SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

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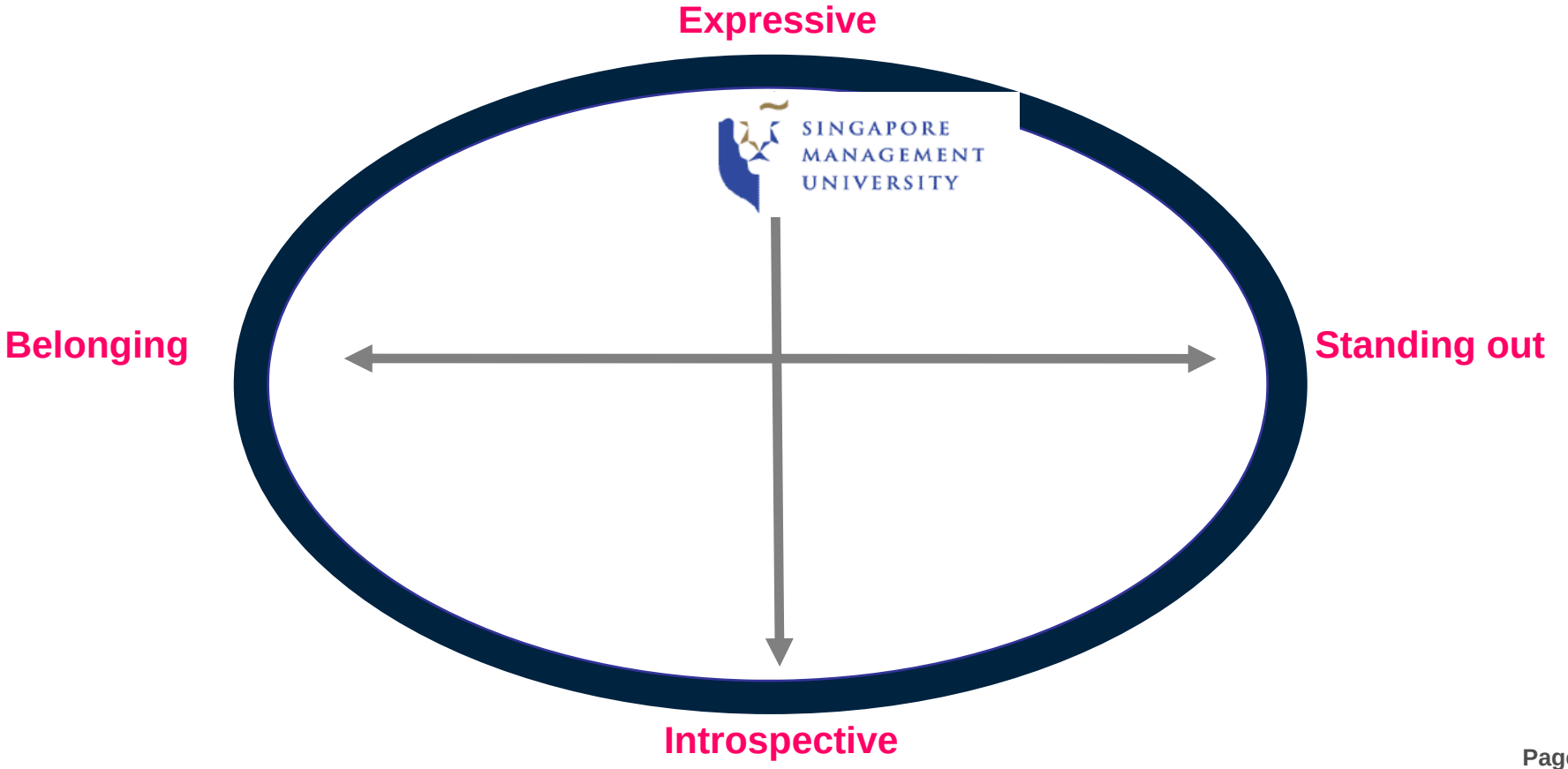
Background

- SMU's entry marked a change in education scene
- Quickly gained reputation for offering a "different" education experience
- First to offer seminar-style teaching
- Emphasis on social skills also a differentiator

Positioning

"SMU more presentable, carry themselves better " – Parents
"Smart, independent, aggressive, fast, playful, fun-loving' – Parents
"more out-going, fun, good for picking up social skills" – Potential Students
"Students can have a more balanced life, not just study" – Potential
"Dynamic, student focused, friendly" – Potential
"not about textbooks, more important to learn about life-skills" Current Student
"Aggressive, entrepreneurial, dynamic" – Current students



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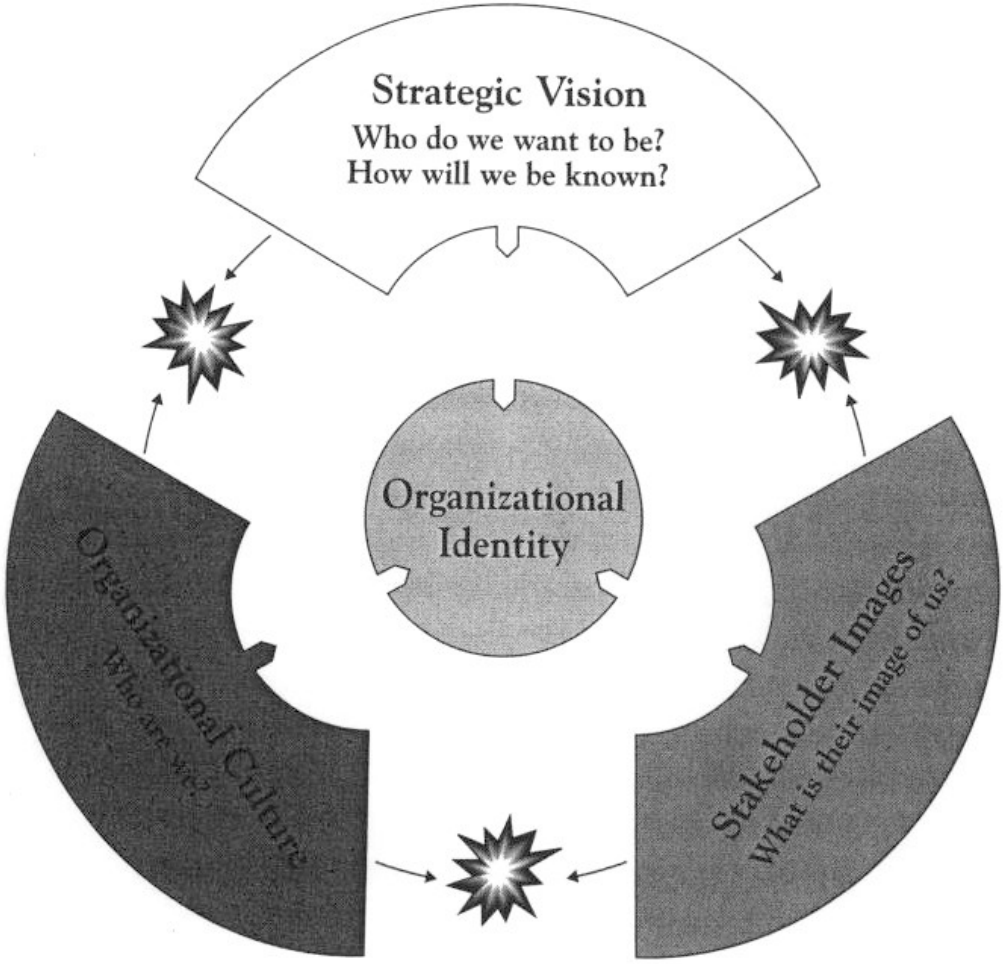
The V-C-I Framework
(Hatch & Schultz, 2008)



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Vision

- “Who do we want to be?”
- “To be a premier university, internationally recognized for its world class research and distinguished teaching.”
- “SMU was designed to provide a different model of university education here in Singapore.”

  - Dr Tony Tan, Former Deputy Prime Minister
- The “challenger brand”

Vision

- Seminars
- De-emphasis on exams
- Group projects
- Presentations
- Overseas exposure
- Not just grades; student’s non-academic background also matters

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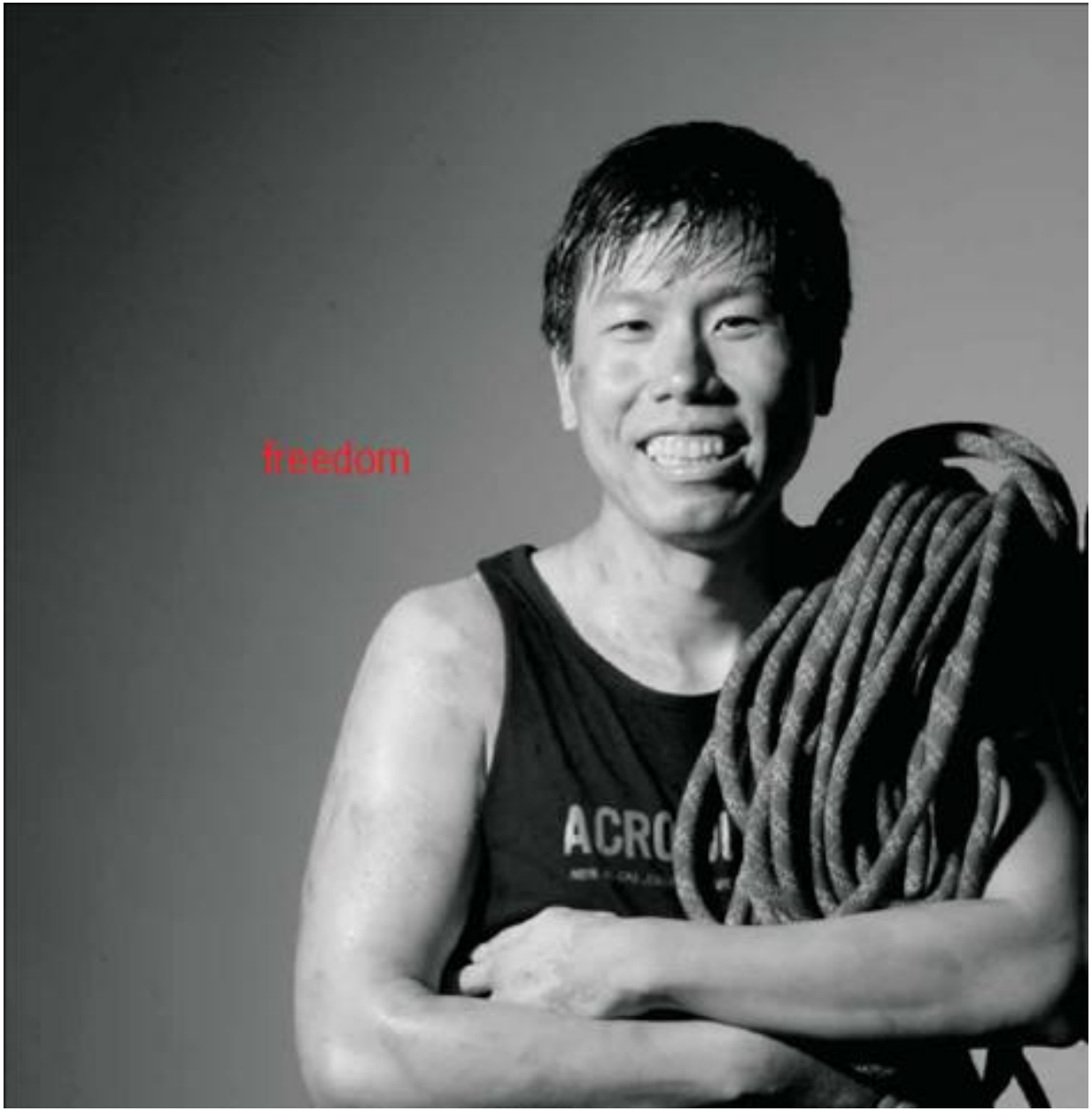
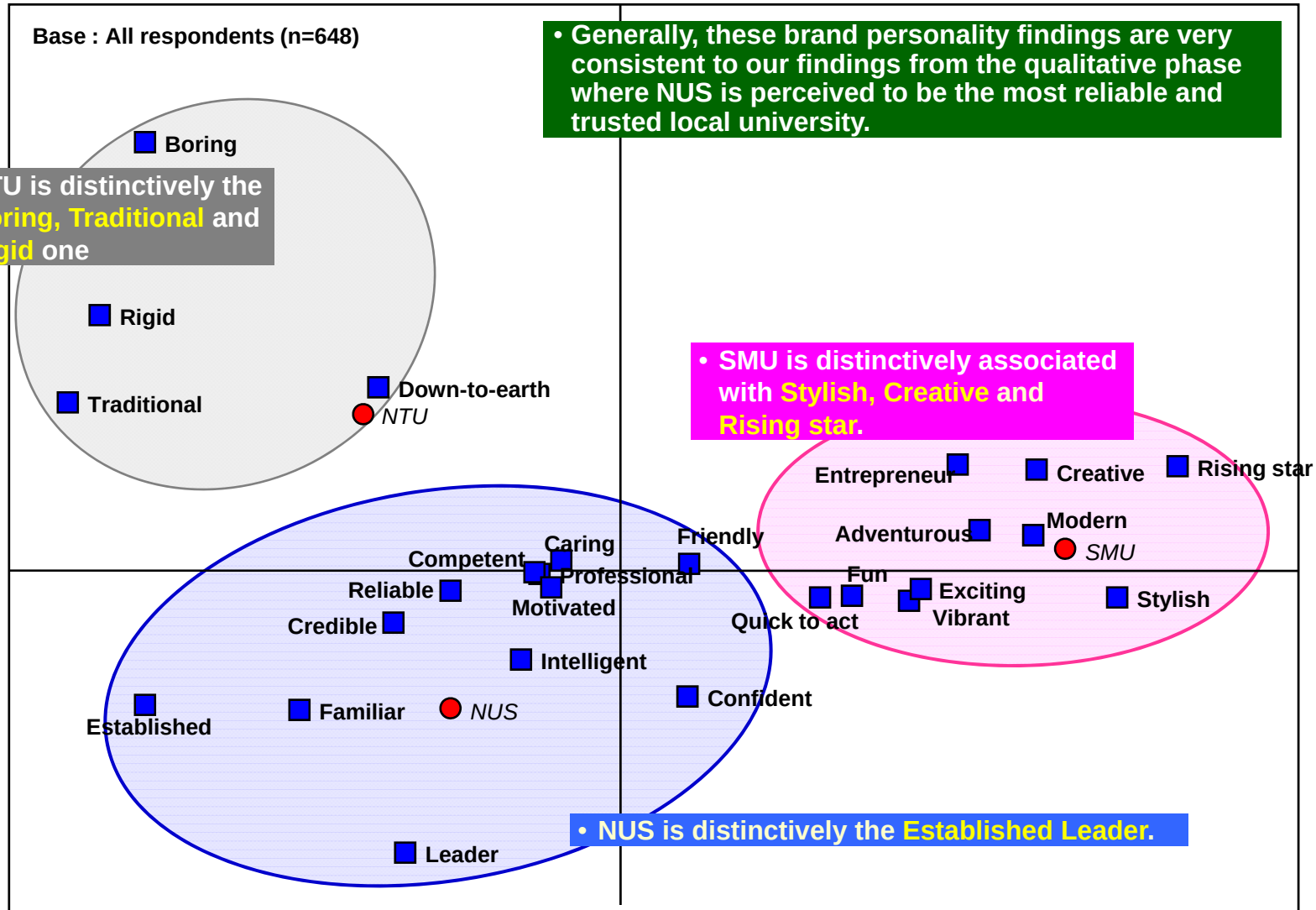


Culture

- “Who are we?”
- What has always been known or believed by stakeholders

Brand Personality- All Respondents



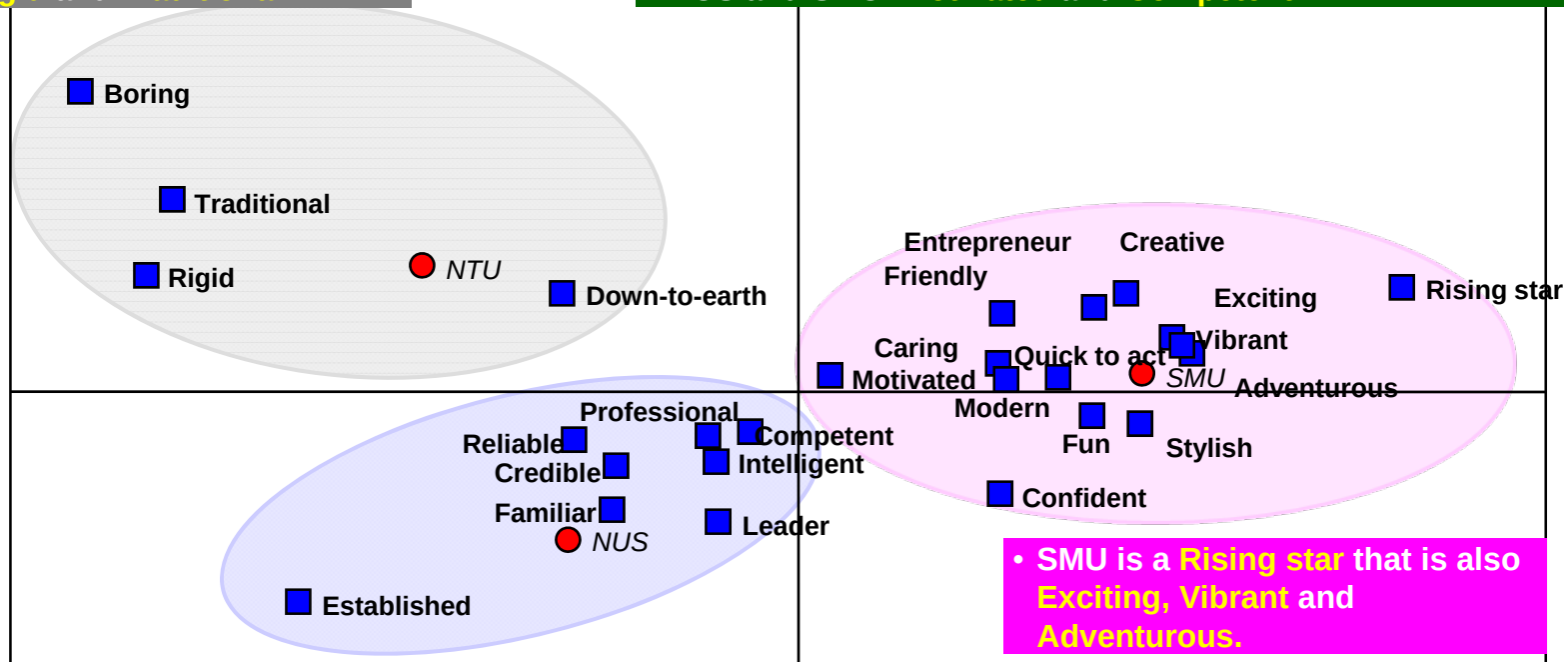
Q7. I have a list of words that could be used to describe any university. For each word, please tell me which of the 3 local universities you see fit. Each word may be applicable to more than 1 university or none at all.If you you feel that the attributes does not apply to any university, you may indicate it as “NONE

Brand Personality- SMU Students

Base : All SMU undergraduates (n=76)

- SMU students acknowledge the fact that their school is not yet established but they do not feel underprivileged
  - They see themselves as more Confident than NUS
- There are several characteristics that are shared by both NUS and SMU- Motivated and Competent

- NTU is distinctively Boring, Rigid and Traditional.



- SMU is a Rising star that is also Exciting, Vibrant and Adventurous.

- NUS is distinctively Established.

Q7. I have a list of words that could be used to describe any university. For each word, please tell me which of the 3 local universities you see fit. Each word may be applicable to more than 1 university or none at all.If you you feel that the attributes does not apply to any university, you may indicate it as “NONE

Axis 2 8.8%

Culture

2007 SMU Students' Association Survey (n = 1297)

- "What do you think is SMU's competitive advantage?"
- Teaching style: 58%
- Smaller class size: 52.5%
- Overseas opportunities: 45.3%

Culture

2007 SMU Students' Association Survey (n = 1297)

- "How would you describe SMU culture?"

Competitive	89%
Obsession over grades	82%
Excellent/good professors	65%
Career-minded	60%
"Different" students	44%
Dynamic and vibrant	38%
"Happening"	23%

Culture: Alumni Giving Back

- SMU: 48%
- NUS and NTU: 5%

Quotes from Alumni

- "SMU was a time for learning, a time for experimentation, and a truly awesome experience for me with many overseas opportunities. I now bring a part of Singapore and SMU heritage with me to wherever I go."

  - Nadir Ali Zafar (BBM, 2004)

- When I first entered SMU, I thought my undergraduate experience would be different because SMU had a unique curriculum. This turned out to be only a small factor. The numerous opportunities to pioneer initiatives, network and champion causes are what I truly treasure.

  - Victor Sim (BSc Econs, 2008)

- SMU is the door to my new life and dreams. It opened doors to opportunities and adventures that I did not even dream of. I remember SMU ads about students being gems to be polished. I would say SMU is a gem. It's a place that lets SMU students and graduates shine brightly. I love SMU and may SMU continue to shine!

  - Jimmy Boh (BBM, 2008)

Images

- “What is their image of us?”

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Brand Imagery- All Respondents

Base : All respondents (n=648)

	NUS	NTU	SMU
Unique Characteristics			• Seminar style teaching, • Non-exams based • High interaction level with staff
Strong Associations	• High employability *(top)* • Good qualification of staff *(3rd)* • Availability of overseas exchange • Exam-based assessment • Traditional style teaching • Availability of hostel • Community svcs included	• High employability *(top)* • Affordability of fees *(2nd)* • Good qualification of staff *(3rd)* • Availability of overseas exchange • Exam-based assessment • Internship included • Availability of hostel • Good quality facilities • Traditional style teaching	• Courses on career skills • Flexible to choose different subject combi • Broad-base teaching • Accessibility of campus • Internship included
Weak Associations	• Affordability of fees *(2nd)* • Seminar style teaching, • Courses on career skills • Non-exams based • High interaction level with staff • Flexible to choose different subject combi • Internship included • Accessibility of campus • Broad-base teaching • Good quality facilities	• Seminar style teaching, • Courses on career skills • Non-exams based • High interaction level with staff • Flexible to choose different subject combi • Accessibility of campus • Broad-base teaching • Community svcs included	• High employability *(top)* • Affordability of fees *(2nd)* • Good qualification of staff *(3rd)* • Availability of overseas exchange • Traditional style teaching • Availability of hostel • Community svcs included • Good quality facilities • Exam-based assessment

(top) = Top most important attribute *(2nd)* = 2nd most important and *(3rd)* = 3rd most important

Q6c. Now, looking at this list of attributes that could also be used to describe universities, please select out of the 3 local universities, the ones that you see fit the attribute. Each attribute can be applicable to more than one university or none at all. If you feel that the attribute does not apply to any university, you may indicate it as "NONE"

SMU's Image

- Seminar-style teaching and learning
- Strongly encourages social aspects of a university education
- More freedom for students to gain wider experiences
- Students perceived to be more vocal, confident, independent and with potential to go far
- Closest alternative to an overseas education locally

Gap Analysis

- Gap 1 (V-C): Changing student culture

  - 65% of SMU students think growing emphasis on grades reduces SMU's uniqueness

- Gap 2 (V-I): "Difference" is under challenge

What are the drivers for university choice?

Least important drivers	Key drivers	Secondary drivers
Facilities	Type of courses available	Education style and culture (Parents)
Hostel life (Students)	Type and degree of exposure gained	Duration of course
Quality of teaching staff	Education style and culture (Students)	Cost
Teaching style	Reputation of university	Location
	Employability	

These are factors that are more of after-thoughts, and does not really affect the decision

These determine the overall value of the university education, and ultimately on future employability after graduation

These are factors that can make a difference between universities, but are not as crucial

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SMU Students' Employability (2008)

- 99.7% land jobs within six months of graduation
- 84% secured jobs before (or within one month of) graduation
- 74% received job offers before graduation
- 66% received 2-10 job offers
- Average starting monthly salary S$3,040

SMU Student Admissions (2008)

- One in 10 students who applied got accepted
- 6000+ students applied for 600+ spots