



Quality of Higher Education in Kerala as a Determinant of Student Migration Abroad for Higher Studies

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Abstract

The study explored how the quality of higher education in Kerala played a pivotal role in influencing students' decisions to pursue their higher studies abroad. The research aimed to elucidate the intricate relationship between the perceived quality of Kerala's higher education system and the phenomenon of student migration to foreign countries for advanced studies. Through a meticulously designed mixed-methods approach, researchers gathered data from various sources, including surveys, interviews, and educational statistics, to comprehensively assess the factors contributing to this migration trend. The findings revealed that the quality of higher education in Kerala exerted a substantial influence on students' migration decisions. Participants consistently cited factors such as the perceived lack of research opportunities, outdated curricula, and insufficient faculty qualifications as key motivations to seek higher education abroad. Furthermore, the allure of global exposure, access to cutting-edge technology, and the potential for a more competitive edge in the international job market were among the driving forces pushing students overseas. By comparing these insights with the experiences of students who remained in Kerala, the study highlighted the significant disparities between the two educational pathways. It underscored the importance of addressing these disparities and enhancing the quality of higher education in Kerala to attract and retain talent, ultimately benefiting the state's educational institutions and the economy. In conclusion, this research provided a nuanced understanding of the interplay between higher education quality in Kerala and student migration abroad. It offered valuable insights for government and educational institutions to formulate strategies aimed at improving the state's higher education system and promoting a conducive environment for students to pursue advanced studies within Kerala's borders.

Keywords; Quality of higher education, Migration, Higher Studies,

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, the quality of higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping the choices and aspirations of students. Kerala, a southern state in India, is known for its robust educational system and has been a hub for higher learning for decades. However, a noteworthy phenomenon has emerged in recent years—the significant migration of Kerala's students abroad for higher studies. This migration trend has sparked questions about the quality of higher education within the state and its impact on the choices made by students. This study seeks to delve into the intricate dynamics between the perceived quality of higher education in Kerala and the migration of students abroad for advanced studies. This research topic would involve a comprehensive study to understand how the current quality of higher education in Kerala influences students' decisions to pursue their higher studies abroad. It would entail an examination of factors such as curriculum quality, faculty qualifications, research opportunities, infrastructure, and overall educational experience within Kerala's higher education institutions, and how these factors impact students' choices to seek education overseas.

Statement of Problem

The quality of higher education in Kerala is a critical factor influencing the migration of students to foreign countries for their higher studies. Understanding the specific aspects of Kerala's higher education system that contribute to this trend is essential for educational policymakers and stakeholders. This study aims to address the following problem:

"Despite the availability of higher education institutions in Kerala, a significant number of students choose to migrate abroad for their higher studies. It is imperative to identify the key quality-related factors within the Kerala higher education system that drive this migration and to explore ways to address these factors to retain talent and promote higher education within the state."

Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the quality of higher education in Kerala, focusing on aspects such as curriculum, faculty qualifications, research opportunities, infrastructure, and overall educational experience.
2. To understand the motivations and reasons that lead students from Kerala to consider pursuing higher studies abroad.
3. To identify quality-related gaps and shortcomings within Kerala's higher education system that may influence students' migration decisions.

Hypotheses:

1. There is a significant relationship between perceived higher education quality in Kerala and students' decisions to migrate abroad for advanced studies.
2. Motivations for student migration abroad are influenced by factors such as perceived lack of research opportunities, outdated curricula, and insufficient faculty qualifications within Kerala's higher education system.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this study encompassed a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data collection, sampling, data analysis, and statistical tests were conducted to comprehensively investigate the research objectives.

Data Collection: The study used both primary and secondary data. For primary data collection, structured surveys were administered to a sample of 250 students and recent graduates who had considered or pursued higher studies abroad. Stratified random sampling was used to select participants from various disciplines, geographic regions within Kerala, and migration experiences. The survey included questions related to motivations for migration, perceptions of higher education quality in Kerala, and demographic information. Secondary data on higher education institutions in Kerala, including enrollment figures, faculty qualifications, research opportunities, and infrastructure, were collected for analysis.

Data Analysis: Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, were calculated to summarize survey responses. Inferential statistical tests, such as correlation analysis and regression analysis, were conducted to explore relationships between variables, including the impact of perceived education quality on migration decisions. Statistical tests, such as Pearson correlation coefficients and multiple regression analyses, were conducted to examine the relationships between variables, including the perceived quality of education in Kerala and students' decisions to migrate abroad. These tests allowed for the identification of statistically significant associations and factors influencing migration decisions.

Review of Literature

The relationship between the quality of higher education and student migration abroad has been a subject of growing interest and research in recent years. Several studies have shed light on various facets of this complex phenomenon, with a particular focus on different regions and countries. Here, we provide an overview of key findings and themes from existing literature.

Quality of Higher Education and Migration: Extensive research has established a strong connection between the perceived quality of higher education and students' decisions to pursue their studies abroad. Marginson and Rhoades (2002), in their seminal work, underscored how students often opt for international education due to factors such as superior faculty qualifications, modernized curricula, and enhanced research opportunities in host countries. Lee and Kim (2014) and Brown and Hirsch (2011) corroborated these findings, highlighting the significance of destination country quality in shaping students' mobility patterns.

Motivations for Migration: The literature offers a rich tapestry of motivations driving student migration abroad. Findlay (2010) emphasized the allure of global exposure as a significant motivator, providing students with a broader perspective on the world. Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) highlighted access to cutting-edge technology and resources as a compelling factor, enabling students to access resources unavailable in their home country. Moreover, Balaz (2018) found that the potential for gaining a competitive edge in the international job market is a substantial motivator for students seeking advanced studies overseas.

Impact on Home Countries: The consequences of student migration on home countries have been a topic of ongoing debate. Some studies, such as the work by Docquier and Rapoport (2012), suggest that student migration can lead to a "brain drain" effect, depleting the home country of its skilled workforce. However, Czaika and Parsons (2017) argue that returnees can contribute positively to their home countries by bringing back valuable knowledge and skills. The impact of student migration appears to be context-dependent, with variations across regions and countries.

Research Gap

While the existing literature offers valuable insights, several research gaps have emerged:

Context-Specific Analysis: The majority of research focuses on global or regional trends, underscoring the need for a Kerala-specific analysis to understand the unique dynamics of the state's higher education landscape and its connection to student migration.

In-Depth Qualitative Exploration: Existing literature predominantly relies on quantitative data, necessitating qualitative exploration to provide a deeper understanding of Kerala students' motivations and perceptions.

Impact Assessment on Kerala: Research primarily focuses on host countries; hence, assessing repercussions on Kerala's educational institutions, workforce, and economy is imperative.

In summary, while existing literature underscores the significance of higher education quality in shaping student migration abroad, this review reveals the need for context-specific, qualitative research that delves into the Kerala context. Such research can provide insights into the impact on Kerala and generate actionable policy recommendations to address challenges linked to this migration trend effectively. This study aims to bridge these research gaps and contribute to a more holistic understanding of the issue.

Trends in Enrolment of Students in Higher Education in Kerala

In the vibrant tapestry of higher education, Kerala, the southern state of India, has carved a distinctive niche. Renowned for its robust educational system and a deep-rooted commitment to knowledge, Kerala has been a beacon of learning and enlightenment for decades. The academic landscape of this coastal haven has witnessed remarkable transformations, shaped by evolving societal aspirations, economic dynamics, and global educational trends. Amid this backdrop, one of the pivotal dimensions of higher education is the enrollment of students in Arts and Science undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses. These courses, steeped in a rich tradition of academic exploration and critical thinking, constitute the cornerstone of the educational journey for countless learners in Kerala. As students embark on this voyage of knowledge acquisition, it is imperative to understand the nuanced trends that influence their choices, aspirations, and academic pursuits. This chapter embarks on a voyage of its own, navigating through the currents of educational data and insights, to illuminate the trends in student enrollment in UG and PG Arts and Science courses in Kerala. It endeavors to unravel the intricate dynamics that underlie these trends, examining factors that drive enrollments, exploring shifts in academic preferences, and addressing the challenges and opportunities that define the educational landscape. In doing so, this chapter seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the prevailing patterns in student enrollment, shedding light on the educational pursuits that shape the future of Kerala's learners.

Table 1 Enrolment of Students in Arts and Science Colleges in number and per cent 2021-22

Course	Total	Girls	Boys	per cent of Girls
B. A.	1,44,461	93,234	51,227	64.5
B.Sc.	1,10,552	74,970	35,582	67.8
B.Com.	47,580	29,910	17,670	62.9
Total	3,02,593	1,98,114	1,02,347	65.5
M.A.	16,939	10,933	6,006	64.5
MSc.	20,919	13,241	7,678	63.3
M.Com.	7,106	4,947	2,159	69.6
Total	44,964	29,121	15,843	64.8
Grand Total	3,47,557	2,27,235	1,20,322	65.4

Source: Directorate of Collegiate Education, various Years

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of student enrollment in Arts and Science colleges in Kerala for the academic year 2021-22. It details the number of students enrolled in various undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) courses, distinguishing between gender and calculating the percentage of female (Girls) students in each category. At the undergraduate level, the table reveals that there were a total of 1,44,461 students enrolled in B.A. courses, with a majority of 93,234 being female students (Girls). This accounts for a substantial 64.5% of the total enrollment in B.A. programs. Similarly, in the B.Sc. category, there were 1,10,552 students, with 74,970 being female, making up 67.8% of the total. For B.Com., the enrollment totaled 47,580, with 29,910 being female students, constituting 62.9% of the total enrollment in this category. When considering the aggregate undergraduate enrollment, the table shows that there were 3,02,593 students in Arts and Science colleges during this academic year. Among them, 1,98,114 were female students, accounting for a significant 65.5% of the total undergraduate enrollment. Shifting to the postgraduate level, the table presents enrollment figures for M.A., MSc., and M.Com. programs. For M.A., there were 16,939 students, with 10,933 being female, reflecting a female enrollment percentage of 64.5%. In the MSc. category, there were 20,919 students, of which 13,241 were female students, making up 63.3% of the total. Finally, in M.Com., there were 7,106 students, and notably, the highest percentage of female students, at 69.6%. Summing up the postgraduate enrollment, the table indicates a total of 44,964 students pursuing M.A., MSc., and M.Com. programs. Among them, 29,121 were female students, representing 64.8% of the total postgraduate enrollment. In total, the "Grand Total" row showcases that during the academic year 2021-22, there were 3,47,557 students enrolled in Arts and Science colleges in Kerala. Among them, 2,27,235 were female students, which translates to a remarkable 65.4% of the total student population. The data presented in this table, underscores the significant representation of female students in Arts and Science colleges across various UG and PG programs in Kerala during the specified academic year. It provides valuable insights into gender-based enrollment patterns, highlighting the active participation of female students in higher education within the state.

Influence of Quality of Education on Student Migration

The pursuit of higher education represents a pivotal phase in the life of an individual, often seen as a transformative journey towards knowledge acquisition, personal growth, and career advancement. For students, this journey is characterized not only by the quest for knowledge but also by a series of choices and decisions that shape their educational path. In recent years, one of the most profound decisions that a significant number of students in Kerala have been making pertains to the destination of their higher studies. The allure of foreign shores for advanced education has been steadily increasing, leading to a phenomenon commonly referred to as "student migration abroad."

This analysis chapter delves into a crucial aspect of this phenomenon—the quality of higher education in Kerala and its role as a determinant influencing students' decisions to pursue higher studies abroad. The exodus of students seeking education opportunities beyond national borders is not merely an anecdotal trend; it reflects a complex interplay of factors that deserve a closer examination. Among these factors, the perceived quality of the higher education system in their home state, Kerala, plays a pivotal role. The state of Kerala, often recognized for its high literacy rates and emphasis on education, has a vibrant higher education landscape, comprising numerous colleges and universities. However, the perceived quality of this educational system has emerged as a crucial factor impacting the migration choices of students. This analysis aims to shed light on the intricate relationship between the quality of higher education in Kerala and the tendency of students to opt for international educational destinations.

Table 3 Profile of Students Studying in Kerala and Others State or Abroad

Variable			Place of Study		Total	Chi-Square Result
			Kerala	Abroad or Other States		
Gender	Female	N	28	38	66	Value= 2.059, df= 1, p=0.151
		%	22.4%	30.4%	26.4%	
	Male	N	97	87	184	
		%	77.6%	69.6%	73.6%	
Arts and Science Professional Degree Diploma Research Others	Arts and Science	N	15	49	64	Value= 28.750, df= 4, p=0.000
		%	12.0%	39.2%	25.6%	
	Professional Degree	N	84	47	131	
		%	67.2%	37.6%	52.4%	
	Diploma	N	13	14	27	
		%	10.4%	11.2%	10.8%	
	Research	N	9	11	20	
		%	7.2%	8.8%	8.0%	
	Others	N	4	4	8	
		%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	

Last Course Completed	+2	N	95	101	196	Value= 0.850, df= 1, p=0.356
		%	76.0%	80.8%	78.4%	
	UG	N	30	24	54	
		%	24.0%	19.2%	21.6%	
Total	N	125	125	250		
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%		

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 3 profiling students based on where they study (in Kerala or abroad/other states) and various demographic and educational factors. It specifically discusses the variable of gender, revealing that 26.4% of students study in Kerala while 73.6% study abroad or in other states. To assess if gender significantly influences this choice, a chi-square test was conducted, resulting in a chi-square value of 2.059 and a p-value of 0.151. The interpretation of this statistical analysis suggests that gender doesn't have a substantial impact on whether students opt to study in Kerala or abroad/other states, as the p-value exceeds the conventional threshold for statistical significance (0.05). In essence, the data indicates that gender doesn't play a significant role in determining students' choice of study location. It also mentions that the analysis goes beyond gender to explore other variables such as the field of study and the last course completed. It points out that the field of study (categorized into Arts and Science, Professional Degree, Diploma, Research, and Others) is significantly associated with the choice of study location. For instance, a larger percentage of Arts and Science students (39.2%) and Professional Degree students (37.6%) opt to study abroad or in other states compared to those studying in Kerala. The chi-square value of 28.750 and p-value of 0.000 suggest a strong statistical relationship between the field of study and study location choice. However, when it comes to the last course completed (either +2 or UG), the analysis finds no statistically significant association, with a chi-square value of 0.850 and a p-value of 0.356, indicating that completing +2 or UG education doesn't notably affect students' decision to study in Kerala or abroad/other states.

Table 4 Monthly Income Family and Place of Study

Place of Study	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Abroad or Other States	38000.0	125.0	22807.0
Kerala	14912.0	125.0	8642.6
Total	26456.0	250.0	20737.2
Independent Sample t-test	t=10.584, df= 248, p=0.000		

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 5 presents an analysis of the monthly family income of students based on their place of study, categorizing them into two groups: those studying abroad or in other states and those studying within Kerala. The data shows distinct disparities in family income between these two groups. For students studying abroad or in other states, the mean monthly family income is notably higher at ₹38,000, with a relatively wide variation as indicated by the standard deviation of ₹22,807. This suggests that, on average, students in this category hail from families with greater financial resources, although there is considerable income diversity among them. Conversely, students studying within Kerala exhibit a significantly lower mean monthly family income of ₹14,912, with a standard deviation of ₹8,642.6. This indicates that, on average, students in this group come from families with more modest incomes, and there is less income variability among them compared to their counterparts. Importantly, the results of the independent sample t-test confirm the substantial statistical significance of these differences, with a t-value of 10.584 and a p-value of 0.000. In essence, the table underscores the economic disparities between students studying abroad or in other states and those studying within Kerala, shedding light on how family income plays a role in the choice of study location for higher education.

Table 5 Age and Place of Study

Place of Study	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Kerala	20.2640	125	2.79153
Abroad or Other States	20.8080	125	2.84746
Total	20.5360	250	2.82713
Independent Sample t-test	t=-1.525, df= 248, p=0.128		

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 5 presents an analysis of the age of respondents based on their place of study, categorizing them into two groups: students studying in Kerala and those studying abroad or in other states. The data shows that, on average, students studying in Kerala have a mean age of approximately 20.26 years, with a relatively narrow age variation as indicated by the standard deviation of 2.79 years. In contrast, students studying abroad or in other states have a slightly higher mean age of approximately 20.81 years, with a standard deviation of 2.85 years, suggesting a minor age difference and a slightly wider age variation among this group. However, it's crucial to note that the results of the independent sample t-test, with a t-value of -1.525 and a p-value of 0.128, indicate that this age difference is not statistically significant. Therefore, the data suggests that, on average, there is only a marginal age discrepancy between the two groups, and this age factor does not play a substantial role in influencing students' decisions regarding their place of study.

Table 6 Motivational Factors for Higher Studies

Statements	Place of Study					
	Kerala		Abroad or Other States		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Pursuing higher education will significantly enhance my career prospects.	3.74	1.46	3.97	1.33	3.86	1.40

I have a genuine passion for acquiring knowledge and learning new things.	3.87	1.39	4.12	1.29	4.00	1.35
Higher education is an important avenue for personal growth and development	3.86	1.42	3.82	1.32	3.84	1.37
I am deeply interested in a specific field of study and wish to specialize in it	3.78	2.94	3.63	1.24	3.71	2.25
I believe that obtaining a higher education degree will lead to better financial stability.	3.54	1.37	3.80	1.22	3.67	1.30
I want to acquire knowledge and skills to share them with others and make a positive impact	3.57	1.24	3.72	1.25	3.64	1.24
Pursuing higher education aligns with my family's expectations and aspirations for me	3.58	1.25	3.64	1.12	3.61	1.18
Higher education provides an opportunity to build a valuable network and make connections	3.50	1.25	3.84	1.20	3.67	1.24
I want to gain exposure to different cultures and international perspectives through higher education	3.50	1.27	3.83	1.27	3.66	1.28
Pursuing higher education is a personal goal or aspiration that I am committed to achieving	3.67	1.38	3.91	1.28	3.79	1.34

Source: Primary Survey, 2023, Minimum-1, Maximum-5

Table 6 provides insights into the motivational factors influencing students' decisions to pursue higher studies, comparing the responses of students studying in Kerala and those studying abroad or in other states.

- **Pursuing Career Enhancement:** Students both in Kerala and abroad/other states view higher education as a means to significantly enhance their career prospects. The mean scores for this factor are close for both groups.
- **Passion for Learning:** Students in both groups express a genuine passion for acquiring knowledge and learning new things, with slightly higher mean scores for those studying abroad/other states.
- **Personal Growth:** Both groups recognize higher education as an important avenue for personal growth and development, with similar mean scores.
- **Specialization:** Students studying in Kerala and abroad/other states differ slightly in their desire to specialize in a specific field of study. Those abroad have a slightly lower mean score for this factor.
- **Financial Stability:** Students studying abroad/other states believe to a greater extent that obtaining a higher education degree will lead to better financial stability, as indicated by their higher mean score.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Both groups express a desire to acquire knowledge and skills to share with others and make a positive impact, with similar mean scores.
- **Family Expectations:** Pursuing higher education aligns with the expectations and aspirations of both groups' families, with similar mean scores.
- **Building a Network:** Students studying abroad/other states place a higher emphasis on higher education as an opportunity to build a valuable network and make connections, as reflected in their higher mean score for this factor.
- **Cultural Exposure:** Those studying abroad/other states are more interested in gaining exposure to different cultures and international perspectives through higher education, as indicated by their higher mean score.
- **Personal Aspiration:** Both groups consider pursuing higher education a personal goal or aspiration they are committed to achieving, with slightly higher mean scores for those studying abroad/other states.

In summary, this table reveals that while students in both groups share common motivational factors for pursuing higher education, there are subtle variations in the emphasis they place on certain factors. Students studying abroad or in other states tend to prioritize factors like financial stability, building networks, and gaining cultural exposure to a somewhat higher degree than their counterparts in Kerala. Understanding these motivations can aid educational institutions and policymakers in tailoring support and opportunities to meet the diverse needs of students.

Table 7 Factor Analysis: factors

KMO and Bartlett's Test				
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.				.797
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square			4897.66
	df			190
	Sig.			.000
Rotated Component Matrix				
Statement	Component			
	1	2	3	4
There is effective and meaningful interaction between faculty and students in Kerala's educational institutions	.846			
I am satisfied with the quality of education I have received in Kerala	.841			
The overall reputation of Kerala's higher education system is positive and well-regarded	.839			
The infrastructure and facilities at Kerala's educational institutions are modern and up-to-date.	.836			
Kerala's educational institutions have well-equipped libraries with extensive resources	.826			
Students have opportunities for professional development and skill enhancement in Kerala's higher education system	.801			
Kerala's institutions foster an environment of innovation and research culture	.762			
The quality of peer learning and interactions among students in Kerala's higher education institutions is excellent	.587			
Students in Kerala have access to state-of-the-art technology and resources for their studies		.819		
The curriculum offered by educational institutions in Kerala is relevant to current industry needs		.817		
Kerala's educational institutions have highly competent and knowledgeable faculty members		.670		
Kerala's higher education institutions provide ample research opportunities for students.		.617		
Kerala's educational institutions provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment		.608		
The overall quality of higher education in Kerala is commendable				
Kerala's institutions are known for their high-quality research contributions.			.782	
Students have access to practical and hands-on learning experiences in their respective fields of study.			.712	
Kerala's universities and colleges are internationally recognized for their quality of education			.647	
Graduates from Kerala's educational institutions are well-prepared for employment				.737
Employers and industries in Kerala value degrees from the state's higher education institutions.				-.629
Higher education institutions in Kerala offer effective student support services				.616
Eigen Value	8.048	3.132	1.930	1.432
Percent of total variation explained	40.242	15.662	9.650	7.162
Cumulative Percent of the variance explained	40.242	55.904	65.554	72.716
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization				
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.				
Cronbach's Alpha				.917

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 7 presents the results of a factor analysis aimed at identifying underlying factors or dimensions that explain the responses to a set of statements related to the quality of higher education in Kerala. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) assesses whether the data is suitable for factor analysis. In this case, the KMO measure is 0.797, which is considered to be good. It indicates that the data is appropriate for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity tests the null hypothesis that the variables in the analysis are uncorrelated. A significant p-value (in this case, $p=0.000$) indicates that the variables are indeed correlated, justifying the use of factor analysis.

The results presented in Table 7 stem from a factor analysis aimed at uncovering the underlying dimensions that influence students' perceptions of the quality of higher education in Kerala. This analysis has yielded four distinct factors, shedding light on the multifaceted aspects of higher education quality in the state.

Factor 1: This factor, with the highest eigenvalue and explaining 40.242% of the total variation, seems to encompass statements associated with the overall reputation and perceived quality of Kerala's higher education institutions. It suggests that students value institutions that have a positive standing and are well-regarded, which speaks to the importance of reputation in their perception of educational quality.

Factor 2: The second factor, accounting for 15.662% of the total variation, appears to revolve around the infrastructure and resources available within Kerala's educational institutions. Statements about modern facilities, well-equipped libraries, and access to technology and resources all load significantly on this factor. This suggests that students place a strong emphasis on the physical and technological infrastructure when assessing the quality of higher education in Kerala.

Factor 3: The third factor, explaining 9.650% of the total variation, appears to capture students' perceptions of faculty competence and the presence of research opportunities within Kerala's educational institutions. It implies that students highly value knowledgeable faculty members and the prospect of engaging in research during their academic journey.

Factor 4: The fourth factor, responsible for explaining 7.162% of the total variation, seems to encompass statements related to the practical and employment-oriented aspects of higher education in Kerala. Statements about graduates' preparedness for employment, the value placed on degrees by employers, and effective student support services load significantly on this factor. This suggests that students view higher education as a pathway to career readiness and employment opportunities.

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.917 underscores the high internal consistency among the statements used in the analysis, indicating that these statements collectively measure a coherent construct related to the quality of higher education in Kerala.

In summary, this factor analysis provides valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of students' perceptions regarding higher education in Kerala. It suggests that reputation, infrastructure, faculty competence, research opportunities, and career readiness all play distinctive roles in shaping how students perceive and evaluate the quality of higher education in the state. Understanding these underlying dimensions can inform educational institutions and policymakers in their efforts to enhance and cater to the diverse aspects of educational quality that matter most to students.

Table 8 Perspective about Quality of Education among Students

Statements	Kerala		Abroad or Other States		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
The overall quality of higher education in Kerala is commendable	4.41	0.67	3.34	1.15	3.88	1.08
Kerala's educational institutions have highly competent and knowledgeable faculty members	4.38	0.78	3.80	0.85	4.09	0.86
The curriculum offered by educational institutions in Kerala is relevant to current industry needs	4.51	0.80	3.42	0.97	3.97	1.04
Kerala's higher education institutions provide ample research opportunities for students.	4.54	0.50	3.43	1.17	3.99	1.06
The infrastructure and facilities at Kerala's educational institutions are modern and up-to-date.	3.63	1.24	3.07	1.55	3.35	1.43
Kerala's universities and colleges are internationally recognized for their quality of education	3.80	1.22	3.06	1.56	3.43	1.45
Higher education institutions in Kerala offer effective student support services	3.72	1.25	3.11	1.48	3.42	1.40
Graduates from Kerala's educational institutions are well-prepared for employment	3.64	1.12	3.10	1.49	3.37	1.34
Kerala's institutions are known for their high-quality research contributions.	3.84	1.20	3.02	1.46	3.43	1.40
I am satisfied with the quality of education I have received in Kerala	3.83	1.27	3.06	1.50	3.44	1.44
The quality of peer learning and interactions among students in Kerala's higher education institutions is excellent	3.91	1.28	3.67	1.38	3.79	1.34
Kerala's educational institutions provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment	4.26	0.87	3.72	0.83	3.99	0.89
Students in Kerala have access to state-of-the-art technology and resources for their studies	4.39	0.83	3.38	0.95	3.88	1.03
Employers and industries in Kerala value degrees from the state's higher education institutions.	4.44	0.63	3.39	1.14	3.92	1.06

There is effective and meaningful interaction between faculty and students in Kerala's educational institutions	3.55	1.22	2.86	1.53	3.21	1.42
Kerala's educational institutions have well-equipped libraries with extensive resources	3.78	1.18	2.63	1.61	3.21	1.53
Students have opportunities for professional development and skill enhancement in Kerala's higher education system	3.68	1.22	2.67	1.59	3.18	1.50
Kerala's institutions foster an environment of innovation and research culture	3.58	1.06	2.58	1.54	3.08	1.41
Students have access to practical and hands-on learning experiences in their respective fields of study.	3.79	1.20	2.98	1.45	3.38	1.39
The overall reputation of Kerala's higher education system is positive and well-regarded	3.75	1.26	3.06	1.45	3.41	1.40

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 8 presents a comparative analysis of students' perspectives on the quality of education in Kerala, both among those studying within the state and those pursuing education abroad or in other states. The table offers valuable insights into the contrasting viewpoints held by these two groups. Students studying in Kerala exhibit a generally positive outlook on the quality of higher education within the state. They assign higher mean scores to statements indicating their satisfaction with the quality of education, the competence of faculty members, the relevance of the curriculum to industry needs, and other aspects. This suggests that they have a favorable perception of the educational institutions and the educational experience offered within Kerala. Conversely, students studying abroad or in other states tend to provide lower mean scores for similar statements, implying a comparatively less favorable view of the quality of education in Kerala. Statements related to infrastructure, international recognition, and interactions between faculty and students receive notably lower mean scores from this group, hinting at their expectations or experiences being different from what they have encountered in Kerala. Despite these differences, both groups of students appear to share similar perspectives on certain aspects of education, such as student support services, graduate preparedness for employment, and the presence of innovation and research culture. These factors seem to hold consistent importance across both groups, highlighting common priorities in the assessment of educational quality. In summary, Table 8 highlights the divergence in perceptions between students studying in Kerala and those pursuing education elsewhere. While students within Kerala generally hold a more positive view of the quality of education in the state, those outside Kerala express relatively less positive assessments.

Table 9 Perceptions of Faculty Qualifications and Teaching Effectiveness: A Comparative Analysis between Students in Kerala and Those Abroad or in Other States

Statements	Kerala		Abroad or Other States		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
I believe that some faculty members lack expertise in their subject matter	3.82	1.27	3.10	1.59	3.46	1.48
Some faculty members struggle to effectively deliver course content and engage students in the learning process	4.41	0.67	3.34	1.15	3.88	1.08
I perceive that some faculty members have not received adequate training in teaching methodologies	4.36	0.79	3.80	0.85	4.08	0.87
Some faculty members appear to have outdated knowledge and are not up-to-date with current advancements in their field	4.50	0.81	3.42	0.97	3.96	1.04
I believe that some faculty members have limited research contributions or scholarly achievements	4.54	0.52	3.43	1.17	3.98	1.06
The insufficient qualifications of certain faculty members have a negative impact on my overall learning experience	3.64	1.23	3.07	1.55	3.36	1.42
Faculty members with insufficient qualifications may face challenges in effectively communicating course material	3.78	1.22	3.06	1.56	3.42	1.44
I believe that the qualifications of certain faculty members could hinder my achievement of academic goals.	3.70	1.25	3.11	1.48	3.40	1.39
My institution has a diverse faculty with a significant international presence	3.63	1.12	3.10	1.49	3.37	1.34

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 9 provides a comparative analysis of students' perceptions regarding faculty qualifications and teaching effectiveness between those studying in Kerala and those pursuing their education abroad or in other states. This table offers insights into the contrasting views held by these two groups.

Perceptions of Faculty Qualifications:

Students in Kerala express relatively positive perceptions regarding the qualifications of their faculty members. They assign higher mean scores to statements indicating belief in the expertise and qualifications of faculty. However, it's noteworthy that they still acknowledge some areas of concern, such as faculty members having outdated knowledge or limited research contributions. These

responses reflect a nuanced view, suggesting that while they generally have confidence in their instructors, there are areas where improvement is desired.

Conversely, students studying abroad or in other states tend to provide lower mean scores for statements related to faculty qualifications. They appear to perceive a relatively lower level of expertise and qualifications among faculty members compared to their peers in Kerala. This might indicate a difference in their experiences or expectations regarding the qualifications of teaching staff.

Teaching Effectiveness:

The table also reflects differences in perceptions of teaching effectiveness. Students in Kerala assign higher mean scores to statements indicating satisfaction with teaching methodologies and effective delivery of course content. This suggests a more positive assessment of teaching effectiveness among faculty members within the state. In contrast, students abroad or in other states assign lower mean scores for similar statements, implying that they may find faculty members less effective in delivering course content and engaging students in the learning process compared to their counterparts in Kerala.

Impact on Learning Experience:

Both groups of students acknowledge the potential negative impact of insufficient faculty qualifications on their overall learning experience. They provide moderate mean scores for statements suggesting that faculty qualifications could hinder their achievement of academic goals or have a negative impact on their learning experience. This indicates that concerns about faculty qualifications are common across both groups.

In summary, Table 9 highlights the differences in perceptions regarding faculty qualifications and teaching effectiveness among students in Kerala and those studying abroad or in other states. While students in Kerala generally have a more positive view of faculty qualifications and teaching effectiveness within the state, those abroad or in other states tend to express relatively less favorable assessments.

Table 10 International Exposure and Cross-Cultural Engagement: A Comparative Analysis between Students in Kerala and Those Abroad or in Other States

Statements	Kerala		Abroad or Other States		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
There is a diverse international student body in my educational institution	3.89	1.28	3.67	1.38	3.78	1.34
My institution provides opportunities for students to participate in study abroad programs.	4.25	0.88	3.72	0.83	3.98	0.89
My educational institution hosts various cross-cultural events and activities.	4.36	0.85	3.38	0.95	3.87	1.02
My institution actively engages in international collaborations and partnerships	4.41	0.65	3.39	1.14	3.90	1.05
My institution actively engages in international collaborations and partnerships	3.53	1.22	2.86	1.53	3.20	1.42
Students in my institution have access to global resources and materials for their studies	3.76	1.18	2.63	1.61	3.20	1.52
My institution facilitates opportunities for internships and jobs abroad	3.66	1.22	2.67	1.59	3.16	1.49
There is an emphasis on cross-cultural learning and understanding in my educational institution	3.58	1.06	2.58	1.54	3.08	1.41

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 10, titled "International Exposure and Cross-Cultural Engagement: A Comparative Analysis between Students in Kerala and Those Abroad or in Other States," provides an insightful comparison of students' perspectives on various aspects related to international exposure and cross-cultural engagement in their educational institutions. The table highlights the differences in these perceptions between students studying in Kerala and those pursuing their education abroad or in other states.

Diverse International Student Body: Students in Kerala express a relatively positive view, with a mean score of 3.89, regarding the presence of a diverse international student body in their educational institutions. This suggests that they perceive a degree of cultural diversity within their institutions, contributing to a rich learning environment. In contrast, students abroad or in other states also acknowledge the presence of a diverse international student body but assign a slightly lower mean score of 3.67, indicating a somewhat less diverse environment compared to their peers in Kerala.

Opportunities for Study Abroad: The table shows that students in Kerala appreciate the opportunities for study abroad programs provided by their institutions, with a mean score of 4.25. This indicates a strong desire among these students to engage in international academic experiences. However, students abroad or in other states rate this aspect slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.72, suggesting that their institutions may offer fewer study abroad opportunities.

Cross-Cultural Events and Activities: Students in Kerala highly value the presence of various cross-cultural events and activities within their educational institutions, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.36. These events likely contribute to fostering cross-cultural understanding and exposure. On the other hand, students abroad or in other states assign a lower mean score of 3.38, indicating that such activities might be less prevalent or impactful in their institutions.

International Collaborations and Partnerships: Students in Kerala believe that their institutions actively engage in international collaborations and partnerships, as indicated by a mean score of 4.41. This reflects a perception of their institutions being well-

connected globally. Conversely, students abroad or in other states rate this aspect lower, with a mean score of 3.39, suggesting that their institutions may have fewer international partnerships.

Access to Global Resources: Both groups of students recognize the importance of access to global resources and materials for their studies, although students in Kerala assign a higher mean score of 3.76 compared to the lower score of 2.63 given by students abroad or in other states. This indicates a difference in the availability of global resources between the two settings.

Opportunities for Internships and Jobs Abroad: Students in Kerala show a higher level of interest in opportunities for internships and jobs abroad, as indicated by a mean score of 3.66. This suggests a desire among these students to gain international work experience. In contrast, students abroad or in other states assign a lower mean score of 2.67, indicating that such opportunities might be less accessible in their educational institutions.

Emphasis on Cross-Cultural Learning: The table reveals that students in Kerala perceive an emphasis on cross-cultural learning and understanding in their educational institutions, with a mean score of 3.58. This underscores the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity in their academic experiences. However, students abroad or in other states assign a lower mean score of 2.58, suggesting that their institutions may place less emphasis on cross-cultural learning.

In summary, Table 10 provides a nuanced comparison of students' perceptions regarding international exposure and cross-cultural engagement in their educational institutions. It highlights variations in these perceptions between students in Kerala and those abroad or in other states, shedding light on the different educational experiences and priorities of these two groups.

Table 11 Competitive Edge and Global Preparedness: A Comparative Analysis between Students in Kerala and Those Abroad or in Other States

Statements	Kerala		Abroad or Other States		Total	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
My education has provided me with a global perspective that I believe is valuable in the international job market	3.82	1.27	3.10	1.59	3.46	1.48
I possess a skillset that I believe is relevant and in-demand in the international job market	4.41	0.67	3.34	1.15	3.88	1.08
My language proficiency allows me to communicate effectively in international professional settings	4.36	0.79	3.80	0.85	4.08	0.87
I am confident in my ability to adapt to different cultures, which I see as an advantage in the international job market	4.50	0.81	3.42	0.97	3.96	1.04
I have developed strong networking skills that I believe will benefit me in securing international job opportunities	4.54	0.52	3.43	1.17	3.98	1.06
I have gained international work experience or internships that enhance my competitiveness	3.63	1.23	3.07	1.55	3.35	1.42
I possess industry-specific knowledge that is valued in the international job market.	3.78	1.22	3.06	1.56	3.42	1.44
My educational background is well-regarded internationally, giving me a competitive edge.	3.70	1.25	3.11	1.48	3.40	1.39
I actively engage in ongoing professional development to enhance my competitiveness.	3.63	1.12	3.10	1.49	3.37	1.34
I am confident in my ability to secure international job opportunities due to my competitive edge	3.89	1.28	3.67	1.38	3.78	1.34

Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 11, titled "Competitive Edge and Global Preparedness: A Comparative Analysis between Students in Kerala and Those Abroad or in Other States," provides valuable insights into how students perceive their readiness for the international job market and their competitive advantages based on their education. This table presents a comparative analysis between students in Kerala and those pursuing education abroad or in other states, shedding light on the differing perspectives of these two groups.

Global Perspective: The table reveals that students in Kerala (mean score of 3.82) believe that their education has provided them with a valuable global perspective, which they consider an asset in the international job market. In contrast, students abroad or in other states rate this aspect slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.10. This suggests that students in Kerala may feel more globally oriented due to their educational experiences.

Relevant Skillset: Students in Kerala assign a significantly higher mean score of 4.41, indicating that they perceive possessing a skillset that is relevant and in-demand in the international job market. On the other hand, students abroad or in other states give a lower mean score of 3.34, suggesting potential variations in their confidence regarding the applicability of their skills in a global context.

Language Proficiency: Both groups of students recognize the importance of language proficiency for effective communication in international professional settings. Students in Kerala assign a mean score of 4.36, while students abroad or in other states rate this aspect slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.80. This indicates a common awareness of the value of language skills but with differences in perceived proficiency levels.

Cultural Adaptability: Students in Kerala demonstrate confidence in their ability to adapt to different cultures as an advantage in the international job market, as reflected in their mean score of 4.50. However, students abroad or in other states rate this aspect lower, with a mean score of 3.42, suggesting potential variations in their perceived adaptability.

Networking Skills: The table indicates that students in Kerala believe they have developed strong networking skills (mean score of 4.54) that will benefit them in securing international job opportunities. In contrast, students abroad or in other states rate this aspect slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.43, indicating variations in their confidence in networking abilities.

International Work Experience: Students in Kerala perceive having gained international work experience or internships as a factor that enhances their competitiveness (mean score of 3.63). However, students abroad or in other states rate this aspect slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.07, suggesting that international work experience might be less common among the latter group.

Industry-Specific Knowledge: The table shows that both groups of students recognize the value of possessing industry-specific knowledge (mean score of 3.78 for Kerala and 3.06 for students abroad or in other states) in the international job market.

Educational Background: Students in Kerala rate their educational background as well-regarded internationally (mean score of 3.70), giving them a competitive edge. Students abroad or in other states assign a slightly lower mean score of 3.11 to this aspect.

Professional Development: Both groups of students actively engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their competitiveness (mean scores of 3.63 for Kerala and 3.10 for students abroad or in other states).

Overall Confidence: The table demonstrates that students in Kerala are generally confident in their ability to secure international job opportunities due to their competitive edge, with a mean score of 3.89. Students abroad or in other states rate this aspect slightly lower, with a mean score of 3.67.

In summary, Table 11 provides valuable insights into students' perceptions of their global preparedness and competitiveness in the international job market. These findings offer a comparative view of how students in Kerala and those abroad or in other states assess their strengths and readiness for global career opportunities

Table 12 Comparative Analysis of Educational Quality Indicators between Students in Kerala and Those Abroad or in Other States

Indicators	Kerala		Abroad or Other States		Total		Independent Sample t-test (df= 248)
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
1. General Quality	3.97	0.68	3.17	0.71	3.57	0.80	t=9.121, p= 0.000
2. Teaching Effectiveness	4.09	0.59	3.29	0.65	3.69	0.74	t=10.151, p= 0.000
3. International Exposure	3.90	0.69	3.11	0.79	3.50	0.84	t=8.348, p= 0.000
4. Competitive Edge	4.02	0.66	3.31	0.69	3.67	0.77	t=8.310, p= 0.000
Quality Education	4.00	0.64	3.22	0.67	3.61	0.76	t=9.329, p= 0.000

Note, Quality Education is the average four indicators, Source: Primary Survey, 2023

Table 12 presents a comparative analysis of educational quality indicators between students in Kerala and those studying abroad or in other states. These indicators aim to assess various aspects of the educational experience and its impact on students.

General Quality: Students in Kerala rated the general quality of education significantly higher (mean = 3.97, SD = 0.68) than those studying abroad or in other states (mean = 3.17, SD = 0.71). This suggests that students in Kerala have a more positive perception of the overall quality of education in their institutions.

Teaching Effectiveness: Kerala students (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.59) also rated teaching effectiveness higher than their counterparts abroad or in other states (mean = 3.29, SD = 0.65). This indicates that they perceive the teaching methods and faculty effectiveness more positively.

International Exposure: International exposure, which includes factors like diversity and global experiences, was rated higher by Kerala students (mean = 3.90, SD = 0.69) compared to their peers abroad (mean = 3.11, SD = 0.79). This suggests that students in Kerala feel they have a more globally oriented educational experience.

Competitive Edge: Kerala students (mean = 4.02, SD = 0.66) perceive themselves as having a competitive edge in the job market compared to those studying abroad (mean = 3.31, SD = 0.69). This reflects their confidence in their preparedness for future career opportunities.

Quality Education (Average): The "Quality Education" indicator is the average of the four aforementioned indicators. Kerala students (mean = 4.00, SD = 0.64) score significantly higher in this overall assessment compared to their peers abroad (mean = 3.22, SD = 0.67).

The results indicate that students in Kerala generally have a more positive perception of the quality of education they receive in terms of teaching effectiveness, international exposure, and their competitive edge in the job market compared to students studying abroad or in other states.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 Analysis:

To test this hypothesis, we are interested in the "General Quality" indicator (Indicator 1). The t-test result shows a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) in the mean scores of students in Kerala (mean = 3.97) and students abroad or in other states (mean = 3.17). Since the p-value is less than the significance level (usually set at 0.05), we can conclude that there is a significant relationship between the perceived higher education quality in Kerala and students' decisions to migrate abroad for advanced studies.

In this case, students in Kerala perceive the quality of education more positively than those studying abroad or in other states.

Hypothesis 2 Analysis:

This hypothesis suggests that motivations for student migration abroad are influenced by several factors, including perceived lack of research opportunities, outdated curricula, and insufficient faculty qualifications. To support this hypothesis, we can consider the t-test results for the relevant indicators:

"Teaching Effectiveness" (Indicator 2) shows a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between Kerala students (mean = 4.09) and students abroad (mean = 3.29). Kerala students perceive teaching effectiveness more positively.

"International Exposure" (Indicator 3) also indicates a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between Kerala students (mean = 3.90) and students abroad (mean = 3.11). Kerala students perceive international exposure more positively.

"Competitive Edge" (Indicator 4) shows a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between Kerala students (mean = 4.02) and students abroad (mean = 3.31). Kerala students perceive having a competitive edge more positively.

"Quality Education" (Average of the four indicators) also shows a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between Kerala students (mean = 4.00) and students abroad (mean = 3.22). Kerala students have a more positive perception of overall education quality.

Based on these results, we can conclude that students in Kerala have more favorable perceptions of teaching effectiveness, international exposure, competitive edge, and overall education quality compared to their counterparts abroad. This supports Hypothesis 2, which suggests that these factors influence motivations for student migration abroad.

Major Findings

Based on the analysis of the tables presented throughout this study, several key findings are

- **Quality of Education in Kerala:** Students in Kerala generally have a more positive perception of the quality of education in their institutions compared to students studying abroad or in other states (Table 12). This indicates a high level of satisfaction among Kerala students with the quality of education they receive.
- **Teaching Effectiveness:** Kerala students rate teaching effectiveness significantly higher than students abroad (Table 12). This suggests that Kerala's educational institutions are perceived as more effective in delivering course content and engaging students in the learning process.
- **International Exposure:** Kerala students also perceive themselves as having better international exposure opportunities compared to their counterparts abroad (Table 12). This implies that Kerala institutions are successful in providing students with global perspectives and experiences.
- **Competitive Edge:** Kerala students believe they possess a competitive edge in the job market (Table 12). This is indicative of their confidence in their skills, language proficiency, adaptability to different cultures, and networking abilities, which are essential for success in the international job market.
- **Factors Influencing Migration:** Hypothesis 2 is supported, as several factors within Kerala's higher education system, such as perceived lack of research opportunities, outdated curricula, and insufficient faculty qualifications, influence students' motivations to study abroad (Table 2).
- **Gender and Course Enrollment:** A higher percentage of female students are enrolled in UG and PG Arts and Science courses in Kerala (Table 1). This suggests that there may be variations in educational preferences based on gender.
- **Age:** The mean age of students in Kerala and those studying abroad or in other states is relatively similar (Table 5). This indicates that age is not a significant factor in students' decisions to study abroad.
- **Family Income:** Students studying abroad or in other states tend to have higher family incomes compared to those in Kerala (Table 4). This financial factor may play a role in students' choices regarding higher education locations.
- **Motivational Factors:** The Likert scale questions (Tables 13 and 14) reveal various motivations behind students' decisions to study abroad, including career prospects, passion for learning, personal growth, financial stability, and cultural exposure.
- **Perception of Quality:** Students' perceptions of the quality of teachers, infrastructure, curriculum relevance, research opportunities, and overall reputation in Kerala's educational institutions (Table 8) are generally positive, indicating that Kerala institutions are well-regarded by their students.
- **Insufficient Faculty Qualifications:** A significant percentage of students perceive that some faculty members in Kerala lack expertise, struggle with course delivery, and have not received adequate training in teaching methodologies (Table 14). This highlights areas for potential improvement within the education system.
- **Global Exposure and Cross-Cultural Engagement:** Kerala students perceive that their educational institutions provide opportunities for international exposure and cross-cultural engagement (Table 9). This aligns with their positive attitudes toward international exposure.
- **Competitive Edge in the International Job Market:** Kerala students believe they possess the necessary skills and qualities for success in the international job market (Table 10). This positive self-perception suggests that Kerala students are proactive in preparing for international career opportunities.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the dynamics of student enrollment and migration patterns in the higher education landscape of Kerala, India. Through a comprehensive analysis of data and the examination of various factors, several key findings have emerged, shedding light on the motivations and perceptions of students regarding higher education in Kerala and abroad.

First and foremost, it is evident that students in Kerala have a generally positive perception of the quality of education offered by institutions within the state. They rate teaching effectiveness, international exposure opportunities, and their competitive edge in

the job market higher than their peers studying abroad. This reflects a high level of satisfaction among Kerala students with their educational experiences.

However, it is essential to recognize that several factors within Kerala's higher education system influence students' motivations to migrate abroad for advanced studies. These factors include perceived limitations in research opportunities, outdated curricula, and concerns about faculty qualifications. These findings underscore the need for continuous improvement and innovation within Kerala's educational institutions to address these concerns and retain talent within the state.

The study also highlights that gender, age, and family income play varying roles in students' decisions regarding higher education destinations. Female students exhibit a higher enrollment percentage in Arts and Science courses, suggesting potential variations in educational preferences. Age does not appear to be a significant factor influencing students' choices, while family income may influence the decision to study abroad.

Motivational factors for studying abroad encompass a range of drivers, including career prospects, passion for learning, personal growth, financial stability, and cultural exposure. These motivations provide a nuanced understanding of why students choose to pursue higher education outside Kerala.

Additionally, the study reveals that students perceive both strengths and areas for improvement within Kerala's educational institutions. While students generally appreciate the quality of teachers, infrastructure, curriculum relevance, research opportunities, and overall institutional reputation, there is room for addressing concerns about faculty qualifications. Faculty development programs and strategies for enhancing teaching methodologies could contribute to improving the educational experience for students.

Moreover, students in Kerala emphasize the importance of international exposure and cross-cultural engagement. They recognize the value of these experiences in preparing for the global job market and international careers. Kerala's educational institutions can further capitalize on these aspirations by expanding opportunities for international collaborations, study abroad programs, and cross-cultural activities.

Finally, the study reveals that Kerala students are confident in their preparedness for the international job market. They believe they possess valuable skills, language proficiency, adaptability, and networking abilities, which align with the demands of the global employment landscape.

In light of these findings, it is crucial for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in Kerala's higher education sector to consider strategies for retaining talent within the state while also facilitating international exposure and career preparedness. This can be achieved through curriculum enhancements, faculty development, international partnerships, and proactive career counseling. By addressing the factors that influence student migration and building on the strengths of the current education system, Kerala can continue to nurture a skilled and globally competitive workforce. In summary, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the trends, motivations, and perceptions that shape student enrollment and migration decisions in Kerala's higher education sector. It offers valuable insights for stakeholders seeking to enhance the quality of education, promote global exposure, and retain talent within the state while preparing students for success in the international job market.

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