. Universities must ensure that their reputation is not going down. At this time, university reputation plays a vital role when selecting a university(Hyuk Jin Lee, 2020). Corporate reputation can be understood by the organization's identity, branding technique, communication, and image in the world(Azoury, 2014). Students always desire to adhere to a university with a good reputation. The existing research showed that a highly reputed university entices ample benefits – a more diverse student and faculty body, increased talent from alumni, and industry support all contribute to the university's brand image. Management should organize marketing and reputation building(Hemsley-Brown, 2016). As the competition among the universities is increasing day by day, they should continually monitor their reputation among the stakeholders, including their current students, ex-students, future students, teachers,

staff, alumni, and employers(Balaji, 2016).

The 4 b hypothesis research shows that the university's reputation is critical in mediating the relationship between UT and student satisfaction. According to the study's findings, University Reputation serves as a partial mediator between UT and student satisfaction. They must ensure to fulfil their all promises and create a positive relation of trust to build a good reputation in the industry because if they are overpromising and under-delivering, this affects the trust level and leads to a bad reputation(John M.T. Balmer, 2006). This reputation can be developed through clear and transparent policies of the organization as well as by furnishing estimated and learned faculty to the students, which in turn develop their faith and enhance their reputation towards the university(Swati Pand, 2019).

Finally, 4 C finding identifies that university repute mediates between university service quality and student satisfaction(Jamie Ressler, 2009)**.** Previous researches are endorsed that university reputation plays a partial mediating role between university service quality and student satisfaction(Alwi, 2020). They must ensure that everything is doing their job correctly and provide all the necessary equipment to the students necessary for them(Fouzia Ajmal, 2021). Providing good service quality can positively impact reputation, which leads to satisfied students(Khan S.K., 2021)**.**

The study highlights that brand image plays a vital role in students' satisfaction levels—the findings of the research support previous research. Universities need to create a positive image of universities by providing the best services to the students and creating a trustful relationship that they are giving the best quality of education, providing the latest technologies, and including the latest changes in education in their university. Students are very concerned about their studies, so they choose universities with a positive brand image.
The study will help the universities create their brand image by maintaining better traditions, providing better quality than competitors, creating a better relationship of trust with the students and then marketing themselves accordingly(Ely Setyowati, 2022). It will help universities evaluate themselves according to these three dimensions and satisfy their students. Satisfied students are essential sources of positive brand equity through positive word of mouth.

RECOMMENDATION
Limitations of the research are an opportunity for future research. In this research, three dimensions of brand image are studied in Pakistan. In the future, some other dimensions will be tested. This research is general. Data is collected from different universities in Pakistan except for any domain so that this research could be specified according to the domain. Self-administrative questions or qualitative research

domains doors are open for this research.

Practical Implementation

According to the research findings, the university's brand image significantly affects the students' satisfaction. Universities must actively work to build a brand image. There are three different viewpoints to creating a university's brand image: UH; universities must work on their culture, which must be unique. Universities could participate in sports, provide career opportunities through different events, provide scholarships to the students, and locate the university in the right place(Hishamuddin fitri Abu hasan, 2008). This research is done in Pakistan so universities could make their culture flexible for the students of different provinces by adopting the cultures of all the provinces of Pakistan(Muhammad Husin, 2022). The second is creating trustful relations; universities must portray themselves as they are in actuality. To maintain trustful relationships, the university's activities must align with their strategies; what they are promising must be fulfilled(Altaf Merchant, 2015). The third is to deliver the best quality of services to the students by checking and balancing whether everyone is doing their job correctly or not. Issues of the students must be encountered by providing new technologies to the students and updated education standards (Laura M. Arpan, 2003).

Theoretical Implementation

The current study is based on signaling theory, which is part of organization attractiveness; signaling theories assume that the managers of the respective institute know more about the quality of their firms than stakeholders. In light of theory(Alam, 2018). This study analyzes the university, individual, and environmental issues in processing the public's perception of the university image. Furthermore, this study supports this theory's idea that a university's public image can shift depending on its focus on its target audience (Jirawan Plungpongpan, 2016). From an assortment of connections and encounters, the corporate picture is made to impact students' perceptions (Tas, 2012). Reputation is one factor that creates signals for the investor (i,e, students) that play a vital role in the brand image of universities in students' minds, which develops the competitive advantage for universities(George J. Papaioannou, 2017). If students are satisfied with their university, it is a significant achievement for the universities in terms of a positive reputation, so universities must actively work to create a positive brand image(Minjung Sung, 2008). For a successful brand image, a corporation must have a strong vision, and its strategies must fulfil that vision; it also reveals the thoughtful positioning strategy(Mai An Tran, 2015).

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