

# Determinants of Building Personal Image of Universities Students: A Literature Review

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## Abstract

This literature review explores the determinants that contribute to the development of the personal image of university students. Personal image encompasses a range of factors, including self-perception, self-esteem, self-concept, and self-identity, all of which are crucial in shaping an individual's academic and social experiences during their university years. Understanding the key determinants of personal image in university students is essential for educators, counselors, and policymakers to provide effective support and foster holistic development among students. This review examines relevant research from various disciplines to shed light on the multifaceted nature of personal image and the factors influencing its formation.

This literature review provides insights into the determinants of personal image in university students and underscores its significant impact on various aspects of their lives. Understanding these determinants and their consequences is vital for educators and policymakers seeking to support the holistic development of students and promote their academic success and well-being. Further research is necessary to continue exploring this multifaceted and dynamic construct.

**Keywords:** Personal image; University students; Determinants; Self-perception; Self-esteem.

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## **1. Introduction**

Personal image is a multifaceted construct that plays a vital role in an individual's life. It encompasses how one perceives oneself, the beliefs held about one's abilities, and how others view and interact with the individual [1]. For university students, personal image is particularly significant as it influences academic achievement, social integration, career aspirations, and overall well-being [2]. This literature review aims to identify the key determinants influencing the development of personal image in university students.

## **2. Literature Reviews**

### ***2.1. Concepts and Components of Personal Image Design***

The concept of image design encompasses intentionally creating a visual impact through the manipulation of external factors like clothing, makeup, and body language to convey specific impressions or messages [3, 4]. This process is often employed in personal branding, marketing, and social interactions, as individuals aim to control and manage the impressions they make on others [5].

#### **a. Expression of Identity and Authenticity**

Image design is a means through which individuals express their identity and personality using external cues [4]. For instance, people may use clothing to reflect their personal style and values or use makeup to enhance their appearance in ways consistent with their self-concept. This enables them to communicate their authentic selves to others, fostering a sense of authenticity and self-expression.

**b. Clothing as Self-Expression:** Clothing is highlighted as a potent form of self-expression [6]. It can convey various messages about one's identity, personality, values, and social status. Additionally, clothing choices can signify group affiliations or subcultures. By selecting clothing that aligns with their personal style and values, individuals can project authenticity and communicate their unique identity to the world.

**c. Makeup as a Transformative Tool:** Makeup is discussed as a tool for altering one's appearance in alignment with self-concept and social goals [7]. It can be used to achieve a range of effects, from accentuating natural features to creating bold looks. Moreover, makeup can be employed to conceal perceived flaws or imperfections, allowing individuals to convey a visual impact consistent with their desired image and message.

**d. The Role of Body Language:** The literature highlights the importance of body language in shaping one's image. An individual's movements, facial expressions, and gestures can convey various messages about their personality, confidence, and social status [8, 9]. Positive and confident body language can create a visual impact that communicates competence, responsiveness, and attractiveness to others.

**e. Social and Cultural Influence:** [10] observes that image building has transcended individual companies and has become a significant aspect of the entire social sphere. Personal identity has gained prominence in the fashion world, underscoring the influence of social and cultural dynamics on image design.

**f. The Multifaceted Nature of Image Design:** The literature discusses image design as a multi-element combination system encompassing Mind Identity (MI), Behavior Identity (BI), Visual Identity (VI), and other interconnected elements [11]. It is emphasized that personal image goes beyond external factors like clothing

and appearance; it also reflects an individual's internal qualities.

**g. Psychological and Communication Perspectives:** Prominent experts in psychology, communication, and personal branding contribute insights on personal image. They stress its crucial role in both social and professional settings, where people assess others based on appearance, behavior, and communication style [12].

**h. Impact on Personal and Professional Life:** Personal image is recognized as having a substantial impact on various aspects of life, including interpersonal communication, social competitiveness, employment prospects, and even the reputation of academic institutions for university students [13].

In summary, the literature review underscores that image design is a multifaceted process encompassing various external factors, including clothing, makeup, and body language, and internal elements like identity and values. It emphasizes the importance of personal image in personal branding, social interactions, and self-expression, highlighting its profound influence on how individuals are perceived by others. The integration of psychological, communicative, and cultural perspectives contributes to a comprehensive understanding of image design's significance in modern society.

## ***2.2. The Dimension of Personal Image Design***

Researchers and scholars have identified various interconnected elements that collectively contribute to an individual's personal image. This holistic approach recognizes that personal image extends beyond external factors like clothing, makeup, and appearance; it also incorporates internal qualities, behaviors, and thought processes. Personal image consists of multiple dimensions that collectively shape how individuals are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves. These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the complexity of personal image. Through literature review, there are several key dimensions of personal image identified.

First, Physical appearance is a prominent dimension of personal image and includes factors such as clothing, grooming, body shape, and overall attractiveness. It is often the first aspect noticed by others and can significantly influence initial impressions [14]

Second is communication Style. It refers to the way individuals communicate verbally and non-verbally is a critical dimension of personal image. This includes tone of voice, language choice, body language, and listening skills [15]. Effective communication contributes to the perception of confidence, competence, and social skills.

Third is behavior and actions. Personal image also encompasses one's behaviors and actions in various contexts. It involves how individuals conduct themselves in social, professional, and personal situations. Behavior identity is a key dimension that shapes how others perceive an individual [16].

Fourth Self-Concept and Self-Perception: An individual's self-concept, which includes their beliefs, values, and self-esteem, is integral to personal image. Self-perception, or how one views themselves, affects their confidence and self-presentation [17].

With the prevalence of digital communication and social media, personal image now includes one's online

presence. This dimension involves how individuals portray themselves on social platforms, the content they share, and the impact of their online persona.

Personal image also intersects with an individual's mental well-being and emotional health. Self-assurance, self-value, and overall psychological well-being play a pivotal role in molding one's personal image [18]. Moreover, personal image is shaped by an individual's values and convictions, which serve as guiding principles for their decisions and actions. Decisions rooted in values can impact how an individual is perceived by both themselves and others. Furthermore, the quality of an individual's interpersonal relationships, encompassing friendships, familial dynamics, and romantic partnerships, can significantly influence their personal image. Healthy relationships can bolster self-esteem and contribute positively to an individual's overall image. Additionally, personal image is influenced by an individual's life experiences and achievements. Accomplishments, triumphs over challenges, and milestones attained all contribute to how individuals perceive themselves and how they are perceived by others.

### ***2.3. The Significance of Personal Image Design***

The significance of personal image design is a multifaceted concept that holds great importance in the contemporary world. This section discusses the various dimensions of its significance and includes relevant citations to support the points made.

**Enhanced Communication and Identity Presentation:** Personal image design has become increasingly important in the 21st century due to the rapid development of social and spiritual civilization [17]. In a society marked by diverse interactions, individuals need to effectively communicate their unique identities and roles. Image design achieves this by combining elements such as makeup, clothing, physical posture, and etiquette norms to create a distinctive image that conveys an individual's social status and identity. This is vital in a world where first impressions are formed quickly, often within seconds [18].

**Business Branding and Differentiation:** Beyond individual identity, image design plays a crucial role in the business world [19]. Effective image design helps businesses establish a recognizable brand identity, enabling them to communicate their messages effectively to their target audiences. It allows businesses to stand out in competitive markets, attract customers, build brand loyalty, and enhance their reputation. In a crowded marketplace, a well-crafted image is a powerful tool for business success.

**Personal and Professional Relationships:** Personal image design reflects an individual's qualities and abilities [20]. It not only makes a person acceptable and understandable to others but also signifies their abilities and moral qualities. This is particularly significant in personal and professional relationships where trust and credibility are crucial. A strong personal image can foster positive relationships, whether in personal friendships, family, or professional networks.

**Employment Competitiveness:** In the modern job market, image design has become a trend in job searching [21]. Many individuals recognize the importance of their image in enhancing their competitiveness in employment. They are willing to invest in image packaging to improve their chances of securing a job. A well-

groomed and professional appearance can create a favorable impression on potential employers and increase job prospects.

**Cultural and Societal Impact:** Image design is a symbol of human civilization [20]. It reflects an individual's cultural quality, taste, style, lifestyle, and attitude toward life. It has a broader impact on economic and cultural development, social and public image, and international impressions. As societies progress and advance, image design becomes an integral part of this process, contributing to cultural and societal development. This underscores the significance of a well-managed image, especially for university students in their transition from campus to society. A good image can open doors to opportunities in life, social contacts, and work, while a poor image can result in missed chances.

In summary, the significance of personal image design is profound and multifaceted. It goes beyond aesthetics to encompass effective communication, branding, relationship building, and societal impact. In today's fast-paced world, where impressions are formed quickly, and competition is fierce, mastering the art of image design is a valuable skill that can lead to personal and professional success.

### **3. Research Methodology**

In this study, the search strategy, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and data extraction and analysis methods used in this systematic literature review are essential components of the research process.

#### **3.1 Search Strategy**

The researchers employed a comprehensive search strategy that involved utilizing multiple academic databases. These databases are common platforms where academic articles, research papers, and scholarly publications are indexed and made accessible to researchers. The databases used in this review include CNKI, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.

To locate relevant literature on the determinants of personal image among university students, the researchers utilized specific keywords and search terms. These keywords are carefully selected terms or phrases that are highly relevant to the research topic. In this case, the keywords used included "personal image," "self-presentation," "identity formation," and "university students." The inclusion of related variations ensures that a broad spectrum of relevant articles is captured during the search.

To focus on contemporary research and make the review manageable, certain restrictions were imposed. Firstly, the review was limited to articles published in English, which is a common language of academic communication. Secondly, the publication year range was set between 2000 and 2023. This timeframe allows the review to concentrate on recent scholarship while excluding outdated or less relevant materials.

##### **a. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Inclusion criteria specify the characteristics that articles must possess to be considered for the systematic literature review. Articles must have been published between 2000 and 2023: This timeframe ensures that the

review focuses on contemporary research; Articles must be written in English: Language restriction ensures that the review can effectively evaluate and understand the content of selected articles; Articles must focus on university students: The review is centered on this specific demographic group to maintain a clear focus.; Articles must explore the determinants of personal image: This criterion defines the primary subject matter of the review and ensures that selected articles are directly relevant to the research topic.

b. Exclusion Criteria:

Exclusion criteria are applied to filter out articles that do not meet the specific requirements of the review. Articles that are irrelevant to personal image or university students: To maintain relevance, articles unrelated to the core topic were excluded. Articles not published in English: Language consistency is important for the review's comprehensibility. Articles published before 2000 or after 2023: These temporal limits help ensure the review focuses on contemporary research. Duplicate articles: Duplicate articles, if encountered, were removed to avoid redundancy and maintain the integrity of the review.

c. Data Extraction and Analysis

After identifying relevant articles that met the inclusion criteria, the next step involved systematically extracting pertinent information from these articles. This information typically includes:

1. Author(s)
2. Publication year
3. Study objectives or research questions
4. Methodology employed in the study
5. Key findings or outcomes
6. Determinants related to personal image

The extracted determinants from the selected articles were categorized into two broad groups: internal and external factors. This categorization helps organize and structure the review's findings, making it easier to analyze and understand the factors influencing personal image among university students.

Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method used to identify and analyze recurring themes and patterns within the collected data. In this review, thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes or trends related to the determinants of personal image. This process helps summarize the key findings and insights from the selected articles, allowing the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions and provide a comprehensive overview of the topic.

In summary, the systematic literature review employed a well-defined search strategy, clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, and rigorous data extraction and analysis methods to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant research on the determinants of personal image among university students. These methodological steps ensure the review's reliability, transparency, and comprehensiveness.

## **4. Discussion**

### ***4.1. Factors that Influence University Students' Personal Image Design***

The shaping of personal image among university graduates is a multifaceted process influenced by various internal and external factors. These factors collectively impact how graduates are perceived by employers and peers, ultimately affecting their readiness for the job market.

#### **a. Internal Factors**

Career identity is a dynamic construct influenced by an individual's interests, skills, values, and self-concept. As stated by [22], a positive corporate image is crucial for motivating graduates to develop the necessary skills and qualities aligned with their chosen occupation. This suggests that an individual's perception of their career identity can drive their commitment to professional growth.

Self-presentation is a fundamental aspect of social interaction, as emphasized by [23]. It involves consciously or unconsciously managing one's image in the eyes of others. This aspect of personal image design can significantly impact social and psychological outcomes. Those who engage in effective self-presentation strategies may be perceived as more competent and likable, potentially increasing their chances of securing employment opportunities.

Self-efficacy, a core concept in Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), influences an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks effectively [24]. This self-belief affects various aspects of an individual's life, including career decisions and job search behaviors. Higher self-efficacy can lead to increased motivation and proactive career planning.

Psychological quality encompasses an individual's character, motivation, abilities, mental health status, and behavior. It reflects one's personality and how they interact with the world [25]. This internal quality can influence personal image and how an individual presents themselves to others.

#### **b. External Factors**

**Social Needs:** Social needs, as described by [26], are shaped by social development and involve meeting present and future development needs. These needs influence an individual's social skills, communication style, and ability to work effectively with others. Graduates who can demonstrate strong interpersonal skills may have a competitive edge in the job market.

A positive corporate image, as highlighted by [27], can motivate students to align their skills and qualifications with a company's values.

This alignment can lead to greater motivation to develop the necessary qualifications for future employment. Companies with strong corporate images are also more likely to offer experiential learning opportunities, further enhancing graduates' readiness for employment.

Networking is a valuable tool for career success, as evidenced by [28]. Building and maintaining professional relationships can increase visibility and reputation in one's field. Graduates who engage in effective networking may access valuable information and resources, potentially enhancing their employability.

Cultural literacy, as defined by [29], encompasses an individual's abilities, character, values, and cultural understanding.

This aspect of personal image can influence an individual's ability to navigate social norms and expectations. Graduates with high cultural literacy may excel in diverse and multicultural work environments.

In conclusion, personal image shaping among university graduates is a complex process influenced by a combination of internal and external factors. Recognizing and understanding the significance of these factors can help graduates better prepare for the job market, enhance their employability, and navigate the challenges and opportunities in their transition from university to the workforce.

## **5. Conclusion**

In summary, this systematic literature review has delved into the multifaceted world of personal image design, with a particular focus on its relevance to university students. The exploration of concepts and components of personal image design emphasized its role in expressing identity, authenticity, and the power of external cues like clothing, makeup, and body language. It underscored the influence of social and cultural dynamics on image design and the interconnected nature of this construct, encompassing mind identity, behavior identity, visual identity, and more.

Furthermore, the review elucidated the dimensions of personal image design, revealing how physical appearance, communication style, behavior, self-concept, online presence, and mental well-being all contribute to the intricate tapestry of personal image. These dimensions collectively shape how individuals are perceived by others and, in turn, impact their self-perception.

The review also highlighted the profound significance of personal image design in the contemporary world. It stressed its pivotal role in communication, branding, relationship building, and employment competitiveness. Personal image design was portrayed as a reflection of an individual's qualities, abilities, and moral values, making it a vital asset in both personal and professional contexts. Moreover, it was noted that personal image design extends beyond individual identity, contributing to broader cultural and societal impacts.

In conclusion, this systematic literature review provides valuable insights into the intricate world of personal image design and its significance in the lives of university students.

It illuminates the factors that influence personal image design, both internal and external, shedding light on the complexities of this critical aspect of modern society. As university students transition into the workforce, understanding and mastering the art of personal image design can be a valuable asset for personal and professional success.



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