



## University Performance in the Era of Digital Transformation

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### Abstract

*In today's rapidly developing digital era, Digital Transformation has become necessary for many institutions, including educational institutions such as universities. Digital Transformation refers to using information and communication technology to improve an organization's efficiency, quality and competitiveness. On the other hand, Brand Image is the public's perception of an institution or company, including universities. In a global context that is increasingly connected and changing rapidly, the role of Digital Transformation in higher education is increasingly becoming a main focus. This research is a type of research that uses a qualitative approach. What is meant by this type of research is in the form of a case study, which is social research which aims to interview and describe data found in the field. This research aims to find data about the problem being researched and the research result. This method will then be carried out to find out the problem that is the research theme, and the survey data will be subjected to a descriptive qualitative approach, which will explain and answer the problem formulation of this research. This research shows that the relationship between Digital Transformation and University Brand Image is very close and influences each other. Digital Transformation significantly impacts the image and reputation of a higher education institution. By effectively implementing information and communication technology, universities can improve operational efficiency, service quality, user experience, and stakeholder engagement. This directly strengthens the university's brand image as a modern, quality, innovative and solution-oriented institution.*

### Introduction

In today's rapidly developing digital era, Digital Transformation has become necessary for many institutions, including educational institutions such as universities (Saraswati et al., 2023). Digital Transformation refers to using information and communication technology to improve an organization's efficiency, quality and competitiveness (Palad, 2023). On the other hand, Brand Image is the public's perception of an institution or company, including universities. In a global context that is increasingly connected and changing rapidly, the role of Digital Transformation in higher education is increasingly becoming a main focus. Digital Transformation refers to using information and communication technology to improve an organization's efficiency, quality and competitiveness (Yilmaz & Tuzlukaya, 2024).

On the other hand, the Brand Image or the brand image of an institution such as a university is key in attracting public attention and trust. The relationship between Digital Transformation and University Brand Image has significant depth. First, in this digital era, a university's image depends not only on its academic reputation and ability to utilize technology effectively to provide satisfying services and experiences for students, prospective students, alumni and other stakeholders. With Digital Transformation, universities can increase information accessibility, expand reach, and increase interaction with the community through digital platforms. This can

strengthen the university's brand image as an institution that is modern, innovative and responsive to the demands of the times. Apart from that, Digital Transformation also allows universities to create a more interactive, collaborative and adaptive learning environment. Using technology in the learning process can give students a more interesting and effective experience, influencing their perception of the university's Brand Image. Not only that, but digital transformation also opens up opportunities for universities to build stronger relationships with external stakeholders, such as industry, government institutions, and local communities. This collaboration can help strengthen the university's image as a relevant institution, contribute positively to community development, and be able to produce graduates who are ready to compete in the digital era.

Research on the relationship between Digital Transformation and University Brand Image is important for several reasons. First, in the context of global competition in higher education, a university's image or brand image can be one of the factors that influences the attractiveness and trust of students, prospective students, alumni and other stakeholders. Digital Transformation, on the other hand, has the potential to strengthen Brand Image by improving information accessibility, user experience and service quality. Second, with the global pandemic such as COVID-19, it is increasingly urgent that digital transformation be implemented in the educational context. Universities that can carry out Digital Transformation well can provide a better learning experience, especially in terms of distance learning and the use of technology in the learning process. Third, this research is also relevant in the context of changes in consumer behaviour and social media use (Das, 2020).

In this heritage study, table 1 will show the results of the review of several previous researchers:

Table 1. Results of Review of Previous Research

Author/Year	Title	Review Results
(Arif & Chintya, 2024)	The Influence of Product Displays and Fashion Trends on Purchasing Decisions Using Lifestyle as a Moderating Variable: Case Studies in Several Boutiques in Medan City	The research results show that product appearance, fashion style and quality of life significantly influence purchasing decisions in supermarkets and shopping centres in Medan. However, supermarket product exposure does not influence purchasing decisions, and fashion trends do not influence lifestyle purchasing decisions in Medan City malls.
(Huda & Rahmawati, 2024)	Institutional, Ownership, Business Risks, Assets Structure To Capital Structure: Profitability As Moderation	Research shows that the government does not influence capital structure. The business crisis hurts the capital structure. Ownership structure has a positive effect on capital structure. Efficiency cannot reduce business risks to the capital structure.
(Dheo et al., 2023)	Brand Image: The Influence of Lifestyle and Product Quality on iPhone Purchases	Brand image is an entrepreneur's vision of a brand by considering other similar brands, the most famous of which is the iPhone, one of Apple's smartphones.

(Wedayanti & Ardani, 2020)	The Role of Brand Image in Mediating the Influence of Electronic Word Of Mouth and Brand Awareness on Purchase Intention	The research results show that EWOM and brand awareness positively and significantly affect purchase intention. EWOM and brand awareness positively and significantly affect the brand image.
(Joshua, 2023)	The Influence of Personal Selling, Brand Image, and Product Quality on Consumer Trust and Its Impact on Insurance Policy Purchasing Decisions	The research results show that financial management and information asymmetry do not significantly affect the cost of equity capital. Similarly, we show that earnings management and information asymmetry do not significantly affect the cost of equity capital.
(Mbetete & Tanamal, 2020)	Effect of Easiness, Service Quality, Price, Trust of Quality of Information, and Brand Image of Consumer Purchase Decision on Shopee Online Purchase	Research shows that brand convenience Image significantly positively affects online purchasing decisions in the Shopee market. Meanwhile, service quality, price, trust, and information quality do not significantly affect online purchasing decisions in the marketplace.
(Mubarok & Mufti, 2022)	The effect of brand image and consumer attitudes on the decision to purchase Batik Jetis Sidoarjo mediated by intent to buy	The results are as follows: (1) Brand image is effective and significantly influences purchasing decisions. (2) Consumer attitudes directly and significantly influence purchasing decisions. (3) Brand image and consumer attitudes positively and significantly indirectly affect purchasing decisions through purchase intentions.
(Ningsih & Anah, 2021)	The Influence of Brand Image, Product Quality and Price on Interest in Buying Oriflame Products (Case Study of Students at Hasyim Asy'ari University Jombang)	The research results found that brand image had a significant influence on the intention to purchase Oriflame products. In contrast, product quality significantly influenced the intention to purchase Oriflame products. And price turns out to have a significant impact. On interests. when purchasing Oriflame products.

(Jamilah & Kusuma, 2021)	The Influence of Content Marketing, Brand Image and Online Consumer Review On Purchasing Decisions at The Tiktok Shop [ Content Influence Marketing, Brand Image and Online Consumer Review of Purchase Decisions at TikTok Shop]	This research shows that brand image positively influences purchasing decisions for Tiktok Stores, and online customer reviews influence purchasing decisions for Tiktok Stores. Marketing content, brand image and online customer reviews positively impact purchasing decisions at the Tiktok Shop.
(Haryani & Zahra, 2021)	The Influence Of Brand Image, Payment System, And Promotion On Interest In College At The Mahkota Tricom Unggul University	The research results show that (1) degree style influences the desire to study at Mahkota Tricom Unggul University, Medan; (2) The fee system influences interest in studying at Mahkota Tricom Unggul University, Medan. (3) The promotion influenced my desire to study at Mahkota Tricom Unggul University. (4) Brand image, pricing, and promotion systems influence the enjoyment of studying at Mahkota Tricom Unggul University, Medan.

Digital Transformation can help universities build and maintain engagement with stakeholders through various digital platforms, influencing their perception of the university's Brand Image. Thus, research on the relationship between Digital Transformation and University Brand Image is an effort to understand the dynamics of educational modernization and a strategy to increase universities' competitiveness, reputation and sustainability in this digital era.

### Methods

This research is a type of research that uses a qualitative approach. This type of research is a case study, which is social research that aims to interview and describe data found in the field (Siregar et al., 2023). This research aims to find data about the problem being researched and the study's results. This method will then be carried out to find out about the problem that is the research theme, and the survey data will be subjected to a descriptive qualitative approach, which will explain and answer the problem formulation of this research. Based on the existing problems, the researcher uses and applies this method because the researcher intends his research to explain how to build a relationship between digital transformation and brands. University image.

This research must be explored in depth without reducing or isolating certain variables so that complete data can be obtained and explained comprehensively. The type of data used in this research consists of primary and secondary data which are the main data sources in this research, and the primary data sources are academic staff from various private universities and colleges totalling 99 people, which are classified based on employment status and academic position which departs from previous research (Julita et al., 2024), while the source of secondary data comes from previous research or scientific journals where the classification contains supporting data.

## Results and Discussion

After realizing the importance of research regarding the relationship between digital transformation and the brand image of the university, it can be explained that this research has very relevant and valuable implications for the development of higher education as well as university marketing and branding strategies, from the results of data on 99 people who were classified based on employment status and academic position. This is supported by data obtained from previous research which is conducted by (Julita et al., 2024). This data can be a benchmark for brand importance. The university's image in supporting its existence goes through several important stages.

Table 2. The Image Of The University In Supporting Its Existence Through Several Important Stages

Stages	Explanation
Digital Transformation	Digital transformation allows universities to increase the accessibility of information and services for students, staff and the general public. With this easier and faster access, universities can strengthen their brand image as open, transparent institutions responsive to stakeholder needs.
Application Of Technology In The Learning Process	By applying technology in the learning process, universities can create a more interesting, interactive and effective learning experience for students. This not only strengthens the university's brand as a modern and innovative institution but also increases student satisfaction and academic achievement, which in turn can improve the university's image in the eyes of society.
Interest Involvement External	engagement with external stakeholders, such as industry, government agencies and local communities. This strong collaboration with external parties can strengthen the university's brand image as a relevant institution, contributing positively to community development and producing graduates who are competent and ready to compete in an increasingly digital world of work.

The relationship between digital transformation and brand University image not only helps universities improve their reputation and competitiveness but also makes a significant contribution to the development of higher education as a whole and strengthens the university's position in the realm of marketing and branding in this digital era (Giang et al., 2021). Digital Transformation and University Brand Image have a close relationship because Digital Transformation influences how the university operates and interacts with stakeholders, influencing the public's perception of the university. When universities apply information and communication technology effectively in administrative and learning services, it can improve efficiency, service quality and user experience, strengthening the university's image as a modern and quality institution. Digital Transformation also allows universities to create learning experiences that are more interactive, flexible, and relevant to student needs in this digital era. With easier access to learning materials, online collaboration, and various other digital facilities, students can develop the skills needed to succeed in the ever-changing world of work.

Implementing Digital Transformation also impacts the university's relationships with alumni, industry and local communities through social media, interactive websites and other

collaborative platforms. This can increase involvement, support and collaboration with external stakeholders, strengthening the university's image as a relevant, innovative and solution-oriented institution (Us et al., 2023). Thus, Digital Transformation is not just about adopting technology but also about how universities use that technology to improve efficiency, service quality, user experience, and stakeholder engagement, all of which contribute to brand formation and maintenance. University image.

### **Brand Image As An Important Element In Higher Education Institutions**

Brand Image is a valuable asset for a higher education institution. A strong and positive image can differentiate a university from its competitors, attract the interest of prospective students, increase alumni engagement, and strengthen relationships with other stakeholders. Brand Image encompasses an institution's academic reputation and achievements and reflects the values, culture and experiences offered to students and the general public. The importance of Brand Image in the context of higher education lies in its ability to influence public perceptions of the quality of education, innovation, relevance to the world of work, and university social contributions (Istrefi-Jahja et al., 2021). A strong image can be a strong attraction for prospective students who are looking for the best learning experience and an adequate academic environment for their personal development. Apart from that, Brand Image also plays an important role in building networks and engagement with alumni. Alumni who are proud of their university tend to be more active in supporting university activities, contributing to development programs, and being effective ambassadors in promoting a positive image of their institution in society.

In higher education institutions, Brand Image includes not only reputation and image regarding academics or achievements but also the university's core values. For example, universities that emphasize ethics, diversity, innovation, environmental sustainability, and social contribution will build a different image from universities that focus more on academic achievement alone. The importance of Brand Image is also reflected in its appeal to prospective students (Ulfiyah et al., 2022). Prospective students tend to choose universities with good reputations, values that align with their wants and needs, and a satisfying learning experience. A strong brand image can be a determining factor in accepting new students and influencing their decision to remain at the university during their studies. Alumni involvement is also important in maintaining the university's Brand Image. Alumni who feel emotionally connected to their university will be more active in supporting activities, making donations, and becoming effective ambassadors in promoting a positive image of the university to the community.

### **Digital Transformation of University Brand Image**

Digital transformation has a significant impact on the brand's image or the university's brand image. One of the main impacts is increasing the visibility and accessibility of universities in this digital era. Through information and communication technology, universities can expand the reach of promotions and information about academic programs, facilities, activities and achievements that can strengthen the positive image of the university (Perera et al., 2023).

Apart from that, digital transformation also plays a role in creating a better user experience for students, prospective students, alumni and other stakeholders. Using technology in learning, administration, and other support services can improve efficiency, service quality and interaction between universities and stakeholders. This can give a positive impression of the university's brand image as an institution that is modern, innovative, and responsive to technological developments. On the other hand, digital transformation also influences people's perceptions of the quality of education universities offer.

Universities that can adopt technology well and provide learning experiences relevant to today's needs tend to be considered more qualified and relevant. This can help improve the university's reputation and attractiveness in attracting quality prospective students (Kazaishvili & Khmiadashvili, 2022). Implementing digital transformation can also strengthen alumni involvement with the university. Through online platforms and special programs, alumni can stay connected with the university, participate in activities, provide financial support, and become effective ambassadors in promoting a positive image of the university to the community. Digital transformation significantly impacts a brand's university image regarding visibility, user experience, public perception, and alumni involvement. Therefore, universities need to continue developing effective digital transformation strategies to strengthen their image and reputation amidst increasingly fierce competition in higher education.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this research shows that the relationship between Digital Transformation and University Brand Image is very close and influences each other. Digital Transformation significantly impacts the image and reputation of a higher education institution. By effectively implementing information and communication technology, universities can improve operational efficiency, service quality, user experience, and stakeholder engagement. This directly strengthens the university's brand image as a modern, quality, innovative and solution-oriented institution. Implementing Digital Transformation also positively impacts student learning experiences, engagement with alumni and industry, and expanding the university's reach in supporting societal and economic development.

By paying attention to technological developments and stakeholder needs, universities can continue to improve their brand and image and maintain their existence in global competition in higher education. Further research exploring the specific impact of implementing Digital Transformation on university user experiences and how it influences Brand Image perceptions could provide valuable insights for future university development strategies. In the future, it will be more interesting if it is studied in terms of in-depth research on the use of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) in the context of higher education, which can be very useful for supporting understanding of Digital Transformation and University Brand Image. Such studies can explore how AR and VR can be applied to enhance user experience and interactive learning and strengthen the university's image as an innovative and modern institution.

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