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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITY WEBSITES IN PAKISTAN: A MULTIMODAL DISCOURSE EXAMINATION OF ONLINE ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION

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Abstract
Websites are important communication tools regarding university credibility in academics, institutional identity, as well as values in the digital era. This paper looks at four Pakistani universities (two public Kinnaird College of Women,Punjab University, and two private universities LUMS and the University of Lahore) in a Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) of how they construct their identities and perform these identities on their official websites. The article looks into textual, visual, and compositional aspects text such as layout, colour, images, and interactive objects by adopting a socio-semiotic position. As indicated by the discovery, we can conclude that public and private sector institutions differ in the way they digitally represent themselves: a priority of innovation, globality, and interactivity is observed in the case of private universities, whereas tradition, authority, and heritage are emphasised in the case of public universities. Despite all these disparities, significant multimodal elements are used intentionally in all the institutions in order to address perceptual issues, communicate with users, and convey academic ideas.

Keywords: communication tools, institutional identity, convey academic ideas, address perceptual issues, communicate with users, and convey academic ideas

Introduction
In the world of technology, a home page is the most significant external face of a university. It serves as the initial touchpoint of potential students, parents, faculty, researchers, and international partners who want to learn about the values, vision, and scholarly landscape of an institution. A university home page is more than a source of information: it is a strategic site whereby identity is enacted and staged in a blend of text, image, color scheme, spatial configuration and interactivity. In this way, it turns into a not only practical medium, but also symbolic and multimodal space of building institutional stories (Tomáskova, 2015; Mafofo and Banda, 2014).

Multimodal strategies in universities have become an increasingly important part of institutional trust-building, inclusivity messaging, advertising academic excellence and competing in national and global education markets. University websites utilize the most rigorously selected images, slogans, navigation menus, and videos to become active participants in the meaning-making processes reflecting institutional priorities and cultural positioning (Ginting et al., 2024). Such an application of various semiotic modes is also consistent with the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) principles, which explores the relationships between various communicative resources in producing the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings (Jones, 2012).

This paper utilizes MDA to examine how four Universities in Pakistan, two Universities in the public sector (Kinnaird College for Women and Punjab University) and two Universities in the privately owned sector (Lahore University of Management Sciences and University of Lahore) create meaning using their official homepages. Through a comparison of the multimodal

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characteristics of the public and the private institutions, the research will help to illuminate the similarities and the differences in the ways the academic identity, credibility, and institutional engagement are realised in the Pakistani higher education sector.

Objectives

This research aims to examine how the sample of Pakistani public and private higher education institutions uses the multimodal approach to sharing institutional values, traditions, and missions. All websites rely on various combinations of visual and textual elements to attract the audience and present a particular image of the university. The objective of the present study is to learn:

1. The way it is stressed in public institutions such as Kinnaird and PU considering tradition, history, and national values
2. Why privately funded schools such as LUMS and UOL emphasize modernity, novelty, and marketability
3. Using these two sectors as a comparison, this study exposes the role of visual communication in developing the academic and cultural identity of Pakistani universities.

Research Questions

The research questions that shall inform the undertaking of this study are as follows:

1. In what ways do the textual and visual modes employed in the homepage design of public and private universities of Pakistan create the institutional identity?
2. How important is color, layout and image in creating the perception of the user in terms of public and private institutions?
3. In what ways do these multimodal elements indicate ideologies, missions, and values of the respective universities?
4. What do public and private sector university web sites have in common, what are their differences, with regard to their interactional strategies and representational choices?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the growing field of digital discourse analysis and educational communication in Pakistan. It highlights how public sector universities, often rooted in national history and tradition, present themselves differently from private universities, which are typically modern, global, and student-centered in design.

Understanding these multimodal strategies can help:

- Universities improve their websites as communication tools
- Policymakers and educators reflect on how digital design influences institutional branding
- Researchers explore how online platforms shape academic identity in a local context

By focusing on Pakistani universities, this study fills a gap in local research and connects global theories of multimodality with regional cultural and educational realities.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The paper represents a qualitative research design in which Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) will be employed to investigate the ways in which Pakistani universities show their institutional identity on their official homepages. MDA lends itself to this kind of analysis since it looks beyond words to consider visual, spatial and design qualities as well. It is an interpretive and descriptive approach, the goal of which is to recognize how various modes of semiotic means, including text, image, layout, color and gaze interact to generate meaning.

This is because the research is not based on any numerical data or surveys but rather on close and detailed reading of the visual and textual elements. It is done to reveal the underlying

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messages, values, and identities which are created by means of the multimodal characteristics of university websites.

Sample Selection

The research is conducted on the official sites of four popular universities in Pakistan, two of which belong to the public sector and two to the private one. These universities have been chosen due to their academic reputation, visual richness and easy findability of the homepage content:

Government Sector Universities:

- Kinnaird College of Women (https://kinnaird.edu.pk)
- University of the Punjab (https://pu.edu.pk)

Universities of the Private Sector:

- Lahore university of management sciences - LUMS (https://lums.edu.pk)
- University of Lahore - UOL (https://uol.edu.pk)

The four institutions are variable in values, traditions, and branding strategies, which enables them to draw significant comparison between the identities of public and privately funded universities as developed through homepages.

Process of data collection

The information has been obtained in Spring semester of 2025 by accessing the official home page of each university and took notes of the information presented therein. The items in the collection were:

- Homepage screenshots
- Description and analysis of written text, headings, banners and navigation menus
- Analysis of Visual features, including pictures of students, buildings, and events
- Analysis of color scheme, typography and space usage
- Interactive elements such as buttons, menus, and links

All homepages were visited as they appear in the public area. There were no internal pages or password-protected pages. It was decided to stick to the home page only, since it is the most common and usually the initial page to be visited by potential students and general users.

Framework of Analysis

It is analyzed in terms of the three meta-functions of Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (SF-MDA) as suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006):

A. Representational Meta-function

This looks at what is both visually and textually displayed on the homepage and it looks at:

- Processes of narration (actions, events)
- Intellectual (symbols, values, identity)
- Imagery to depict students, faculty and the academic life

B. Interactional Meta-function

This examines the way the viewer is addressed, and:

- Gaze direction (whether students gaze at the viewer)
- Social distance (close up, medium wide shots)
- Interactive buttons and hyperlinks
- Written language tone

C. Compositional Meta-function

That is taking into consideration the arrangement of the homepage and the organization of the information:

- Value of information (position of ideal and real information)
- Framing (isolation or joining visual / text blocks)
- Salience (what catches the eye-color, size, contrast)

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These three meta functions were used in the consistent application to each homepage to get a comparative conception of how various universities design and structure their multimodal content to present their identity.

Despite these limitations, the methodology allows for a rich, in-depth understanding of how meaning is constructed across different university sectors using multimodal strategies

Literature Review

Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) examines communication as not only determined by language, but also by other modes such as image, layout, color and gesture. According to Rodney H. Jones (2012), MDA is concerned with the processes of meaning making by drawing on a variety of modes other than language. This is particularly applicable in digital platform such as the university websites where image and text combine to convey meaning.

D. Machin (2007) claims that multimodal analysis investigates visual grammar and construction of media texts. His work is not empirical but forms the basis of future understanding of how web sites adopt pictures, banners and layout designs to signify academic authority and institutional objectives.

Meifang Zhang (2020) also mentions multimodal like visual metaphor and image-text relations which can be used in the case of analysis of how the meaning is constructed simultaneously with images and text on university homepages.

Besides, Yaoyao Chen et al. (2020) address both qualitative and quantitative approaches to the multimodal discourse, such as semiotics, action analysis, and the study of gestures. They underline the role of the multimodal frameworks in assisting the analysis of the identity construction- which is crucial to understand the ways in which Pakistani universities construct the image of their institution.

The need to comprehend multimodal discourse at the level of the social and the cultural is also mentioned by Emilia Djonov (2014). Her abstract does not mention any results; however, it proves the importance of the research direction, evaluating the interaction of images with a defined cultural value, and might be relevant in the Pakistani context because modesty, tradition, and national pride is likely to be implemented in the web design style in Pakistan.

Similarly, Natalya V. Dutova (2024) describes the development of the socio-semiotic approach which is founded on the metafunctions of Halliday, three semiotic hypotheses by Hodge and Kress, and discourse as a social practice of Scollon. Those views that are presented above support the argument that university websites represent symbolic locations which can promote values conveyed through tradition and culture about the institution.

As T. van Leeuwen (2012) writes, even as multimodal discourse analysis gains provisions, its critical aspect (namely, the incorporation of power, ideology, and social theory) remains undeveloped. Even so, the use of this emerging lens on university websites can prove applicable, especially when comparing the means through which public and private universities make use of design in a manner that both seeks to reaffirm and undermine contemporary social claims.

L. Faigley et al. (2002) have presented educational advantages of multimodal methods and came to the conclusion that multimodal teaching practices assist in augmenting activities and interactions of learners. Concentrating on the theme of English Language Learning, their research results allow assuming that the role of the influence of a university web site on user perception and interaction with educational content can also be taken.

Shanshan Yu (2022) says that human communication was always based on multimodal communication and never depended on language exclusively but on sign systems. This fact proves the suggestion that university web pages as a form of public communication should be written and presentable in a combination of pictures, written words, structure, and the connected interaction.

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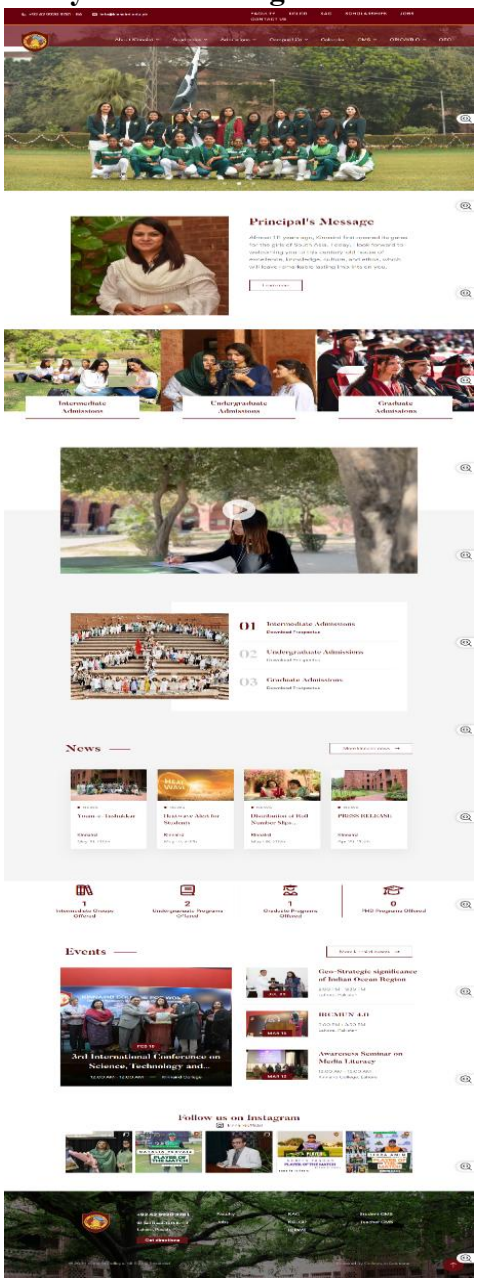
Through the reviewed literature, it is evident that the multimodal discourse analysis can be an effective tool of analyzing how a sense of meaning is realized through visual and textual aspects in the digital environment. These texts underline this study that aims at examining university homepages as multimodal texts that:

- Institutional identity: build through visuals, layout and language.
- Represent cultural values and education philosophies, particularly when dealing with the observance of both public and private institutions.
- Connect with the audience using multimodal design, which is not only effective but also denotes meaning.

Using this body of literature, the present study is set to add value to the body of knowledge in the use of multimodal strategies to position themselves and reach out to their audiences in the competitive digital academe by Pakistani universities.

Findings, Discussion and Conclusion

Analysis and findings



This chapter is a background study of multimodal characteristics of the home pages of four Universities in Pakistan, namely Kinnaird College of Women, University of the Punjab (PU), Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), and University of Lahore (UOL). Based on the structure of the Systemic Functional Multimodal Discourse Analysis (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006), it concentrates on the representational, interactional, and compositional functions of the elements of the homepage: the image, the text, the color, the layout and the gaze. The chapter also brings out the comparison between the approach of using design and content attitudes that constitute communication between the institutions in public sector (Kinnaird and PU) and those within the private sector (LUMS and UOL) universities.

Multimodal Analysis of Kinnaird College Webpage

Textual and Aesthetic Critique:

Kinnaird's official website (https://kinnaird.edu.pk/) is a coordinated mix of textual and visual forms that intends to render credibility, ancient traditions and the current scholarly brilliance. At the top and with a fixed position the home page displays the college crest and its Latin motto, Let us be known by our deeds, and navigational tabs (About, Admissions, Academics, Research, etc.) all of which provide an instant framework of prestige and efficient flow of information. There is a featured image rotator which displays various photos of students, convocation, academic events and students' project. These pictures come in form of visual narration where Kinnaird is presented as an active and academic school. Supporting headings such as Apply Now, Student Societies or News and Events act The web page has a multilingual tone of language, mostly formal English

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just like the medium of teaching and embodies cultural background on a visual level of modest dress sense, national pride and architecturally rich background.

Color Semiotic Examination:

The semiotics of color matters are also relevant to the creation of the message and the mood of the site: Navy Blue: This strong color transmits the depth of the intellectual world, discipline, and stability. It is applied in heads, banners and buttons, which intensifies the serious academic style of the college. White and Gray: These colors work as background palettes and ensure visibility and cleanness as well as suggest purity, transparency and trust. Gold Accents: Gold is found throughout headings and borders and communicates a feeling of excellence, prestige and timelessness qualities that are very much part of the history that defines the institution. Photographs show students in uniforms or wearing something modest, naturally lit, with no oil paintings, artistry, or other bragging and because of this students look natural and serious, representing discipline, cultural suitability and academic diligence. The architectural photographs of the buildings of old red bricks bring back the feeling of colonial history and institute pride. In general, the sober use of professional colors is in contrast with more graphic images of the commercial advertisements, which promote the pedagogic and informational purpose of the site.

Representational Meta-function:

Narrative Representation: At the homepage or slideshow, actional processes are being used, other students are seen busy doing their tasks, i.e., presentation of research, receiving medals or in co-curricular activities. These pictures carry a story of development, liberation, and learning on the go. These photos have a sense of vector (e.g., arms stretched in action, throwing their graduation-hats upwards), of motion, of direction, and of learning towards the goal. The hidden agenda behind every scene is the goal of accomplishing success, academic achievement, and being confident. Reactional Representation: In most of the photos, students are focused at the camera, which generates a demand image. They challenge the viewer into entering in or imagining himself or herself being a part of the institution. The viewer is the phenomenon, dragged into the symbolic area of Kinnaird learning environment, and the student is the reactor. Symbolic Process: The portrayed ladies allude to the Pakistani women of today who are modern, educated, and have self-belief and self-confidence. The red-brick college in the background serves as the clue to the message that the place is not just stuck in some tradition but has a continuity to it as well as modernity.

Interactional Meta-function:

Contact: The site forges contact mostly by the following means: Presence of students gazing at the user (eye-level direct gaze), Interactive objects such as buttons which can be clicked on (Apply, Read More) serving to encourage the user to respond, therefore, requires a response. This fictional association creates the trust, most importantly by the amiable but professional sounding images and words. Social Distance: The medium shots in which the students are positioned indicate a personal interaction ranging between too formal and too intimate intimacy which implies the existence of balance between the visitor and the institution. They invite the viewer to be a prospective family/regime of academics. Attitude: The involvement is proscribed by the frontal horizontal angle, whereas the equality and empowerment are cast off by the eye-level camera shots. In the pictures of the campuses above, even a bit exaggerated angle suggests amazement, scale, and academic power, making one remember the size and prestige of the school.

Compositional Meta-function:

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Information Value: Left side (Given): Its content is organized, predictable such as a logo, motto and navigation menu- this helps position the viewer to the idea of who the institution is. Right side (New): This side has moving content which may include announcements and present happenings, accomplished this is a dynamic area where the difference of time may drive elders to note. Top (Ideal): The crest and motto, which symbolize values and ideals.

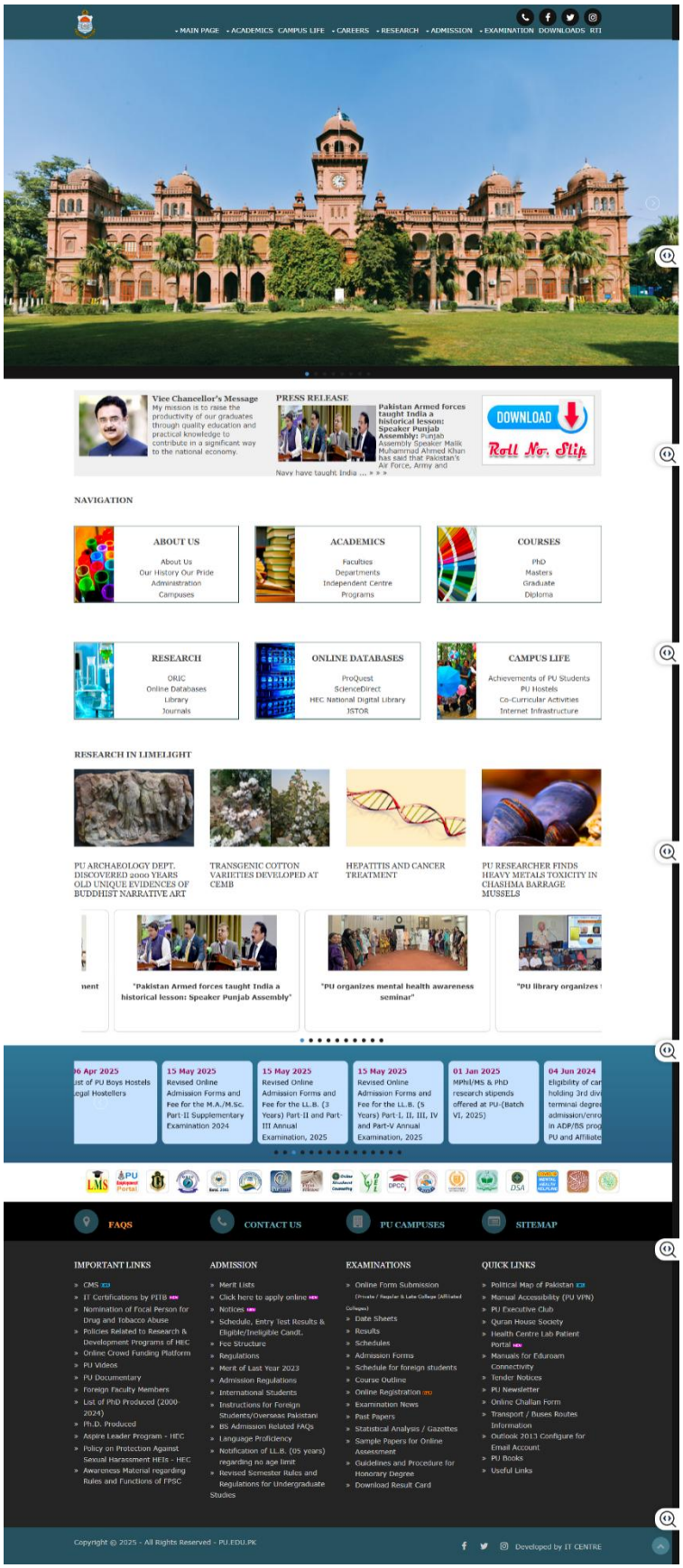
Bot (Real): Footer contains the real life information- contact information, social media, legal disclaimers. Such vertical and horizontal arrangement reveals customary academic site design, but also the slight building up of hierarchy and confidence.

Framing: The structure of the contents is easily divided with menus, banners, news, events, and the footer are visually separated by layout and margins. The home page is arranged in a grid like setting and provides a clear sense of navigation opportunities and unity. There is no sudden transition between any of the sections that makes the image travel fluidly.

Salience: the biggest feature is the image slider, because it is large in size, and the images are high contrast. There are big and colorful call-to-action buttons, such as the Apply Now button, which attract a user to it. Merit List, Admission Open, or Convocation are also used in words in the headlines and have been given the visual priority by use of color and bold type. These strong characteristics direct the user to institutional priorities and actions of desperate users.

The Kinnaird College web page uses an effective multimodal discourse, through compositions, color, image, gaze, and place to relay its message of credibility, cultural relevance, and academic excellence. All the design decisions including the navy-and-gold color scheme, iconographic imagery of powerful and confident women, strengthen the institutional rhetoric of institutional heritage, empowerment, and academic excellence. In contrast to the paper advertising, which should convey pertinent information or be fun or convincing in any case, this web page educates, informs, and invites, which indicates the air of one of the most authoritative women colleges in Pakistan.

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Multimodal examination of the Web page of the Punjab University

Textual and Visual Analysis:

The artistic style of the Punjab University (PU) home page (https://pu.edu.pk/) is official, symmetric and scholarly. The site starts with the symbol of the institution and its establishment date (1882) and, right here, the authority and the heritage are established. At the top is a horizontal navigation menu with such significant areas on the page as 'About Us,' 'Admissions,' 'Academics,' 'Research,' 'Examinations,' and 'Contact Us.' These will be extremely structured pieces which will target either the national or international market. The middle block of the home page consists of spinning banner with institutional update, institutional events, and academic activities. These visual elements underline the academic dynamism of Punjab University, research orientations of the University, and inclusivity. Under this, there is a news head that has the latest update on admissions, examinations and student affairs.

Semiotics of Color:

The colors that prevail on the PU web page are blue, white and sometimes red. The blue color is traditionally the color of trust, discipline, and seriousness, which is appropriate to an old academic institution. White backgrounds are simple and subtle and enhance clarity and readability, and also guarantee formality. A little amount of red is also touched to fore-forewarn sharp messages or messages that need serious considerations, alerts the viewer psychologically to act or take action. Students used in promotional photos are conservatively

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dressed according to the local culture and this enhances the importance of the university upholding the culture and the values.

Representational Meta-function:

Telling-wise, the home page illustrates students on academic and ceremonial grounds- in cases of awards or at convocations. These images are both actional processes wherein actors and unspoken goals are academic achievements. In reactional viewpoint, the majority of images do not make direct eye contact with the viewers and this implies that they are offering image where information is given but not required to engage. Symbolically, the abundance of the use of the PU logo, flags, old buildings, and graduation clothes in itself indicates the existence of tradition, success, and institutional pride. All these signs create some visual narrative of Punjab University as a hub of learning and success.

Interactional Meta-function:

The establishment of the contact is mainly by interactive buttons such as Apply Now, Examination Portal, and Online Results as opposed to the gaze of the human participants. The absence of frontal gaze in pictures implies an interaction of an offering type, in which the websites present information without any interpersonal involvement. Medium and wide-angle images maintain social distance-this is an indication of formal yet respectful relationship between a viewer and subject. The language, which is used, is informative and objective, a tone used appeals to an academic audience, and it is formal. Horizontal and forward angles of the images signify equality and straightforwardness and high angles of the shots in the campus include admiration and gravitas of the institutions.

Compositional Meta-function:

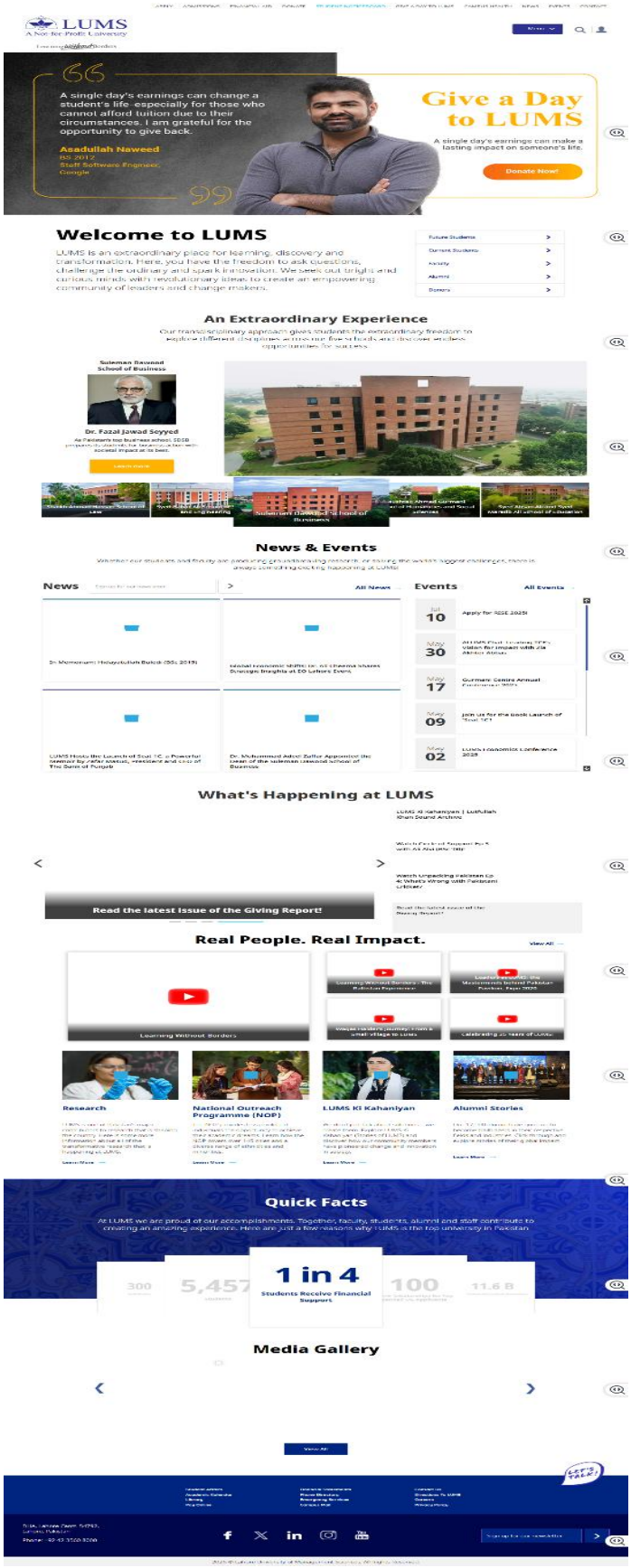
Information Value: The upper section of the web page (Ideal) has the crest of the university and central menu representing the vision of the university. The dynamic image banner and the important updates happen in the central division (New). The bottom (Real) contains the contact information, quick links, as well as policies which are practical and factual data. The left side can be filled with non-changing content and the right side by rotating or new content-thereby occupying a left left (Given New) format.

Framing: Even divisions in this section of the web page are framed by such visible contours as boxed divisions, differences in colors, or white background. These are frames that render navigation of the content smooth and they create conceptual borders between topics.

Salience: The rotating banner of images in the central position with the pictures of the institutional achievements is the most salient feature. Announcements are red highlight and even large written font headings forward the attention of the viewers to the right information and at the right time. The use of pictures and institutional colors makes the name more recognizable and reaffirming the identity.

The homepage of the Punjab University is a good display of multimodal communication. The visitor is able to get a distinct message of reliability, heritage, and academic quality, through the judicious application of corporate design, official color schemes, institutional iconography, and educational iconography. All modes (visual, textual, spatial) collaborate to place PU on the map of an elite university with long roots behind its back and the openness to innovations and interactions.

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LUMS Website Home page Multimodal analysis

Visual and Textual analysis:

The main site of Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) (https://lums.edu.pk/) offers an interesting mix of Aesthetics, organizational content, and interactivity so as to create the impression of credibility, emotional connection and institutional status. The first thing that the university communication relayed at the top is the logo and tag line located on top which reads A Not-for-Profit University. The main menu will have the major categories listed, including Admission, Academics, Research, and Life at LUMS, among others, and will also show thorough coverage of the prospective students, faculty and the donors.

It consists of a formal introduction about LUMS as a center of transformation and intellectual discovery and then about visuals of various schools and departments. The section below, which is called News & Events, keeps the site up to date with the milestones of the university. All the components of the page are a combination of the verbose and the image type of content, aimed at a professional, academic, and amateur charitable end-user.

Semiotic Analysis of Color:

The preeminent colour combination, that is, blue and white with orange accents, epitomize the LUMS values of professionalism, clarity and warmth. Blue is intelligent, trusting and authoritative and it suits an academic school. The color white includes ease of reading and cleanliness this time 〖orange color is to be used sparingly in call to action such as Donate Now to arouse emotional urgency and easy visibility. The colors are utilised minimally and this is a source of

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restraint and professionalism. There is an illustration of photos of the different students and faculty members who dress modestly and appropriately, symbolizing discipline and inclusion.

Representational Meta-function:

The homepage has both action and abstract images in the story. The graduation testimonial and request of donation are a symbolic and actional process: he is the initiator of action and symbol of success. Videos and photos of students and campus life provide the viewer with a feeling of being involved, being united, and having goals in the future. None of
dramatic action scenes, but on the contrary still photos that display professional involvement, education, and executive practice.

Reactionally, the viewer penetrates the eyes of the testimonial speaker who looks directly at him or her, creating a bond of trust. The majority of the other images are indirect gazes, as the offer images, which offer context but do not require any direct engagement. On a symbolic level, the existence of research labs, women in science, and the success of students give LUMS a visionary view of empowerment, innovation, and change.

Interactional Meta-function:

The home page engages its visitors with a mixture of textual commands (e.g., Apply Now, Read More, Donate), videos, and gentle gaze methods. Mostly, it is only the contact of the offer that leaves the user with an open range to explore instead of incessant attention. Sustaining a formality and establishing a feeling of closeness is accomplished with medium shots and responsible images of the people in the contexts of institutions-social distance is occurring. The frontal horizontal angle of the majority of visuals promotes the involvement of the viewer as well as equality.

Compositional Meta-function:

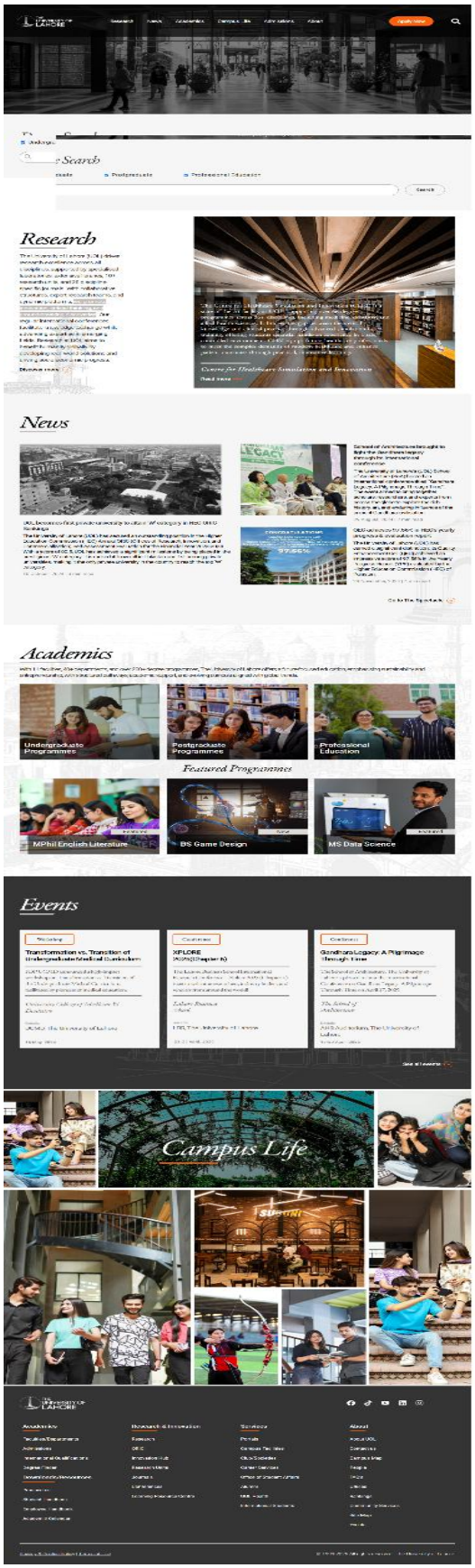
Value of information: The head of the page (Ideal) has institutional identification and menus, the middle one (New) has dynamic sliders and the actual time reactions. At the bottom (Real), there are details of the most needed data: fast data, media links, and contacts. The left-right separation is adopted wherein text appears on the left side and any visuals or executional buttons appear on the right, as in the given new configuration.

Framing: It follows the rule of unique framing of each content block (news, donation, programs), with evident visual boundaries but with colors and a structure at the same time. This aids clarity of the mind and strengthens message segregation.

Salience: The most salient detail is the rest of the page, the section titled "**Give a Day to LUMS**" that comes in a warm color, a human figure, and a button to click on to be directed to the page. Video thumbnails and big headlines about "**Real People. The attention of Oli is also drawn to Real Impact."** The conspicuous location of quantitative data and organizational success creates credibility.

The LUMS homepage is a strong multiple-mode text that brings together the seriousness of an institution and the affective content. Using wise color decisions, clean design, testimonial-like graphics and call-to-action buttons, LUMS manages to convey its qualities of excellence, belongingness and leadership. This site exists as a site of symbolic interaction and development of narratives, as well as an information portal.

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Multimodal Analysis of the University of Lahore Website Homepage

Description:

The aesthetic design of the University of Lahore UOL official homepage (https://uol.edu.pk/) produces a contemporary and realistic profile of academic identity. The colour scheme of the site is green, which is associated with growth and harmony. At the top left, we see the UOL logo, which alarmingly tells us about the brand. Its navigation bar contains the following buttons: Admissions, Faculties, Research, Contact Us, ensuring that the site is very easy to navigate for all categories of visitors. The main section features a sliding banner with campus highlights, academic announcements,visual accounts of student and faculty events. These are complemented by text that is in the form of headlines and links to additional information. The imagery and the layout have been combined to provide an intuitive and friendly interface that is meant to appeal to future students and those who will be working with the academic team.

Color Semiotic Analysis:

The home page of UOL use the color semiotics strategically in the home page. The prevailing application of green conforms to development, schooling and energy. This decision is perhaps an attempt to give it a calm but very assertive graphic little that will attract both students and parents. White acts as a passive background that increases professionalism and understanding. The accent colors, say orange and blue, are sometimes facilitated to amplify call-to-action elements such as Apply Now, to allocate attention in directing the user and make the visual navigation. Students, labs, and campus buildings are depicted in natural light, which speaks of transparency and the institutional trustworthiness.

Representational Meta-function:

According to the narrative aspect, the site depicts an actional process using scenes of students in labs or at events. Such pictures mean active learning and engagement, which presupposes the vitality of institutions. There are no too staged photographs, which contributes to authenticity. As per the reactional process, we have people staring at the viewer and they

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suggest that they are looking at the viewer invitingly. These need kinds of images are engaging. Symbolically, reading students hold books, in research rooms, or in groups to convey success, creativity, and scholarly networks.

Interactional Meta-function:

The interactive meaning is made up with the combination of direct gaze with the clickable objects. It would create a rapport when students are observed straight into the camera as they pretend to be in a conversation. Use of call-to-action buttons such as Explore, Learn More and Apply Now positively enhance viewer engagement. Social distance is also preserved through medium shots that have created a formal interaction without being actualistic. The language deployed in banners is formal and academic that makes it appropriate to a higher education setting. The arrangement is horizontalized where the frontal angle is used to enhance equality and admiration of the institution to the viewer.

Compositional Meta-function:

Information Value: The upper part of the web page contains the logo and the main menu of the UOL, which are the best contents- the values and navigation. Banner of events and admissions (new) is in the middle, whereas the bottom houses actual information such as policies, contacts, and social media. The left panel is filled with fixed headlines (Given) and right column displays a dynamic, updated content (New).

Framing: Text is divided visually according to colour contrast, boxes, and spacing, which makes navigation easy. Every now and then each of the sections is a separate entity but tied visually to the entirety.

Salience: The rotating banners, colorful CTAs, and real-time updates are the most prominent visually. The components are designed to attract attention first. Visual salience is also aided by high-resolution pictures of academic and other extracurricular activities. Visual weight and contrast are also utilized in the homepage to set priorities in messages.

The University of Lahore's home page has engaged an intelligent multimodal design in promoting its academic identity. The color scheme, layout as well as the appropriate usage of text, words and framing blend optimally to give UOL an image of a credible and professional yet dynamic organization. Graphic and textual decisions comply with the expectations of the culture, as well as with the international requirements, thus being accessible and appealing to a broad audience.

Data Interpretation

1. Representational Analysis

Kinnaird Women College

The home page of Kinnaird creates a formidable response of achievement, discipline and women empowerment with regard to academics. The images show students participating in research presentations, award ceremonies as well as co-curricular activities. These visual images focus on active, competent, and modern women in the context of Pakistan, and this approach is placed in the context of the institution with its history and culture. Symbolic weight is provided by the college crest with the Latin motto “Let us be known by our deeds”. This way the symbology links the past traditions and the present progress.

Punjab University (PU)

The PU home page stresses on academic formality, heritage and institutional pride. The majority of images depict students in scholarly and formal contexts, e.g. convocations and conferences. These pictures are a symbol of success but in more regulated and official ways. This can be explained by long academic tradition and patriotism as the national flag, graduation gowns, and the year of the university foundation (1882) are present.

LUMS

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LUMS integrates symbolic and actional in that it provides testimonials, scientific laboratories, as well as pictures of various student life. The main page emphasizes professional involvement, leadership, and innovativeness with the help of photos of alumni success and group-based scholarly culture. What these images convey is a progressive, research- driven, transformative and inclusive institution.

University of Lahore (UOL)

The images in UOL depict real interaction in the student and the dynamics of the institution. The structures of the academic community build on images of students in laboratories, classrooms and other group activities and promote a story of real learning. There are no staged images to make it more realistic and relatable. UOL as an institution is presented as youthful, contemporary to promote growth.

2. Interactional Analysis

Eye Contact and Audience Interaction

Kinnaird and UOL employ the use of direct gaze in the various student pictures resulting in a demanding image where the viewer is invited to envision himself in that location. This builds relationship and trust.

PU, on the other hand, generates an offer image by using the indirect gaze and is quite formal and competent of information presentation but not other hand, generates an offer image by using the indirect gaze and is quite formal and competent of information presentation but not interaction.

LUMS combines both: direct gaze in testimonials in order to create a sense of confidence and indirect gaze in the academic visuals in order to create a background information.

Social Distance

- The universities are in the public sector, and it is more likely that they keep medium and wide shots and create an official atmosphere and a remote relationship with the viewer.

The pictures on the websites of the private institutions are inclined to follow closer shots, which can make the acquaintance warmer and friendlier.

Tone and Attitude

Kinnaird has adopted an objective tone, neither too professional nor too friendly in both the graphics and the written information.

Punjab University is a serious and academic as an institution being old and publicly funded.

LUMS does incorporate some dignity along with friendliness and interaction, which attracts donors, scholars as well as students.

The tone of **University of Lahore** is convenient and is contemporary, indicating flexibility and openness.

Compositional Analysis

Information Value

Each website follows the typical **top–bottom (Ideal–Real)** and **left–right (Given–New)** structure:

- The **top** sections (Ideal) usually contain the **logo**, **tagline**, and **navigation menu**, representing institutional identity.
- The **middle** or center sections highlight **dynamic elements**—event sliders, application links, and achievements (New).
- The **bottom** (Real) includes **practical information** such as contacts, policies, and social media links.

Arrangement and Design

- **Kinnaird** has a grid layout where there is a sufficient visual break between parts (e.g., events, news, call-to-action buttons).

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- **The Punjab University** has an upward framing structure based on the posting of a box, white space as well as bars of color which distinguish notices and updates.
- **LUMS** employs a modular design, which is not only classy but practical as well as there exists clean visual edges.
- **University of Lahore** does not hesitate to choose a lively contemporary design and make maximum use of spacing, framing, and highlighted areas as elements of interactivity.

Salience

The most salient things in all four cases are rotating banners or sliders, where achievements and admissions as well as student life are depicted. Significant types of Call-to-Action (CTA) buttons-like, Apply Now, Donate, or Read More, are designed in another tone so as to attract readers attention-currently; orange, blue or gold.

4. Color Semiotics

Kinnaird Navy blue (Intellect, discipline), white/gray (clarity, trust), gold (prestige)
Punjab University Blue (tradition, seriousness), white (formality), red (alerts and attention)
LUMS: Blue (smartness), white (impartiality), orange (emotion, involvement)
University of lahore: Green (growth, harmony), white (professionalism), the orange/blue accents (action)

The choice of colors is representative not only of the branding but also of the ideology of institutions. Universities that belong to the public sector refer to classic and conservative color range, whereas the color scheme applied by the universities of the private sector is modern and expressive to attract younger and international markets.

Summary of Key Findings

Feature	Kinnaird (Public)	PU (Public)	LUMS (Private)	UOL (Private)
Narrative Focus	Empowerment, academic life	Heritage, discipline	Innovation, transformation	Practical learning, inclusion
Gaze	Mostly direct (engaging)	Indirect (informative)	Mixed (trust + info)	Mixed (personal + academic)
Color Scheme	Navy, gold, white	Blue, white, red	Blue, white, orange	Green, white, orange/blue
Interaction Type	Balanced, formal	Formal, distant	Warm, modern	Interactive, inviting
Layout Structure	Grid, hierarchical	Boxed, structured	Modular, clean	Bold, dynamic

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

In this paper, the author aimed at examining how four Pakistani universities, two public ones (Kinnaird College of Women and Punjab University) and two private universities (LUMS and University of Lahore), within the context of the corporatized higher education design their institutional identity and address their users with the multimodal aspects on their online official websites. Within the conceptualization of text-based Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MDA) framework, the study analyzed the interaction of textual and visual content, layout, color, and

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interactive components with the text, which identified the patterns in the sector that led to commonality in communicating in higher education, as well as the differences within it.

The results indicate that the universities of the public sector (including Kinnaird and Punjab University) are highly preoccupied with academic legacy, institutional tradition and cultural decency. These have more formal songs on their websites with organized designs, conservative colour schemes and images of the websites that are commonly centred on symbols of the institutions, ceremonies and historic architecture. There is also interaction although this is not over-emphasized and instead these sites seem to be aimed at informing than interacting. This is used in their multimodal preferences, which express values of stability, credibility and national pride.

Conversely, private universities such as LUMS and university of Lahore are more user-friendly and operate in a more contemporary pattern. They have direct gaze pictures in their homepages, testimonials, emotional appeals through hot-friendly colors as well as clearly visible call-to-action buttons. The institutions do not only wish to make the viewer know, but connect, remind and engage them. They are more dynamic and modular in their layout and sometimes have the theme of transformation, innovation, diversity and global orientation in their messaging. This equates to an appropriate branding that matches with the competitiveness of the market and global attraction.

Nonetheless, though the sectors are different, all the four universities apply a similar basic structure on their web design which includes the top-bottom hierarchies, rotating banners and the contact information in the footer. It implies that some global norms are being observed in web design amongst academicians, and is the case amid differences in the application of such global norms to locally relevant provisions.

Also, these universities achieve functional yet narrative balance on the basis of multimodal strategies employed. The sites cannot be characterized as online brochures which passively reflect what every school is aspiring to present: the kind of values they hold, the kind of community that they are trying to present, and their futuristic aspirations.

Conclusion

This paper makes the following conclusion: the homepages of Pakistani universities present significant opportunities in the visual and ideological communication because of the reception of a range of modes: text, image, color, layout, and interaction, into the formation of institutional identities. The discussion showed that:

- The focus of the public universities is tradition, seriousness, and credibility using formal language, historic images, and structure.
- Private colleges are concentrated on engagement, innovation, and accessibility using interactive layouts, different visuals and emotionally fancied contents.

Every institution tactfully employs multimodal elements in order to attract, inform and persuade its audience.

This conclusion shows the increase in the role of digital discourse in the field of higher education, especially the role of presentation of the institution visually in the competitive, towering world of academia. They also show how multimodal design manifests larger social values that include gender representation, national pride and global aspirations.

Recommendations

To designers and university administrators, this research paper draws attention to the fact that they must make decisions regarding visual and textual messages that resonate with the mission of the institution and expectations of the audience. A good homepage has to be able to deliver more than information, but needs to give sense of trust, excellence and inclusiveness in all forms of communication.

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To researchers, the discussion promotes bountiful prospects of additional research in academic discourse, internet semiotics and contrastive web research. In future findings, departmental pages, mobile interface design, or student feedback to the university branding on-line can be studied.

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