



Research Article

The Building Blocks of Student Loyalty in Saudi Private Universities: A Marketing Perspective

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Received date:12 June 2023; Accepted date:24 July 2023; Published date: 25 September 2023

Academic Editor: Azzam Jamil Falah Al-Rifae

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Abstract

This study investigates the various factors that influence student loyalty in Saudi universities, given the escalating competition among them for student enrollment and retention. The paper aims to address the research gap in the context of Saudi Arabia by focusing on private universities in Jeddah city. It can be gleaned from the existing literature on this topic that Academic Experience, Student Life and Support, Student Satisfaction, and University Image are the building blocks of student loyalty in private universities. To test the effect and impact of the mentioned factors on Student Loyalty, the research design followed a descriptive approach, employing a quantitative survey guided by five hypotheses. The study population includes 3,860 students from three private universities in Jeddah. A structured online questionnaire was distributed during the spring semester of 2023, and a total of 302 responses were collected through random sampling. The findings indicate that University Image strongly affects Student Loyalty, while Student Satisfaction has a moderate impact on Student Loyalty. University Image also has a moderately positive effect on Student Satisfaction. The study recommends that universities invest in promoting their brand image, improving their academic experience, and reconsidering their tuition fees to match the services offered. This study contributes toward filling the literature gap on student loyalty in Saudi literature, provides marketing implications, and paves the way for future marketing research on Saudi universities.

Keywords: student satisfaction; university image; student loyalty; private universities; Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Saudi Arabia has undergone remarkable economic diversification, propelling significant

changes in its higher education system in recent years. The establishment of 12 new public universities and 5 private universities since 2006 has marked a significant expansion of

educational opportunities fostering growth and access to higher education all over the country, as well as making Saudi Arabia one of the fastest-growing education systems in the Middle East due to its numerous prestigious universities (Abu Najm, 2022). This significant expansion of educational opportunities fosters growth and access to higher education all over the country and makes Saudi Arabia one of the fastest-growing education systems in the Middle East due to its numerous prestigious universities. Since 2016, Vision 2030 has given education development particular attention in order to assist Saudi Arabia become one of the world's most prosperous countries. (Sohail & Hasan, 2021). The Vision of 2030 also entitles vital elements in equipping the younger generation with the educational opportunities that will enable them to become productive members of the Saudi society.

To address these developments, the higher education system in Saudi Arabia is required to adopt unique approaches to tackle the challenges faced by universities (Alharbi, 2016). As this sector experiences rapid growth, it also faces escalating competition among other institutions competing for student enrollment and retention. During the 2020 recession, the country faced a sharp decline in economic activity, making it difficult for students to afford high-cost educational expenses. This combination of fierce competition and an extremely cut-throat environment in higher education propels the need to build loyalty among the students through customer-focused strategies (Leonard et al, 2015).

The city of Jeddah, in particular, is a hotspot for intense competition among private universities. This intense rivalry makes it hard to attract and retain students. Lack of student loyalty is a threat that can have detrimental ramifications for universities. When students are not loyal to their institution, they may be more likely to spread negative word-of-mouth, transfer to a different university, or even drop out altogether, leading to a decline in enrollment and revenue for the institution. Consequently, it becomes critical for private universities to thoroughly understand the mindset and motives of the new generation of students and the factors influencing their students' loyalty. Building and nurturing student loyalty is crucial as it directly impacts their reputation, enrollment rates, and financial performance (Amin, 2021).

Issues pertaining to student loyalty have already

been addressed by various scholars such as Ngwira and Intravisit (2023) and Kieng et al. (2021), yet no relevant studies have been found on student loyalty in universities in Saudi Arabia. Hence, the purpose of the present study involves identifying the factors that affect student loyalty in Saudi Arabia. The significance of this study lies in its two main contributions. Firstly, it addresses the limited research conducted and fills the literature gap on the factors influencing student loyalty in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, these research findings serve as a valuable resource for private universities and researchers to make informed decisions to cultivate stronger relationships with their students.

The study thus aims to achieve four primary objectives. First, to identify the main factors that influence Student loyalty toward Saudi private universities. Second, to analyze the relationship between the different factors on student loyalty. Third, to measure the impact of each factor on student loyalty. Fourth, to formulate recommendations for Saudi private universities to enhance student loyalty.

Literature Review

This review is structured thematically to conceptualize student loyalty, explore the different factors influencing loyalty, and develop the main hypotheses of the study focus while relating the review to the context of Saudi private universities.

Students as Customers in a University Setting

Students are considered 'customers of educational services'; this is especially true in the case of private universities, where students actively choose a university and pay tuition fees in exchange for educational services. Therefore, students are expected to be treated as customers throughout their university journey (Tariq et al., 2020). Research by Todea et al. (2022) confirms no discernible difference between students and consumers of other services. As such, education can be considered a service, and students as customers are in a position to determine what they expect from a university and evaluate the quality of service provided. Based on the research of Paul and Pradhan (2019), students of private universities carry the expectation of being regarded as paying customers and require a high standard of service delivery. Due to this, maintaining student loyalty is considered a

crucial aspect in private universities as it ensures that students remain committed to their university.

Student Loyalty

Student loyalty is the degree of connection students feel toward their university, and how it is expressed through their attitudes and behaviors (Snijders et al., 2020). This study explores the concept of student loyalty in other countries and then applies these existing frameworks in the realm of Saudi private universities.

A study by Todea et al. (2022) elaborated that student loyalty refers to students' commitment to their university following their educational experience. According to Snijders et al. (2020), loyalty can be expressed in different forms, such as positive recommendations from students about their university or engaging in extracurricular programs. This paper also examines other possible loyalty effects, such as positive word-of-mouth and commitment toward the university. Kieng et al. (2021) explain that loyal students are more likely to speak positively about their university. In line with what Mulyono (2020) stated, the behavior of university students in sharing positive experiences, making recommendations to others, and giving referrals is affected by their overall satisfaction and the brand image of their university. Another kind of loyalty is present in "retention" which is one of the main dimensions measuring student loyalty by enrolling and persisting in the university (Mulyono, 2020).

The Student Loyalty Model & Hypothesis Development

All evaluations of student loyalty indices are fundamentally based on a classical model that includes sources and consequences of student loyalty (Tariq et al., 2020). The student loyalty model is fundamental to understanding the main factors that influence student loyalty. Many factors impact student loyalty; however, the objective of this research is to identify the main factors that are significant and form an integral part of the model.

Several researchers, such as Leonnard et al (2015) and Snijders et al. (2020), have developed various models to conceptualize the student loyalty model. The research framework of Ngwira and Intravisit (2023) suggests that independent variables such as university image, reputation, functional service quality, and student perceived value are associated with student satisfaction, which leads to student loyalty. Similarly, the models of Kieng et al. (2021) and Mulyono (2020) prove some common variables. Thus, it can be concluded that recent literature identifies student satisfaction and university image as the main pillars of the student loyalty model. This review will define and elaborate on the three main pillars as follows:

Student Satisfaction

Kieng et al. (2021) define student satisfaction as the favorable evaluation of various student experiences provided by a university. Research by Ngwira and Intravisit (2023) defines student satisfaction as "a temporary approach caused by an appraisal of students' academic experience, services, and facilities". According to several research results, focusing on improving student satisfaction is crucial for developing student value and fostering student loyalty. Student satisfaction has been identified as the major driver of student loyalty. Therefore, when students are satisfied with their educational institution, they will be more likely to remain loyal to it and spread a positive image of it (Tariq et al., 2020 and Paul & Pradhan, 2019).

H1: Student satisfaction has a significant effect on student loyalty.

Student satisfaction and retention at Saudi universities are largely driven by the quality of the services they receive. It is predominantly derived from the combination of excellent learning and non-learning processes (Azam, 2018). Moreover, Allam and Malik (2020) and Sibai et al. (2021) identified the predictors of student satisfaction in Saudi universities as instructor performance, service delivery, and support facilities. Numerous studies have been conducted on student satisfaction, and the findings suggest several factors influencing it, as seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Student Satisfaction Dimensions in Recent Literature

Key Dimensions	Researcher(s)	Country
Academic Services, Administrative Services, Physical Evidence	Azam (2018)	Saudi Arabia
Infrastructure, Campus Life, Admin/Staff Support, Faculty, Academic	Allam & Malik (2020)	Saudi Arabia
Facilities, Career preparation, Perceived quality, Associations of brand	Todea et al. (2022)	Romania
Resources, Management, Course, Curriculum	Baysal & Araç (2019)	Turkey
Teaching and learning process, Curriculum, Leadership, Administrative service, Relationship Quality	Mulyono (2020)	Indonesia
Academic Experience, Student Support Facilities, Campus Life and Social Integration, Faculty Services	Kieng et al. (2021)	Cambodia
Marketing Mix: process, price, product, place, promotion, people, physical evidence.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	Thailand
University Image, Functional Service Quality, Students' Perceived Value, university reputation	Ngwira & Intravisit (2023)	Thailand
Functional Value, Service Quality, Image, Social Value, Customer Intimacy	Paul & Pradhan (2019)	India
Technology Support, Academic Support, Social Support, Service Support	Kakada et al. (2019)	India
Perceived Academic Quality, Perceived Administrative Quality, Perceived Physical Facilities, Perceived University Image	Ali et al. (2021)	Pakistan
Institution reputation and ranking, Quality of teaching and faculty, Academic support, Campus infrastructure, IT services, Library services, Price fairness, Placement opportunity, Choice of courses, Security	Tariq et al. (2020)	Pakistan

These student satisfaction dimensions vary across contexts and countries with little consensus on the different constructs. As this vein of research focuses on exploring the main determining factors in Saudi universities, the most common ones that will be elaborated on are academic experience, and student life and support.

Academic Experience

The academic experience is a critical component of student satisfaction as students attend college with the expectation of receiving a high-quality education (Kakada et al., 2019). It encompasses a range of variables that can impact student satisfaction. Therefore, the obvious factors affecting students' academic experiences are academic resources, service quality, and teaching quality. Resources are vital to the academic experience. Students need access to resources such as libraries, computer labs, and research facilities to support their academic pursuits (Kieng et al, 2021). Weerasinghe and Fernando (2017) explored the influence of service quality on student satisfaction and found that cooperation and the amiability of administrative staff are crucial factors in shaping student satisfaction.

Furthermore, teaching quality can be assessed through several factors. Li et al. (2022) reveal that the academic experience of the faculty and academic professionalism are important indicators influencing student satisfaction.

H2: Academic experience significantly affects student satisfaction.

Student Life and Support

Student support facilities greatly influence student satisfaction. In 2019, Kakada et al. emphasized a strong positive correlation relationship between student satisfaction and student support facilities. Azam (2018) adds that higher education institutions must focus on every aspect of the student's experience at the institution to achieve student satisfaction. Social interactions, availability of scholarships, and perceived fairness of tuition price are the main factors affecting student life and support. Thus, a positive campus life experience and social integration can lead to a greater sense of community and a more enjoyable college experience (Kieng et al., 2021). According to Tariq et al. (2020), prioritizing price fairness and offering scholarships attract and retain satisfied students, promote access to education,

and build a positive reputation. Fair pricing leads to higher student satisfaction, while pricing that exceeds the value of facilities provided results in dissatisfaction, dropouts, or even switching.

H3: Student life and support have a significant effect on student satisfaction.

University Image

According to Ali et al. (2021), the concept of university image pertains to the way the institution is viewed by external and internal stakeholders. Research by Ngwira and Intravisit (2023) illustrates that a university's image is determined by its trustworthiness, reputation, heritage, and its campus culture. Findings from Mulyono's (2020) research concluded that university image significantly shapes student satisfaction and loyalty. The research by Paul and Pradhan (2019) also suggested that the university's reputation, academic rankings, and image are paramount to the formation of a student's loyalty. In the context of Saudi Arabia, Muhammad et al. (2020) indicate that reputation and trust are fundamental factors in Saudi Arabia where customers mainly rely on recommendations from family and friends. Studies have indicated that the retention and loyalty of students are significantly influenced by the reputation and image of the university. Findings by Ngwira and Intravisit (2023) and Kieng et al. (2021) reported that university image had a strong impact on students' loyalty.

H4: University image has a significant effect on student loyalty.

Besides, prior research has shed some light on the relationship between university image and satisfaction. Recent studies by Kieng et al. (2021) and Mulyono (2020) have highlighted that the image of a university serves as a mediator and improves students' satisfaction. As stated by Paul and Pradhan (2019), previous studies have discovered that the image of an institution has a significant impact on student satisfaction formation and ultimately leads to students' loyalty toward the institution.

H5: University image has a significant effect on student satisfaction.

In conclusion, the student loyalty model is a widely-used framework; after an extensive review of the literature, five hypotheses were

conceived based on the modification of prior research frameworks on student loyalty proposed via two papers by Ngwira and Intravisit (2023), and Kieng et al. (2021). As for the students' satisfaction antecedents, they were concluded from recent studies in Saudi Arabia by Allam and Malik (2020) and Azam (2018).

Research Methodology

Research Design

The researchers conducted applied research to address the issue at hand. To execute the study, the researchers utilized a descriptive research design by gathering objective data that reflected the relationship among the different variables. According to Tariq et al. (2020), descriptive analysis is used when researchers specifically need to answer the questions of "what is" and "what was". Borishade et al. (2021) applied descriptive design to answer the research questions and to be able to evaluate different variables in a succinct and scientific manner. Starting with journals, the researchers reviewed the available literature and found the knowledge gap. The literature review is crucial in research as it supports building conceptual models and filling the gap in the market. The researchers then relied on primary data, with structural self-administered online questionnaire deployment, as the main data-gathering method, as it is time-efficient, provides easier access to the target audience, and captures a larger sample of the study population (Tariq et al., 2020). The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the socio-demographic section and the evaluation of variables. All these variables were tested based on a 5-point Likert scale to investigate the significance of each hypothesis.

Sampling and Data Collection

The population of this study comprised undergraduate and graduate students of three private universities in Jeddah city, which counted 3,860 individuals. Todea et al. (2022) recommended choosing universities that have similarities when sampling. Hence, the researchers have selected these three universities as they offer their students relatively comparable educational experiences and services, and all three were founded more than 20 years ago. Besides, simple random sampling was followed to reach the sample group. The researchers followed a mono-method using a quantitative survey:

questionnaires. 320 respondents accepted to participate in the study and their answers were complete; however, only 302 responses were valid and considered for the analysis stage. The researchers utilized SPSS to analyze data and formulate the results. The data were collected in May 2023.

Ethical Considerations

To avoid common ethical issues, such as the universities' and participants' privacy, during the data-collection process, all participants were informed about the research purpose and how the data would be used, and they voluntarily agreed to participate, ensuring their anonymity.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the questionnaire's validity and reliability, the researchers adapted all the questionnaire questions from previous peer-reviewed studies by Amin (2021), Jie and Chaipinchana (2022), and Paul and Pradhan (2019) which addressed the same topic in other countries. This was done with minor adjustments to some questions to match the study settings and environment.

Results

The final survey results were obtained from a sufficient sample of 302 students. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing.

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Table 2: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Private University	University A	152	50.3
	University B	60	19.9
	University C	90	29.8
Gender	Female	256	84.8
	Male	46	15.2
Academic level	Undergraduate	226	74.8
	Graduate	76	25.2
School	Architecture & Design	49	16.2
	Business & Management	133	44.0
	Communication & Advertising	30	9.9
	Computing & Engineering	51	16.9
	Health & Behavioral Sciences	17	5.6
	Law & Diplomacy	22	7.3
Current Year of Study	First Year	33	10.9
	Second Year	104	34.4
	Third Year	60	19.9
	Fourth Year	73	24.2
	Fifth Year	32	10.6

Table 2. shows the demographic characteristics of all respondents. It can be concluded that the respondents were from different universities, years of study, and gender, a varied range of university levels was represented in the sample. The majority of the sample size was female, accounting for 84.8% of respondents. Male students, on the other hand, made up only 15.2% of the sample. It is worth noting that this gender

distribution is because some of the sampled universities were exclusively established for female students, and only recently started enrolling male students. Similarly, the majority of respondents were undergraduate students, accounting for 74.8% of the sample, while graduate students made up a smaller percentage of the sample, at 25.2%.

Table 3: Summary Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. D	Result
1. Student Satisfaction	3.59	0.82	Agree
a. Academic Experience	3.85	0.83	Agree
b. Student Support and Life	3.32	0.99	Neutral
2. University Image	3.82	0.84	Agree
3. Student Loyalty	3.66	1.02	Agree

Table 3 above indicates that sampled students were generally satisfied with their Academic Experience at their university with a mean average value of 3.85, and Student Life with a mean score of 3.32. Academic Experience had the highest

mean, while Student Support and Life received a neutral average. Furthermore, University Image had positive results, with a mean score of 3.82, and students were generally perceived as loyal to their university with a mean of 3.66.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics and Answers of Respondents on Statement.

No.	Variable	Statement Items	Measurement Adapted From	Mean	Result
1	Student Satisfaction (Academic Experience)	I am satisfied with the availability of teaching tools and platforms such as, blackboard, email, etc.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	4.25	Strongly Agree
2	Student Satisfaction (Academic Experience)	I am satisfied with the necessary equipment in the university as the classrooms, labs, computers, digital projectors...etc.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.92	Agree
3	Student Satisfaction (Academic Experience)	I am satisfied with my faculty qualifications.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.78	Agree
4	Student Satisfaction (Academic Experience)	I am satisfied with the teaching methods and techniques.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.75	Agree
5	Student Satisfaction (Academic Experience)	I am satisfied with the administrative staff at the university.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.56	Agree
6	Student Satisfaction (Student Support and Life)	The social activities at my university enhance the interest of my studies.	Amin (2021)	3.52	Agree
7	Student Satisfaction (Student Support and Life)	I am satisfied with offered scholarships.	Paul & Pradhan (2019)	3.42	Agree
8	Student Satisfaction (Student Support and Life)	I would rate the sufficiency of services provided by my university considering the price I pay for tuition to be.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.04	Neutral
9	University Image	The reputation of my university influences the value of my degree.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.98	Agree
10	University Image	I know my university is one of the best private institutions in the kingdom.	Amin (2021)	3.96	Agree
11	University Image	I would rate the general public views of my university's image to be.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.91	Agree
12	University Image	My university is my first choice from Saudi private universities.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.86	Agree
13	University Image	The academic ranking of my university is important for its reputation.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.75	Agree
14	University Image	Getting into my university is a guarantee to a successful career because of its brand name.	Amin (2021)	3.70	Agree

15	University Image	I have received advice from others about my university.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.61	Agree
16	Student Loyalty	I proudly say that I am a student at my university.	Amin (2021)	4.17	Agree
17	Student Loyalty	I am highly interested in keeping in touch with my faculty after the program.	Amin (2021)	3.89	Agree
18	Student Loyalty	If I have to choose a university today, I will choose my current university.	Paul & Pradhan (2019)	3.72	Agree
19	Student Loyalty	I will recommend my university to my friends and relatives for education.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.72	Agree
20	Student Loyalty	I know the university's motto or mission statement.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.66	Agree
21	Student Loyalty	I often talked to others about my university achievements and benefits of joining it.	Paul & Pradhan (2019)	3.58	Agree
22	Student Loyalty	I would become a member of any alumni organizations at my university.	Amin (2021)	3.45	Agree
23	Student Loyalty	If I pursue further education /degrees, I will attend my same university.	Amin (2021)	3.07	Neutral
15	University Image	I have received advice from others about my university.	Jie & Chaipinchana (2022)	3.61	Agree
16	Student Loyalty	I proudly say that I am a student at my university.	Amin (2021)	4.17	Agree
17	Student Loyalty	I am highly interested in keeping in touch with my faculty after the program.	Amin (2021)	3.89	Agree
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23	Student Loyalty	If I pursue further education /degrees, I will attend my same university.	Amin (2021)	3.07	Neutral

Testing of Hypotheses

Correlation analysis and analysis of variance

(ANOVA) were used to assess the relationship between variables and sub-variables to test the main hypothesis and assess its significance.

Table 5: Summary of Hypotheses Correlations and Significance Level

Hypotheses	R-Value	P-Value
H1: Student satisfaction has a significant effect on student loyalty.	.690 ^a	<.001
H2: Academic experience significantly affects student satisfaction.	.886 ^a	<.001
H3: Student life and support has a significant effect on student satisfaction.	.922 ^a	<.001
H4: University image has a significant effect on student loyalty.	.777 ^a	<.001
H5: University image has a significant effect on student satisfaction.	.649 ^a	<.001

The summarized test results evaluated and discussed in Table 5 above show that:

H1: Student satisfaction has a significant effect on student loyalty.

The value of R is 0.690, which indicates a moderate positive correlation between Student Satisfaction and Student Loyalty. The p-value is below the significance level of 0.05, thus the hypothesis is true.

H2: Academic experience significantly affects student satisfaction.

R-value 0.88 indicates a strong positive correlation between Academic Experience and Student Satisfaction. These findings present the p-value of the ANOVA below the significance level; thus, the hypothesis is true.

H3: Student life and support has a significant effect on student satisfaction.

The value of R-value is 0.922, which indicates a

strong positive correlation between Student Satisfaction and Student Life and Support. The p-value is below the significance level; thus, the hypothesis is true.

H4: University image has a significant effect on student loyalty.

R-value of 0.777 shows a strong positive correlation between University Image and Student Loyalty. The p-value is below the significance level of 0.05, thus the hypothesis is true.

H5: University image has a significant effect on student satisfaction.

R-value of 0.649 indicates a moderate positive correlation between Student Satisfaction and University Image. The p-value is below the significance level of 0.05, thus the hypothesis is true.

After the above analysis, the hypothesis test conclusion of the research is as follows:

Table 6: Conclusion of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Correlation	Result
H1: Student satisfaction has a significant effect on student loyalty.	Moderate Positive	Accepted
H2: Academic experience significantly affects student satisfaction.	Strong Positive	Accepted
H3: Student life and support has a significant effect on student satisfaction.	Strong Positive	Accepted
H4: University image has a significant effect on student loyalty.	Strong Positive	Accepted
H5: University image has a significant effect on student satisfaction.	Moderate Positive	Accepted

The results show that the five hypotheses of this research were accepted: H2, H3, and H4 have a strong positive correlation, whereas H1 and H5 have a moderate positive correlation.

Discussion

This discussion answers the main research questions and addresses the objectives by identifying the factors that influence students' loyalty toward Saudi private universities in addition to analyzing the relationships and measuring each factor's impact on Student Loyalty. The findings confirm the literature review that the Student Loyalty Model can be used as a framework to understand the factors that influence Student Loyalty. Hence, the framework of this study derived from prior frameworks proposed by Ngwira and Intravisi (2023), and Kieng et al. (2021), is valid including the two variables of Student Satisfaction and University Image impact on Student Loyalty.

Using the five accepted hypotheses, the researchers examined the relationship between different factors on Student Loyalty and measured how each factor impacts loyalty; thus, the below correlations were deduced.

H1: Student Satisfaction has a significant effect on Student Loyalty.

The results show a moderate positive relationship between Student Satisfaction and Student Loyalty which means an increase

According to the correlation analysis, these hypotheses have a strong positive impact on the dependent variable, Student Satisfaction. These results are also approved by Ali and Ahmed (2018); and Chandra et al. (2018), whose studies revealed a significant impact of the quality of Academic Experience and physical facilities on Student Satisfaction. Research by Ngwira and Intravisi (2023) confirmed a reasonable impact of functional service quality on Student Satisfaction. While there are proponents of this correlation, detractors equally exist. Kieng et al.'s (2021) study rejected the effect of the Academic Experience on Student Satisfaction. The variance in the results between the current study, under the context of Saudi Arabia, and the study of Kieng et al. (2021), in Colombia, is due to cultural differences between the two countries. Depending on the context,

inStudent Satisfaction in Saudi private universities will cause a reasonable, not substantial, increase in Student Loyalty. Some factors play a role in this relationship, including the amount of tuition fees and the satisfaction with administrative staff. Compared to public universities, private universities in Saudi Arabia charge students a hefty sum for similar services. Student Satisfaction should be guaranteed since they are paying for these services. This outcome is consistent with the result reported by Ngwira and Intravisi (2023); Ali and Ahmed (2018); Chandra et al. (2018); and Tariq et al. (2018), who concluded a significant direct impact of Student Satisfaction on Student Loyalty. Besides, Todea et al. (2022) confirmed a significant impact of Student Satisfaction on loyalty; however, the relationship was indirect. Furthermore, Tariq et al. (2020); and Ali and Ahmed (2018) reported a strong impact of Student Satisfaction on Student Loyalty as those students satisfied with their university tend to spread positive feedback about their universities, which is a consequence of Student Loyalty. Nevertheless, Rojas-Méndez et al. (2009, as cited in Ali & Ahmed, 2018) rejected the impact of Student Satisfaction on Student Loyalty.

H2: Academic Experience significantly affects Student Satisfaction.

H3: Student Life and Support have a significant effect on Student Satisfaction.

respondents have different mindsets and varying standards when it comes to evaluating their satisfaction.

H4: University Image has a significant effect on Student Loyalty

The findings confirmed that University Image has a strong positive correlation with Student Loyalty, which is similar to the results of Tariq et al. (2022); Kieng et al. (2021); and Ali and Ahmed (2018). On the other hand, the University Image has a moderate impact on Student Loyalty, as reported by Ngwira and Intravisi (2023). The difference in the relation intensity between the studies is due to the cultural differences and the variations in the studies' contexts.

H5: University Image has a significant effect on Student Satisfaction.

The tests have proven that University Image has a moderate positive correlation with Student Satisfaction. Respondents' answers on the questionnaire reflected the importance of University Image in supporting Student Satisfaction and the value of their studies. The study of Ngwira and Intravisit (2023) and Kieng et al. (2021) align with this finding. Nevertheless, Panda et al. (2019) and Ali and Ahmed (2018) highlighted an inverse relationship where their studies confirm a significant impact of Student Satisfaction on University Image. They considered Student Satisfaction was a prerequisite for building a positive University Image, and their hypothesis was accepted. Satisfied students help in building a strong image for the institution.

In a nutshell, Academic Experience and Student Life and Support strongly correlate with Student Satisfaction, whereas University Image has a moderate positive correlation with Student Satisfaction. In contribution to Student Loyalty, University Image strongly correlates with Student Loyalty, whereas Student Satisfaction has a moderate relationship with Student Loyalty. This result is similar to that found in Ngwira and Intravisit's (2023) study where they concluded that University Image has a stronger correlation with Student Loyalty than Student Satisfaction.

Recommendations

Finally, this research formulated a set of recommendations for Saudi private universities to enhance Student Loyalty and improve their marketing strategies as follows:

- **Boosting University Image:** emphasize and invest more in promoting their positive brand image through both digital and traditional communication channels.
- **Improving Academic Experience:** ensure that their academic programs remain up-to-date, relevant, and rigorous. Additionally, invest in modern facilities and technology to enhance the learning experience for students.
- **Reconsidering Tuition Fees:**

improve their services to match their tuition fees, which can be achieved by providing more value through modern facilities and technology. Moreover, consider alternative pricing models such as income-based tuition or deferred payment plans.

Limitations & Future Studies

Several limitations were encountered that should be considered when interpreting the results and implications of this study. The time limitation restricted the study's depth and breadth, forcing the researchers to collect data within a specific duration. The small sample size of the study included only private universities in Jeddah. Moreover, the findings are specific to the cultural, social, and economic factors present in Saudi Arabia. The research relied primarily on surveys as the method of data collection that might have only captured part of the full range of factors influencing student loyalty. Additional qualitative methods could have provided a more in-depth understanding and rich insights into students' perspectives. Despite these limitations, the researchers believe that this research provides valuable insights. Future studies could address these limitations by adopting a longitudinal design, utilizing multiple data-collection methods, and expanding the sample size to enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine the various factors influencing student loyalty in Saudi private universities and to measure the relationships and impact of these factors. The building blocks of student loyalty in Saudi private universities were determined to be student satisfaction (comprising the academic experience, student life, and support) and university image. The findings showed that Academic Experience and Student Life have a strong positive correlation with Student Satisfaction, and University Image has a moderate positive correlation with Student Satisfaction. In contribution to Student Loyalty, University Image strongly correlates with Student Loyalty, whereas Student Satisfaction has a moderate relationship with Student Loyalty. The outcomes of this research paper support the global literature by demonstrating

a significant impact with a positive correlation of each factor on student loyalty.

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Appendix

Questionnaire

Section I: Demographical Variables

#	Question	List
1	University Name	<input type="radio"/> University A <input type="radio"/> University B <input type="radio"/> University C
2	Gender	<input type="radio"/> Female <input type="radio"/> Male
3	Academic level	<input type="radio"/> Undergraduate Student <input type="radio"/> Graduate Student
4	School	<input type="radio"/> Architecture and Design <input type="radio"/> Business and Management <input type="radio"/> Communication and Advertising <input type="radio"/> Computing and Engineering <input type="radio"/> Health and Behavioral Sciences <input type="radio"/> Law and Diplomacy
5	Current Year of Study	<input type="radio"/> First Year <input type="radio"/> Second Year <input type="radio"/> Third Year <input type="radio"/> Fourth year <input type="radio"/> Fifth Year

Section 2: Measuring dependent and independent variables using Likert scale

(1)	Very dissatisfied	Strongly Disagree	Extremely Unlikely
(2)	Dissatisfied	Disagree	Unlikely
(3)	Neuter	Neuter	Neuter
(4)	Satisfied	Agree	likely
(5)	Very satisfied	Strongly agree	Extremely likely

Question Items		Rating Scale				
		VD 1	D 2	N 3	S 4	VS 5
Student Satisfaction						
1	Rate your satisfaction with the faculty's qualifications					
2	Rate how pleased you are with the teaching methods and techniques					
3	Rate your satisfaction with the administrative staff at the university					
4	Rate your satisfaction with necessary equipment in the university as the classrooms, labs, computers digital projectors, etc.					
5	Rate your satisfaction with availability of teaching tools and platforms such as, blackboard, email. etc.					
6	Rate your satisfaction with the faculty's qualifications					
7	Rate your satisfaction with offered scholarships					
8	Rate how much do the social activities at your university enhance the interest of your studies					

Question Items		Rating Scale				
		SD 1	D 2	N 3	A 4	VA 5
University Image						
9.	Rate the following: I have received advice from others about my university					
10.	I know my university is one of the best private institutions					
11.	Getting into my university is a guarantee to a successful career because of its brand name.					
12.	My university is my first choice from a Saudi private university.					
13.	The reputation of my university influences the value of my degree.					
14.	The academic ranking of my university is important for its reputation.					
15.	I would rate the general public views of my university's image to be.					

Question Items		Rating Scale				
		EU 1	U 2	N 3	L 4	EL 5
Student Loyalty						
16.	Rate the following: If I have to choose an institute today, I will choose my present institute.					
17.	I will recommend my university to my friends and relatives for education.					
18.	Probability of attending further education / degrees at the university.					
19.	I often talked to others about my university achievements and benefits of joining it.					
20.	I know the university's motto or mission statement.					
21.	I would become a member of any alumni organizations at my university.					
22.	I proudly say that I am a student of my university.					
23.	I am highly interested in keeping in touch with my faculty after the program.					