

**AN EXPOSITORY RESEARCH ON THE PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS THAT
LEAD THEM TO CHOOSE BETWEEN STUDYING IN INDIA AND OVERSEAS FOR THEIR
HIGHER EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the factors that influence the decision-making of Indian high school students and parents while deciding between India and other foreign countries for higher education. The paper focuses on analyzing the research objective that states to investigate the role of cultural and social factors in shaping the perceptions of students and parents towards studying in India and overseas. The next objective is to compare and contrast the quality of higher education in India and overseas and analyze how this impacts the perception of students and parents. Lastly, the research analyses and explores the financial implications of studying in India and overseas and how these factors impact the decision-making process of students and parents. The data is collected and analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods to perform this research in an expository manner.

The result and discussion highlight that cultural and societal factors influence students' and parents' decision-making. Although most parents in India prioritize education, security, and quality of life

for their high school children, some still choose to send them overseas for better opportunities and wider horizons.

The study highlights how the outdated curriculum, low teaching quality, limited research opportunities, and lack of job opportunities are issues that continue to bother students and parents when planning to study in India. Stereotypes about the quality of education have also been influenced by media coverage of Indian institutions or negative life events. On the other hand, foreign institutions are perceived to have better curricula, faculty, resources, and research opportunities.

When it comes to higher education, both studying in India or abroad involves various financial considerations. However, Indian institutions attract students and parents due to their affordable tuition fees, comparatively low cost of living, easy connectivity. The study identifies the multiple factors that Indian students and parents consider while choosing a college, which may serve as a helpful guide for deciding to pursue higher education in India or abroad.

Keywords: cultural factors, social factors, higher education, India, overseas, perceptions

1. INTRODUCTION

The perception of students and parents plays a significant role in determining whether the students choose to pursue their higher education in India or abroad. Several factors influence their decision-making, including the quality of education, availability of resources and research opportunities, affordability, cultural and societal values, and personal goals and aspirations. Students and their families in India are increasingly interested in exploring study abroad and other higher education alternatives outside of the country.

There are several reasons why studying abroad has become popular, such as better job prospects, a desire to explore different cultures, and the aspiration to advance one's education. (Autela & Jain, 2021).

Despite the growing trend of studying abroad, many Indian students and their parents prefer higher education within the country. When deciding whether to go to an educational institute in India or overseas, several factors come into play, including the cost of education, proximity to family and friends, and accessibility of the institution. Given the importance of higher education for individual career prospects and the economic growth of the nation, it is crucial to understand the factors that influence the decision-making process of students and parents in choosing between studying in India or abroad. This study aims to investigate these factors, specifically focusing on how Indian students and their families perceive the feasibility of pursuing higher education opportunities outside of India (Thirunarayanan & Jaikumar, 2021).

The significance and need of this study are to enhance the understanding of the decision-making process of students and parents and to provide insights that can inform policies and initiatives aimed at promoting higher education in India or foreign.

1.1 BACKGROUND

Education is a key investment in one's future, and the decision to pursue higher education is a significant milestone in one's academic journey. Students from all around the globe are looking for higher education possibilities in other countries, contributing to the trend towards a more globalized higher education system (Pandey, 2020). With the increasing globalization and changing job market, students and parents have various options when pursuing higher education, including studying in India or overseas. There is a growing trend among Indian students to consider pursuing higher education opportunities outside the country. Several factors come into play while deciding whether to study in India or overseas. The availability of resources and support systems, the cultural and social context, job options, and scholarship and financial assistance opportunities, all play a role. Students and parents may see these things differently depending on their experiences, values, and perspectives (Anitha & John, 2020). Students may be more interested in a certain career route

or receiving exposure to foreign cultures, while parents may be more worried about the safety and security of their children.

Policymakers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders in defining the higher education landscape could benefit from a better understanding of students' and parents' perspectives and decision-making processes. Several factors, including personal goals, career aspirations, financial considerations, and cultural factors, often influence the decision to study in India or overseas. However, one of the significant factors that influence this decision is the perception of students and parents regarding the quality of education, cultural diversity, employment opportunities, and cost of education. This research aims to explore the perception of students and parents that leads them to choose between studying in India and overseas. (Gupta & Rai, 2020).

2. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Autela and Jain (2021) analyzed the factors influencing Indian students' college selection process. The research revealed that students primarily relied on peer reviews to determine a school's educational quality. Other significant factors that influenced students' decisions included career prospects, cultural familiarity, and availability of financial assistance. However, the study also highlighted that students faced difficulties accessing information regarding higher education opportunities and expenses in foreign countries, creating significant challenges for them. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and institutions to promote higher education in India and improve international student recruitment strategies.

Thirunarayanan and Jaikumar (2021) surveyed to investigate the factors influencing Indian students' decision to study overseas. The study revealed that students were motivated to study abroad due to limited educational and employment opportunities in India. Attractive pull factors for studying overseas included the quality of education, better employment prospects, cultural experience, and personal growth. However, students who studied abroad faced several challenges, including

language barriers, lack of family support, and financial constraints. The research highlights the need to analyze the push and pull factors that impact Indian students' decision to study abroad. The findings could benefit policymakers, educators, and institutions to recruit and retain competitive international students from India. These statistics provide insights into why an increasing number of Indian students are choosing to study abroad.

Anitha and John (2020) conducted a survey to investigate how Indian students make college selections. The research revealed that students prioritized academic quality, scholarships, and the reputation of foreign universities when selecting an institution. Other significant factors influencing students' decisions included career prospects, language and culture, and personal growth. The study emphasizes the need to understand the driving forces behind Indian students' decision to study abroad. The findings could be valuable for policymakers, educators, and institutions in India to improve higher education accessibility and attract international students to the country. The report suggests that providing meritorious students with a top-tier education and financial assistance could be an effective strategy to retain them in the nation. This research sheds light on the decision-making process of Indian college applicants.

Gupta and Rai (2020) studied Indian students' motives and university choices overseas. The survey indicated that Indian students contemplating studying abroad prioritized scholarships, financial help, and the institution's reputation and rating. According to the survey, students valued how near their school was to home, the kind of resources they had, and how acquainted they were with the culture. The research emphasizes the necessity of knowing Indian international students' college selection determinants. The findings may motivate Indian officials, educators, and organizations to develop measures to recruit and retain outstanding youngsters. The study reveals that schools retain overseas students by providing high-quality education and student assistance. In conclusion, the research sheds light on Indian-origin overseas students' educational decisions.

Kaur and Mehta (2020) studied Indian students' views on studying abroad. Data shows that Indian students want to study abroad to further their career. Students might push themselves academically, learn new skills, and experience something new by studying abroad. Indian students studying abroad often face linguistic, finance, cultural, and isolation issues. Governments, educators, and institutions should do more to make Indian students studying abroad more comfortable, the authors said. The assessment shows how Indian students see the pros and cons of studying abroad. The results may help Indian politicians, educators, and institutions improve higher education and recruit more international students.

2.1 RESEARCH GAP

Despite a few researches addressing cultural adaptation, academic and social integration, and career prospects for Indian students studying abroad, a literature gap exists in this area. Therefore, further research is required to provide additional data and a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by Indian students while studying overseas. This would assist schools and governments in developing effective initiatives to support these students, both academically and personally, and ensure they have the necessary resources to succeed.

2.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

- I. How do the cultural and social factors impact the perceptions of students and parents towards studying in India and overseas?
- II. How does the quality of higher education in India and overseas impact the perception of students and parents?
- III. What are the financial implications of studying in India and overseas, and how do these factors impact the decision-making process of students and parents?

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this research lies in its ability to shed light on the reasons why Indian students choose to pursue higher education either abroad or in India. The study is valuable as it examines the factors that influence their decision-making process and includes insights from both students and parents about the relative merits of domestic and international institutions concerning educational quality, job opportunities, and cultural immersion. Policymakers and educational institutions can utilize this research to understand student preferences better and cater to their needs. The findings can also help to elucidate how cultural and societal factors shape Indian students' perspectives and decisions, facilitating greater understanding and dialogue between India and foreign nations. Understanding the drivers of students' college choices can enable the development of policies and programs that enhance their experiences before, during, and after enrollment.

2.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- I. To investigate the role of cultural and social factors in shaping the perceptions of students and parents towards studying in India and overseas.
- II. To compare and contrast the quality of higher education in India and overseas and analyze how this impacts the perception of students and parents.
- III. To explore the financial implications of studying in India and overseas and how these factors impact the decision-making process of students and parents.

2.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study will assess how faculty, curriculum, research possibilities, and teaching methods impact how students and their families view domestic and overseas educational institutions. It discusses how job availability, pay expectations, and brand recognition affect how students and parents perceive domestic vs. international education. While examining the financial feasibility of domestic and foreign schools, consider tuition, scholarships, living costs, possible return on investment, and elements that affect students' and parents' cultural experiences.

The research analyzes students' and parents' perceptions of studying in India or abroad. The paper is limited to sample size of 50 individuals who are Indian students.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This part of the paper outlines the methodology employed in examining the factors that impact the decision-making of Indian high school students contemplating studying overseas. It delves into the data collection methods and strategies utilized in greater detail. These methods have been crucial in identifying the key factors influencing students' and parents' decisions regarding pursuing higher education in India. The chapter discusses various research procedures and sampling processes, emphasizing the study's approach and reliability.

3.1 RESEARCH METHOD & DESIGN

Conducting of primary research involving 50 participants has provided insights into the factors that influence the decisions of Indian students and parents when selecting a higher education program. This research has involved surveys or face-to-face interviews to gather information on the academic status, course availability, educational quality, infrastructure, and cost of living in various locations, depending on the study's objectives. Participants from diverse educational, economic, and cultural backgrounds are included in the sample to ensure diversity. Statistical methods have been employed to determine if there are significant differences in group perspectives. This study has aided policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders in understanding the decision-making process of students and their families regarding higher education.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

In this paper the research approach of Mixed-method examines students' and parents' opinions on higher education in India or overseas. This method combined qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to understand the research problem completely. The investigation is useful to academic, policy, and report sources via a literature study. This assists in developing a 50-person

sample survey and interview guide. The survey captures quantitative and qualitative data using closed and open-ended questions, while the interview guide can encourage in-depth discussions and study of research topic issues. Content, topic, and descriptive statistics show data patterns, trends, and links. Tables, charts, and narrative summaries help make conclusions and propose research topics. Inductive and deductive approaches are used to examine the data collected. Secondary data evaluate inductive aims. Secondary data trends track novel study designs, techniques, and other research procedures.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

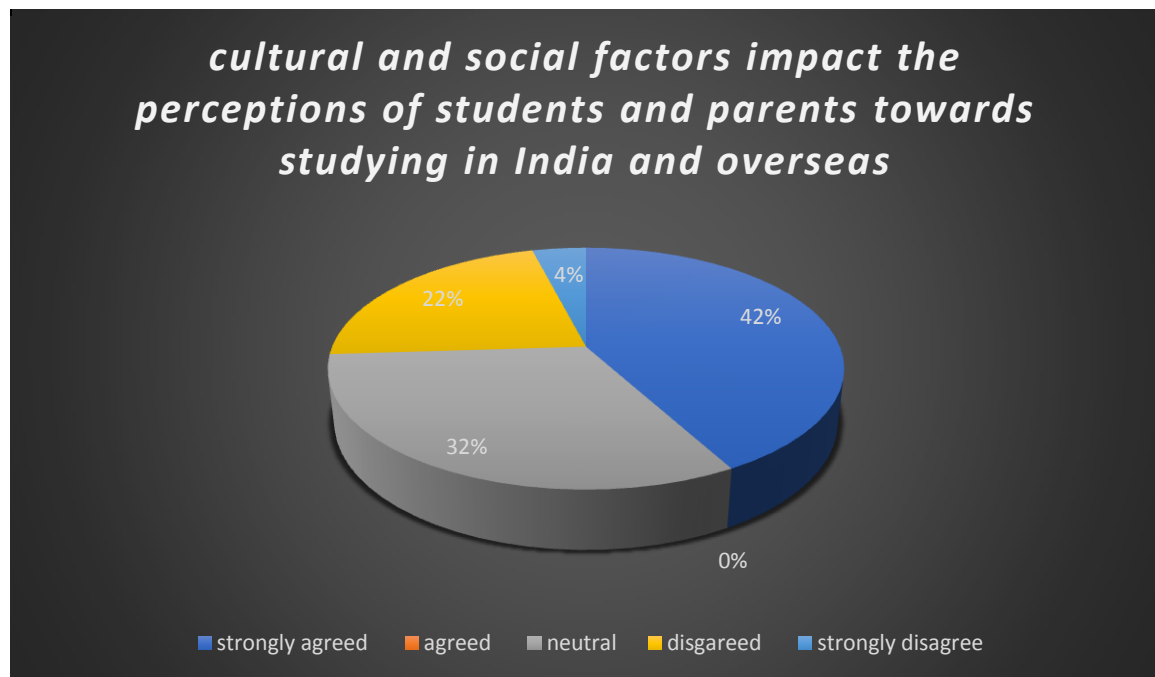
I. How do the cultural and social factors impact the perceptions of students and parents towards studying in India and overseas?

Cultural and social factors can significantly impact the perceptions of Indian students and parents regarding studying in India or overseas. For instance, the cultural perception that higher education institutions in certain countries have better academic quality or offer more opportunities for career advancement may influence a student's decision to study abroad. Similarly, the social perception that studying abroad will enhance one's status or prestige may also be a factor. On the other hand, the preference for staying close to family and community, cultural familiarity, and cost considerations may encourage students to choose higher education institutions in India. Other cultural and social factors, such as language barriers, racism, and discrimination, can also shape students' and parents' perceptions and decisions about studying abroad or in India.

India's culture and society may influence pupils' and parents' expectations (Tiwari & Sharma, 2018). Language, cultures, traditions, and beliefs may affect how overseas students and their families see India's educational and social climate and others. Some students and parents pick a state or country where English is widely spoken and used in the classroom, while others want a state or country with a similar culture and traditions (Kaur & Mehta, 2020). Safety, security, and

quality of life may impact how Indians and others see education. Some students and parents prefer studying and living abroad, while others think studying and living in India gives more value and career advancement. Friends, family, and personal preferences may influence someone's decision to study in India or elsewhere. Cultural and social variables may affect how students and their families see educational prospects in India and abroad (Altbach, 2019).

Examining genuine circumstances might help us understand how cultural and socioeconomic issues affect students' and parents' views of higher education in India and elsewhere. Study abroad programs in native-language nations may be more appealing to students and their families. Students from non-English-speaking nations may find higher education in India easier. English-speaking students may enjoy studying abroad. Culture influences higher education in India and worldwide. India's religious and cultural commonalities may make traditionalist students and their families feel at home. Some kids and parents may prefer foreign schools' more practical instruction, while others prefer India's more conventional approach. Safety and security may affect learning perspectives in India and abroad. Due to better infrastructure and security, some students and their families may feel safer in other nations. Even in India, personal choices, upbringings, and life situations affect how students and their families see studying abroad (Bhowmik & Joshi, 2020). Understanding these elements may help create educational policies and programs that satisfy students and parents.



The graph, as mentioned earlier, shows that from the 50 participants, based on the responses provided, most respondents are either neutral or disagree that religious and cultural differences strongly influence high school students when selecting an overseas destination for their future studies. Only a minority of respondents strongly agree with this statement.

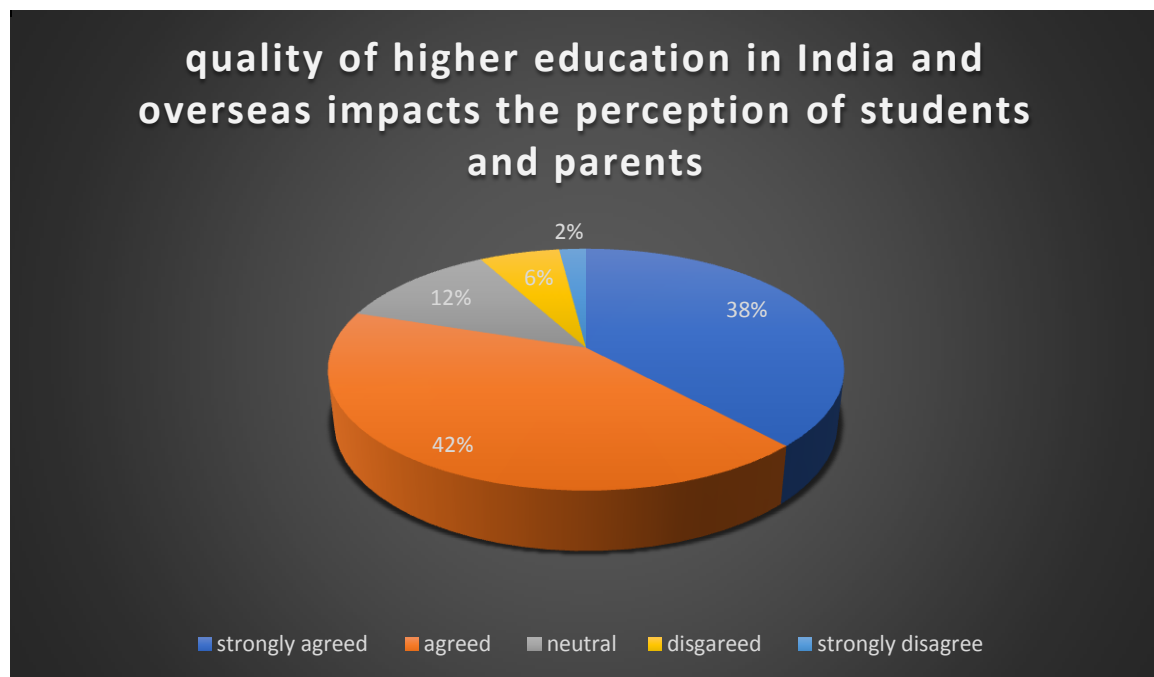
II. How do the quality of higher education in India and overseas impact the perception of students and parents?

The perceived quality of higher education in India or overseas substantially influences the advantages and negatives that students and parents weigh when deciding whether to pursue higher education in India or elsewhere (Chakraborty, 2019). The quality of a university is often judged by its academic standing, the quality of its professors, the quantity and quality of its research, the state of its physical facilities, and the achievements of its student body.

For example, in India, the quality of higher education may be seen as subpar by certain students and parents due to factors including an outmoded curriculum, inadequate facilities, a dearth of research

opportunities, and inadequate funding. These generalizations may have been influenced by either unfavorable media portrayals of India or personal experiences with Indian institutions.

The prestige of international universities, the caliber of their faculty, the sophistication of their facilities, and the breadth of their research opportunities all provide an air of superiority to their programs (Das & Chakraborty, 2018). However, the expensive tuition, living expenses, and visa restrictions may discourage students and their families from considering an international education.



This table shows the findings of a survey or research that asked participants about their perspectives and the factors that impact their choice to study outside India. 19 of 50 respondents strongly agreed, and 21 agreed that such attitudes and reasons exist. Six participants answered "neutrally," suggesting they had no strong view. Just three respondents disagreed, showing that most thought certain students and their families should study abroad instead of in India. One responder strongly disagreed, but just one. According to the distribution of responses, "there are circumstances that

motivate students and their parents to seek education abroad rather than Indian schooling for future studies" is supported by a substantial majority of the sample.

So, students' and families' impressions of higher education in India and overseas are highly influenced by their experiences. India's higher education system is struggling due to population growth. Several Indian schools lack infrastructure, personnel, research facilities, and opportunity (Gupta & Bhowmik, 2018). Indian students and parents believe their institutions and colleges cannot compete with the world's finest. So, many Indian youngsters pursue further education abroad.

A select set of foreign institutions is known for its creative curriculum, great teachers, and state-of-the-art scientific investigation facilities. Many students and parents feel that attending one of these institutions would boost their chances of finding a solid career after graduation. Foreign institutions provide high-quality education, which helps Indian students enter the global workforce.

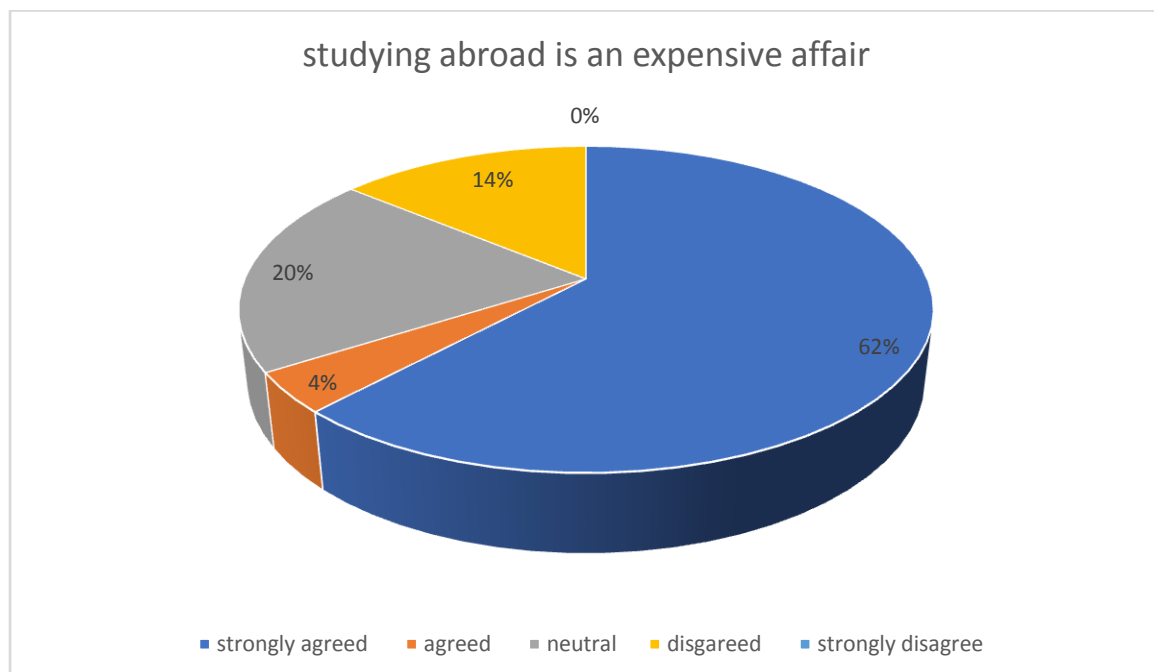
Hence, college rankings take into account student and family input. Positive views of higher education may motivate students to seek the greatest employment prospects, while negative views may dissuade them (Khan & Khalid, 2019).

III. What are the financial implications of studying in India and overseas, and how do these factors impact the decision-making process of students and parents?

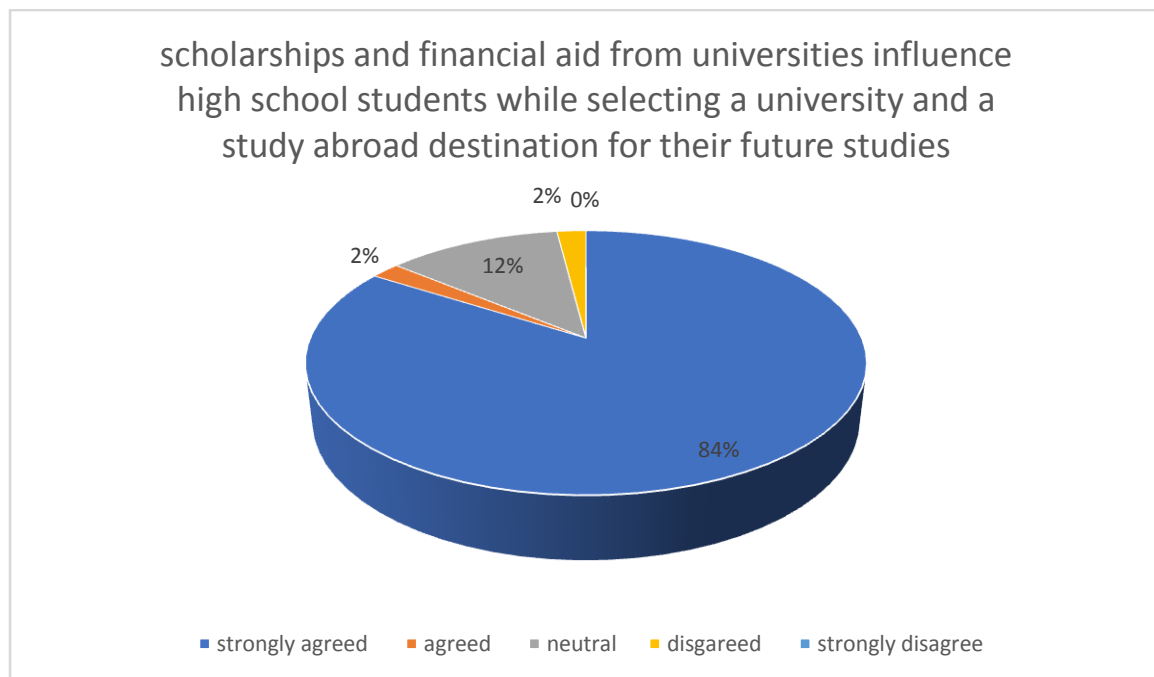
Although studying in India has many advantages, it is not without its negatives. For example, it may be difficult for international students to find work in India when they graduate, and their pay may be lower than in other countries. Although English is the language of choice in the academic world, native tongues are commonly spoken. Some students may require extra help in the form of individual tutoring or language classes in order to overcome the language barrier. The entire cost of higher education in India might be higher in regions with less developed infrastructure, such as housing and transportation (Kular, 2019).

Quite the opposite: Whether a student chooses a public or private institution, as well as the depth and breadth of their academic pursuits, may significantly impact the final price tag (undergraduate vs. graduate). The roughly \$28 billion that Indian students spend yearly on higher education outside India accounts for around 1% of India's GDP. The overall cost of studying abroad is affected by several variables, such as the location, kind of school, and field of study.

Foreign institutions may charge substantially more than Indian ones (Li, 2018). Overseas students may spend more on schooling than in India. International students may expect to spend much more on rent, food, and transportation than in India. Student visa applications may need financial verification. Exchange rate swings may affect your study abroad budget. Students should consider the currency rate while choosing a study abroad destination. Numerous colleges provide foreign student scholarships and financial help. Even though the competition is fierce, students should prepare. Many international students take part-time jobs, but this is not always enough. Several nations limit their employment. You may have to repay foreign college loans (Lopes, 2020). Loan rates and repayment methods vary by lender and country.

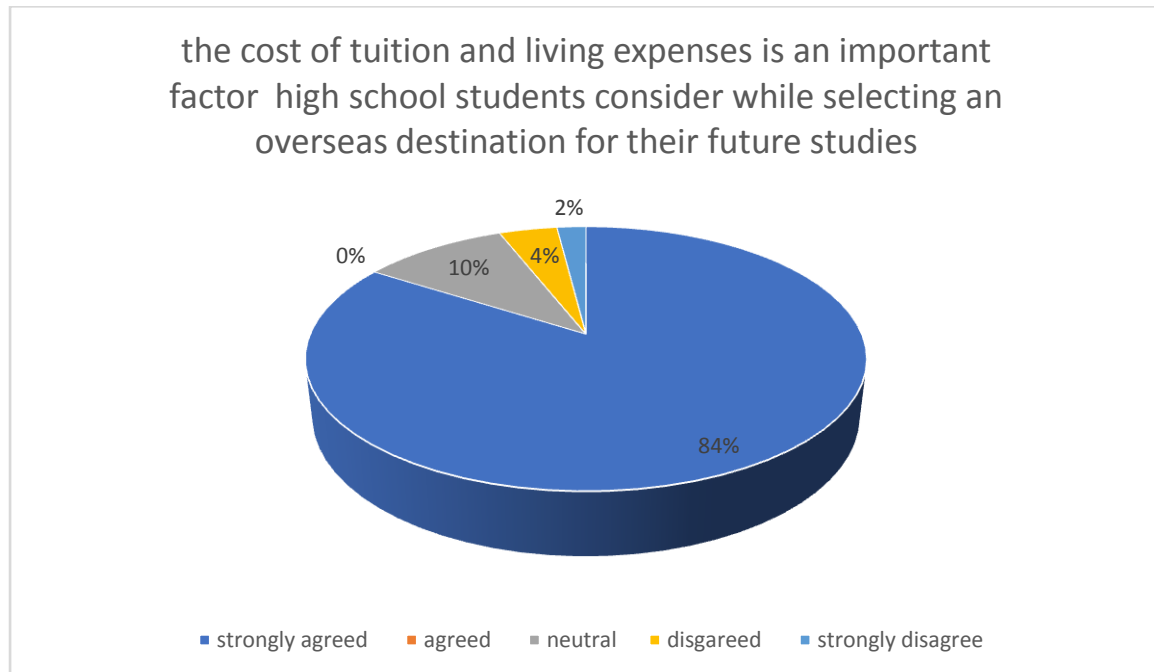


The above graph shows that "Studying abroad is a costly affair and middle-class or poor students cannot afford it" was highly accepted by most respondents, while a few disagreed or were indifferent. The significant percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with the statement may indicate that studying abroad is expensive and may deter middle-class and low-income students from doing so (Mekala & Sharma, 2020). Some colleges demand hefty tuition rates, and many nations have high living costs, in addition to travel, visas, and other costs. Scholarships, fellowships, and financial assistance programs may help students lower study abroad expenses, which may explain the low number of disagreeers and neutrals. International students may get discounted tuition or other benefits from specific colleges and nations, making studying abroad more affordable.

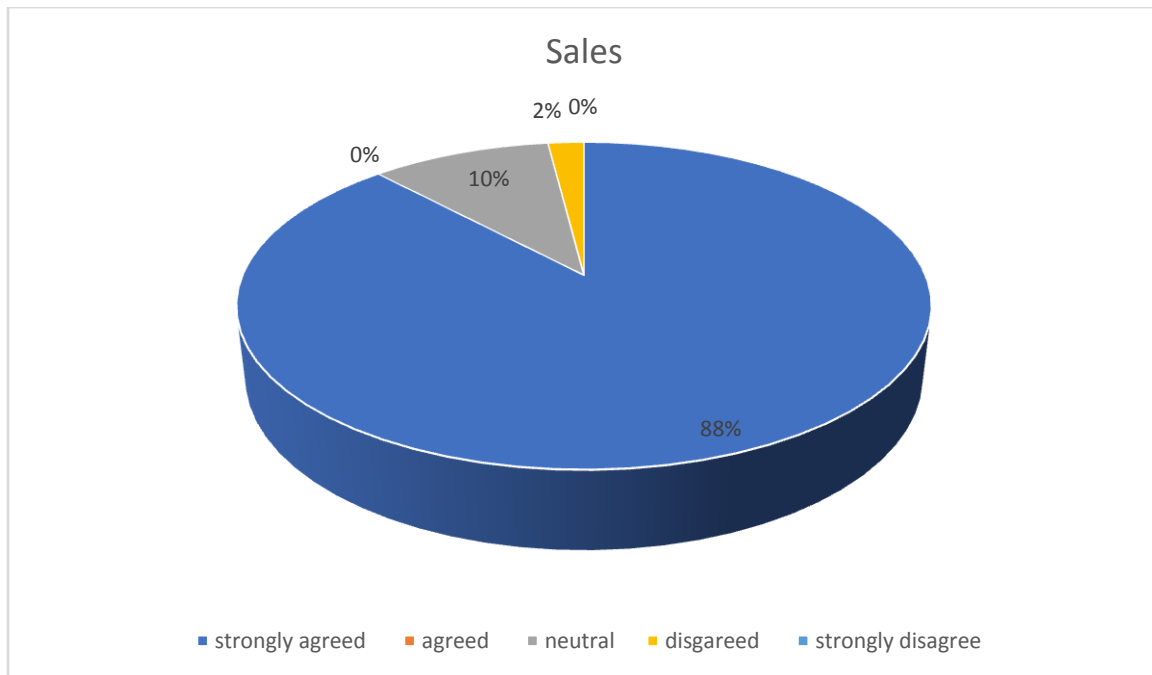


As per the pie chart above, Respondents said that scholarships and financial aid influence high school students university and study abroad choices (Mehra, Kaur, & Grover, 2019). The significant percentage of students who strongly agreed shows the significance of financial aid and scholarships in high school students' college and study abroad choices. Students will choose institutions and study abroad programs that provide financial help if they can. Scholarships may motivate students to apply to specific colleges and study abroad programs. Students may prioritize institutions and

programs that provide significant financial help. Scholarships and other financial aid may influence students' choices. Students may pick schools with larger scholarships. Several colleges provide financial help to international students, which may attract them (Mukherjee, 2021).



Although most respondents strongly agreed with the statement, high school students may consider tuition and living costs while choosing a study abroad program. Due to tuition, housing, food, and transportation, studying abroad may strain student and family finances. Because of budget constraints, high schoolers may pick cheaper abroad destinations. Before choosing, people should calculate how much they will need for lodging, transportation, and food. The currency rate may also affect their budget. Tuition may also matter. Due to exorbitant tuition, certain institutions may exclude international students. Budget high schoolers may choose institutions with lesser tuition or grants.



Most responders (as shown by the above pie chart) agree with the assertion. The high percentage of respondents who strongly agreed on shows that family financial assistance or status influences high school kids' college decisions. Student education relies on family finances. Financial conditions may limit parents' education investments. Parents may fund high school students' college educations. Financially stable parents may help their children afford additional educational possibilities. Low-income students may have to attend a less prestigious institution or seek financial help elsewhere. Families may consider financial assistance while choosing a college (Nabi & Ahmed, 2020). When choosing, families should consider education, living, and other costs. Depending on their finances, parents may be able to send their children to college without loans.

5. RESULTS

The data analysis suggests that cultural and social factors can influence the perceptions of students and parents toward studying in India or overseas. Some families may prefer a country with similar cultural norms, while others may prioritize using English in the education system. Education is highly valued in India and many other cultures due to its perceived safety benefits and improved quality of life. However, some students and parents may favor studying abroad for personal reasons

such as experiencing different cultures, making international connections, or pursuing specific career paths. Family, friends, and extracurricular activities can also influence the decision to study in India or overseas. The research also highlights that some Indian students and parents may perceive higher education in India as inferior due to outdated curriculums, inadequate facilities, limited research opportunities, and funding. Negative media portrayal of Indian institutions and personal experiences may have contributed to these perceptions.

In contrast, international institutions are often perceived as having better curriculums, faculty, resources, and research opportunities. However, high tuition fees, living expenses, and visa restrictions may deter some students and their families from studying abroad. The financial benefits of studying in India or overseas are not straightforward, as there are many factors to consider. While India's lower tuition fees attract many international students, other costs, such as accommodation, food, and transportation, may still be relatively low in India due to the country's lower cost of living.

6. CONCLUSION

Many factors, such as personal preferences, financial status, future aspirations, and upbringing, influence the decision to pursue higher education. Indian students often consider studying abroad to broaden their horizons and enhance their career prospects. However, this can be a challenging prospect for many families. Recent research has focused on identifying the factors that motivate Indian students and their parents to choose between studying in India or overseas. These factors include education quality, career opportunities, cultural familiarity, financial constraints, and individual preferences. Such studies have provided insights into the priorities of Indian students and families, thereby enabling educational institutions to better cater to their needs. Moreover, they have brought attention to the cultural and socioeconomic factors influencing these decisions and fostered cross-cultural communication between India and other countries.

6.1 FUTURE SCOPE

As previously mentioned, longitudinal research is needed to explore how the perspectives of students and parents change over time and how educational policies and economic conditions affect decision-making. It is also recommended that future studies focus on specific regions or sectors to understand how language, social norms, and business practices influence the worldview and choices of students and families. Additionally, future research should investigate the experiences of Indian students who have studied abroad and how effectively they can apply what they have learned upon their return home.

6.2 SUGGESTIONS

- The impact of COVID-19 on the decision-making process of students and their families regarding higher education in India and globally is worth investigating. Comparing pre- and post-pandemic data could reveal changes in student and parent preferences for studying abroad.
- Narrowing down research to a particular industry, such as technology or healthcare, may provide insights into how industry-related factors influence students' and parents' decision-making. This could help policymakers and educators better understand industry-specific issues that impact students and their families.
- Exploring social media and online forums may help uncover the information prospective students and their families seek to make informed decisions about studying in India or overseas. This approach may also reveal hidden concerns or issues that influence decision-making.

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