

A STUDY ON STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY HEI'S (HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS) IN KERALA STATE FOR BRANDING THEIR INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the various tactics utilised by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Kerala, India, to proficiently promote their establishments. The importance of institutional branding in the competitive educational industry is highlighted, as it directly affects student enrolment, staff recruitment, and the institution's general credibility. The study conducts a comprehensive assessment of the branding strategies employed by higher education institutions, utilising various secondary sources such as academic publications, institutional reports, and marketing case studies.

Identified key tactics encompass the use of online channels, strategic alliances, alumni involvement, and campaigns to reach the community. Digital media, including social media, websites, and online advertising, serves as an essential instrument for engaging potential students and stakeholders. Collaborations with industry and global institutions augment legitimacy and offer distinctive educational endeavours, ultimately reinforcing brand image. Alumni networks foster pride and connection, while community outreach programs establish universities as socially responsible and vital to regional growth.

Moreover, the document emphasises the significance of academic achievement, infrastructural enhancement, and distinctive program offers as essential components of effective branding. Higher Education Institutions that prioritise advanced research, sophisticated infrastructure, and creative curriculum tend to attract more enrolment and cultivate a favourable public image.

Barriers including budgetary limitations, rivalry from existing institutions, and the necessity for ongoing innovation are also addressed. The article concluded with suggestions for higher education institutions in Kerala to implement an integrated and flexible branding strategy that corresponds with changing educational patterns and commercial requirements. This paper offers an in-depth analysis of branding dynamics in higher education, providing essential insights for administrators and policymakers seeking to improve the recognition and popularity of their institutions.

Keywords: Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Branding Strategies, Kerala, Digital Media, Strategic Partnerships, Alumni Engagement, Community Outreach, Academic Excellence, Infrastructure Development, Innovative Curricula, Institutional Reputation, Student Enrollment, Faculty Recruitment, Educational Sector Competition and Marketing in Education.

Introduction

In a more competitive global education market, branding has become an essential tactic for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to gain students, staff, and financial support. Branding in higher education promotes institutional exposure and reputation while differentiating it from

competitors by emphasising distinctive ideals, strengths, and services. In Kerala, a state distinguished by its elevated literacy rate and strong focus on education, higher education institutions are increasingly implementing creative advertising strategies to sustain their competitive edge and attract a varied clientele.

This research article seeks to examine the many tactics utilised by higher education institutions in Kerala to establish and maintain their brand identity. The research examines the diverse strategies that universities implement, including digital marketing, social media involvement, strategic collaborations, and alumni connections. The research also analyses the alignment of these tactics with the cultural, social, and educational context of Kerala, offering a thorough comprehension of their efficacy and obstacles.

This paper analyses the branding strategies of several higher education institutions in Kerala to find best practices and provide ideas on how such organisations might utilise their distinctive characteristics to improve their brand's reputation. This study offers a varied viewpoint on the branding dynamics in Kerala's higher education sector using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies, including case studies, surveys, and interviews with key players.

This research enhances the wider conversation on higher education branding by emphasising the unique context of Kerala, providing significant insights for higher education institutions worldwide. The findings highlight the significance of strategic branding in attaining institutional objectives and emphasise the necessity for ongoing innovation in response to changing curricular developments and commercial requirements.

Background of the study

In the fast-changing realm of higher education, branding has become an essential strategic instrument for universities globally. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are progressively acknowledging the need of establishing a unique brand identity to recruit and retain students, obtain financing, and improve their overall image. This is especially relevant in areas such as Kerala, India, where an increase in higher education institutions has heightened competitiveness.

The education industry in Kerala is distinguished by its elevated literacy rates and a substantial number of reputable higher education institutions. These institutions encompass public universities, private colleges, and specialised research centres, all competing for recognition in a saturated marketplace. The rivalry transcends academic programs to embrace the entire institutional brand, encompassing views of quality, innovation, and social effect.

Branding in higher education involves several techniques, such as digital marketing, alumni involvement, industrial alliances, and the development of distinctive academic programs. These techniques seek to distinguish schools in a way that appeals to prospective students, parents, and other stakeholders. The efficacy of these tactics can profoundly impact an institution's capacity to attain its objectives, ranging from enrolment goals to research financing and social engagement.

The branding difficulty in Kerala is exacerbated by its heterogeneous demographic and socio-economic landscape. Institutions must manage a multifaceted set of requirements from students and parents who are becoming more discerning and internationally conscious. Furthermore, the emergence of digital technology and social media has revolutionised conventional marketing frameworks, requiring novel and flexible branding methods.

Notwithstanding the significance of branding, there exists a paucity of empirical study explicitly examining the tactics utilised by higher education institutions in Kerala. Comprehending these tactics is crucial for several reasons. Initially, it offers insights on how institutions might successfully distinguish themselves in a competitive marketplace. Secondly, it facilitates the identification of exemplary methods that may be replicated or modified by other institutions. Ultimately, it provides a framework for assessing the influence of branding

activities on diverse performance criteria, such as student enrolment, academic reputation, and financial stability.

This study seeks to address this research gap by thoroughly analysing the branding techniques employed by higher education institutions in Kerala. It aims to deliver an in-depth analysis of the existing branding scenario and furnish actionable advice for institutions aiming to improve their brand visibility. The results of this study will enhance the academic discussion on higher education branding and provide a significant resource for policymakers, educators, and administrators aiming to improve their institutions' standing in Kerala's competitive educational landscape.

Justification

The higher education landscape in Kerala is vibrant and diverse, with numerous Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) striving for excellence amidst stiff competition. In this context, the branding of these institutions becomes paramount, not only for attracting students but also for establishing their unique identity and reputation. This research paper aims to delve into the strategies adopted by HEIs in Kerala for branding themselves, thereby contributing to the academic discourse on institutional branding in the region.

1. **Relevance and Importance:** The branding of HEIs is critical in today's competitive educational environment. A strong brand not only attracts prospective students but also influences stakeholders' perceptions, including parents, alumni, funding agencies, and employers. Moreover, in an era of globalization, a well-branded institution can enhance its visibility and credibility on the national and international stage, thereby attracting talent and resources.
2. **Contextual Significance:** Kerala has a distinctive educational landscape characterized by a high literacy rate and a strong emphasis on quality education. However, the proliferation of HEIs has intensified competition, necessitating effective branding strategies to stand out in the crowd. Understanding the specific strategies adopted by institutions in Kerala is crucial for policymakers, administrators, and educators to enhance the overall quality and competitiveness of the state's higher education sector.
3. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite the growing importance of institutional branding, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding the strategies employed by HEIs in Kerala. While there exist studies on branding in higher education globally, the unique socio-cultural context and educational dynamics of Kerala warrant a focused investigation. This research paper seeks to address this gap by providing empirical insights into the branding strategies prevalent among HEIs in the state.
4. **Practical Implications:** The findings of this research have practical implications for HEI administrators, marketers, and policymakers. By identifying effective branding strategies and best practices, institutions can enhance their competitiveness, attract quality students, secure funding, and forge strategic partnerships. Moreover, insights from this study can inform the development of tailored branding strategies aligned with the socio-cultural ethos and educational priorities of Kerala.
5. **Academic Contribution:** Academically, this research paper contributes to the existing literature on institutional branding in higher education. By exploring the strategies adopted by HEIs in Kerala, it enriches our understanding of the contextual factors influencing branding decisions and outcomes. The insights garnered from this study can inform theoretical frameworks and models of institutional branding, thereby advancing scholarly discourse in the field.
6. **Ethical Considerations:** Ensuring zero plagiarism is paramount in academic research to maintain integrity and uphold scholarly standards. This research paper adheres to ethical guidelines by citing sources appropriately, acknowledging contributions from

other scholars, and presenting original insights and analysis derived from empirical data.

The research paper titled "A Study on Strategies Adopted by HEIs in Kerala State for Branding Their Institutions" addresses a pertinent issue in higher education and fills a significant gap in the literature. By investigating branding strategies specific to Kerala's educational context, this study offers valuable insights for stakeholders and contributes to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in institutional branding. Moreover, its adherence to ethical standards ensures the integrity and credibility of the research findings.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the diverse branding techniques being utilised by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the state of Kerala.
2. To evaluate the efficacy of various branding methods in augmenting the visibility and repute of higher education institutions in Kerala.
3. To investigate the socio-cultural determinants affecting the selection and execution of branding initiatives by higher education institutions in Kerala.
4. To assess the congruence between the branding techniques employed by higher education institutions in Kerala and their institutional missions, values, and aims.
5. To evaluate the perceptions of primary stakeholders, including students, parents, alumni, employers, and funding agencies, about the branded image of higher education institutions in Kerala.

Literature Review

In the current competitive higher education environment, the branding of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has become an essential technique for enrolling students, obtaining financing, and improving their overall image. Although there is a substantial body of literature on branding in higher education worldwide, there is a significant lack of study explicitly addressing the branding techniques employed by higher education institutions in Kerala, India. This literature review seeks to deliver a thorough examination of the current scholarship on institutional branding within higher education, particularly focussing on the context of Kerala.

1. Branding in Higher Education: Branding in higher education involves many efforts designed to influence the perception and identity of an institution among its stakeholders, such as students, professors, alumni, employers, and the wider community (Kapferer, 2012). Institutions aim to distinguish themselves from rivals and create a distinctive brand identity that appeals to their prospective students through strategic communication, marketing activities, and high-quality educational courses (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015).
2. Contextual Factors in Institutional Branding: Branding in higher education involves many efforts designed to influence the perception and identity of an institution among its stakeholders, such as students, professors, alumni, employers, and the wider community (Kapferer, 2012). Institutions aim to distinguish themselves from rivals and create a distinctive brand identity that appeals to their prospective students through strategic communication, marketing activities, and high-quality educational courses (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015).
3. Strategic Branding Initiatives: The branding techniques employed by higher education institutions are shaped by several contextual elements, such as institutional mission and values, regional demographics, cultural norms, socio-economic dynamics, and educational regulations (Van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). Kerala, a state distinguished by its elevated literacy rate and advanced educational policies, presents institutions with distinct difficulties and possibilities in efficiently navigating a competitive educational environment (Government of Kerala, 2020).

4. **Measurement and Evaluation of Branding Effectiveness:** Evaluating the efficacy of branding strategies is essential for higher education institutions to determine their impact and make intelligent choices about budget allocation and future efforts. Factors like brand recognition, perception, loyalty, student enrolment, faculty recruitment, research funding, and alumni contributions are frequently employed to assess the efficacy of branding initiatives (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Kim & Kim, 2005).
5. **Research Gap and Rationale:** Although the literature on institutional branding in higher education is comprehensive, a significant research vacuum persists about the specific branding techniques employed by higher education institutions in Kerala. Due to the distinctive socio-cultural setting and educational dynamics of the state, empirical research centred on Kerala can yield significant insights for both academics and practice. The research idea seeks to enhance academic comprehension of institutional branding and provide practical advice for higher education institutions in Kerala by bridging this gap.

The literature study emphasises the significance of institutional branding in higher education, the contextual elements affecting branding strategies, the strategic efforts utilised by higher education institutions, and the approaches for assessing branding efficacy. This review synthesises current literature and identifies the research vacuum concerning Kerala, establishing a foundation for the proposed study on the branding techniques employed by higher education institutions in the state, thereby paving the way for additional empirical exploration in this domain.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This research study utilises a systematic literature review (SLR) methodology to examine the branding techniques implemented by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Kerala. SLR entails a methodical and exhaustive examination of pertinent material, succeeded by the summary and evaluation of results to extract major conclusions. This technique guarantees a robust and comprehensive procedure, enabling the discovery of essential themes and patterns in institutional branding campaigns.

Data Collection Methods:

The data collecting procedure encompasses several phases:

1. **Literature Search:** A thorough literature search was performed across digital libraries, including PubMed, Google Scholar, ERIC, and pertinent academic publications, utilising predetermined search criteria. The search approach included phrases such as "higher education institutions," "branding strategies," "Kerala," and their associated variants. Furthermore, manual examinations of reference lists and citations from pertinent papers were conducted to discover further sources.
2. **Screening and Selection:** Retrieved articles were evaluated according to established inclusion and exclusion criteria to guarantee both relevancy and calibre. The inclusion criteria comprised research examining branding tactics employed by higher education institutions in Kerala, published in peer-reviewed journals or academic magazines. The exclusion criteria encompassed papers unrelated to higher education branding, research done outside of Kerala, and those devoid of empirical data or qualitative insights.
3. **Data Extraction:** Retrieved articles were evaluated according to established inclusion and exclusion criteria to guarantee both relevancy and calibre. The inclusion criteria comprised research examining branding tactics employed by higher education institutions in Kerala, published in peer-reviewed journals or academic magazines. The exclusion criteria encompassed papers unrelated to higher education branding, research done outside of Kerala, and those devoid of empirical data or qualitative insights.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Research examining branding techniques implemented by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Kerala.
- Articles disseminated in peer-reviewed journals or academic magazines.
- Research offering factual data or qualitative perspectives on institutional branding methodologies.
- Published works accessible in English or accompanied by English translations.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Studies not explicitly associated with higher education branding.
- Investigation carried out outside the geographical confines of Kerala.
- Articles devoid of empirical proof or qualitative analysis about branding techniques.
- Non-peer-reviewed materials include conference abstracts, dissertations, and opinion articles.

Ethical Considerations:

Ethical concerns were essential throughout the study process to guarantee honesty and compliance with academic standards:

1. **Plagiarism:** The research work complies with ethical standards, guaranteeing complete originality by accurately referencing sources and correctly attributing original writers.
2. **Confidentiality:** The confidentiality of data and information obtained from chosen research is preserved to protect the privacy and intellectual property rights of the authors.
3. **Transparency:** The research process is clearly articulated to facilitate examination and replication of the study results by other researchers and stakeholders.
4. **Consent:** Since this study entails the examination of pre-existing literature, direct consent from human subjects was unnecessary. Nonetheless, ethical issues about the use of copyrighted content and appropriate citation methods were rigorously observed.

This review study seeks to deliver a thorough analysis of branding techniques employed by higher education institutions in Kerala through the integration of rigorous research design, systematic data collection methods, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria, and ethical concerns, hence maintaining academic integrity and rigour.

Results and Discussion

1. **Diverse Branding Strategies:** The survey indicated a wide range of branding techniques implemented by HEIs in Kerala to boost their visibility and reputation. These methods embraced several elements, including high-quality education, developing infrastructure, faculty expertise, student successes, industrial alliances, and social responsibility programs. Institutions utilised a mix of conventional and modern marketing strategies, such as print media, websites, social media platforms, and alumni networks, to express their brand identity successfully.
2. **Emphasis on Academic Excellence:** A noteworthy result of the survey was the focus placed by HEIs on academic achievement as a cornerstone of their branding initiatives. Institutions promoted their faculty's credentials, research output, accreditation rank, and ratings to separate themselves from rivals and recruit exceptional students and faculty personnel. Academic relationships with famous universities and research organisations both nationally and globally were also used to improve institutional status and legitimacy.
3. **Investment in Infrastructure and Facilities:** Another remarkable result was the enormous investments made by HEIs in infrastructure development and advanced facilities to boost their appeal to students and stakeholders. This encompassed contemporary classrooms, labs, libraries, athletic facilities, and residential housing. Institutions acknowledged the influence of physical infrastructure on perceptions of quality and prestige, subsequently integrating it into their branding strategy.

4. **Leveraging Student Success Stories:** The research revealed that higher education institutions in Kerala strategically employed student success narratives and accomplishments as a fundamental element of their branding approach. Institutions aimed to illustrate the concrete results of their educational programs and the transforming influence on students' lives by highlighting the achievements of graduates in academics, research, entrepreneurship, sports, and community service. Such comments acted as compelling endorsements for prospective students and parents, shaping their impressions and judgements.
5. **Engagement with Industry and Community:** HEIs in Kerala shown a proactive strategy in collaborating with industry partners and the local community as a component of their branding efforts. Collaborative activities, including internships, industry-academia alliances, consultancy projects, and community outreach programs, were underscored to illustrate the practical significance of academic programs and the institution's dedication to social advancement. By cultivating mutually advantageous partnerships with stakeholders, institutions improved their reputation as drivers of innovation and social transformation.
6. **Challenges and Future Directions:** The study revealed that higher education institutions in Kerala have several obstacles, including resource limitations, competitiveness, regulatory adherence, and evolving market dynamics, while employing various branding tactics. Institutions must adjust their branding strategy to meet with changing educational trends, technology progress, and stakeholder expectations. Furthermore, enhanced collaboration among higher education institutions, government entities, industry stakeholders, and civil society organisations is essential to jointly improve the branding and competitiveness of Kerala's higher education sector.

The research's outcomes elucidate the techniques employed by higher education institutions in Kerala for branding, emphasising a holistic strategy that includes academic quality, infrastructure enhancement, student achievement, industry collaboration, and community participation. By comprehending and using these branding methods, institutions may augment their exposure, repute, and influence, therefore contributing to the general advancement of Kerala's higher education sector.

Limitations of the study

1. **Reliance on Secondary Data:** The main limitations of this study is its insistence on secondary data. Although secondary data sources give useful insights, they may lack the depth and specificity necessary to comprehensively grasp the intricacies of branding tactics employed by HEIs in Kerala. The study may be deficient in personal viewpoints and nuanced context that may be acquired by primary data gathering methods, such surveys, interviews, or case studies.
2. **Scope and Depth of Analysis:** Executing a thorough analysis of branding strategies exclusively utilising secondary data may provide difficulties regarding the study's depth and broadness. The accessible secondary data may be constrained for the variables analysed, the temporal scope, or the particular institutions incorporated. Thus, the study's capacity to encompass the complete spectrum of branding techniques and their efficacy within the framework of Kerala's higher education institutions may be limited.
3. **Potential for Bias and Inaccuracy:** Secondary data sources, including published reports, academic journals, and institutional websites, may possess intrinsic biases or mistakes that might compromise the validity of the findings. Institutional reports may exhibit a biased or too optimistic representation of branding initiatives to preserve a favourable image. Academic literature may exhibit certain theoretical viewpoints or disciplinary biases that might affect the understanding of branding techniques and their consequences.

4. **Lack of Contextual Understanding:** Although secondary data might yield significant insights into overarching trends and patterns, it may lack the context-specific comprehension required to fully understand the findings within the distinct socio-cultural and educational milieu of Kerala. The study may neglect crucial elements influencing branding tactics and their results in the region without direct understanding of the local environment, encompassing cultural norms, institutional histories, and stakeholder dynamics.
5. **Inability to Verify Findings:** In contrast to primary data gathering methods, which allow researchers to directly ascertain the correctness and trustworthiness of the data, secondary data usage offers less opportunities for validation. Researchers must depend on the legitimacy and integrity of sources, which may differ in their rigour and reliability. Consequently, the conclusions obtained from secondary data analysis may exhibit limits in confidence and generalizability.
6. **Temporal Constraints:** Secondary data may be constrained by time, indicating that the information accessible during the study may not represent the latest advances or trends in branding tactics among Kerala's higher education institutions. Alterations in institutional regulations, market dynamics, or technology innovations may not be sufficiently documented, hence constraining the study's validity and contemporaneity.
Generalizability: The results may possess restricted generalizability outside the setting of Kerala. Regional culture, educational regulations, and the distinctive institutional qualities of Kerala may affect branding tactics in a manner that differs from other states or nations. Consequently, prudence must be observed when generalising the findings to different circumstances.
7. **Self-Reporting Bias:** The data for this study was dependent on self-reported information from higher education institution administrators or marketing staff. This raises the potential for self-reporting bias, wherein individuals could offer socially acceptable comments or exaggerate the efficacy of their branding tactics. Consequently, the precision and dependability of the data may be somewhat undermined.
8. **Absence of Comparative Analysis:** The study may be deficient in a compared analysis of branding techniques across various types of higher education institutions in Kerala, including government-funded vs private universities, arts and science colleges against professional schools, or urban versus rural institutions. A comparative examination may yield significant insights into branding variances influenced by institutional features.
9. **Institutional Variability:** Higher Education Institutions in Kerala exhibit significant disparities in size, reputation, academic offerings, student demographics, and financial resources. The study may inadequately address this diversity, thereby neglecting the influence of institutional variances on branding tactics and outcomes. Subsequent study may investigate these intricacies more thoroughly.

Recognising these limitations is crucial for appropriately interpreting the study's findings and for directing future research efforts to further the knowledge of institutional branding in Kerala's higher education sector.

Future Scope

1. **Longitudinal Analysis:** subsequent research may investigate the long-term efficacy of branding methods implemented by higher education institutions in Kerala. By monitoring institutional branding initiatives over time, researchers may evaluate the durability and progression of these strategies, discern new trends, and analyse their enduring effects on institutional reputation, student enrolment, and stakeholder views.
2. **Comparative Studies:** Executing comparative analyses between higher education institutions in Kerala and those in other states or countries may yield significant insights into the contextual elements affecting branding strategies and outcomes. Comparable assessments may elucidate

the distinct strengths and problems encountered by Kerala's higher education institutions, promote cross-cultural learning, and guide the creation of contextually appropriate branding frameworks.

3. Stakeholder Perspectives: The future research may explore the viewpoints of several stakeholders, including as students, parents, alumni, professors, industry partners, and policymakers, about institutional branding in Kerala. Comprehending their views, expectations, and preferences helps guide the creation and execution of focused branding strategies that appeal with various stakeholder groups and bolster institutional engagement and loyalty.

4. Technological Innovations: Given the growing dependence on digital platforms and technology-mediated communication, future study may investigate the influence of digital marketing tactics, social media participation, and online branding tools on the branding initiatives of higher education institutions in Kerala. Examining the efficacy of novel digital marketing strategies and new technologies (e.g., virtual reality, artificial intelligence) might yield significant insights for improving institutional visibility, engagement, and competitiveness in the digital era.

5. Alumni Engagement: Considering the substantial influence of alumni on institutional reputation and community cohesion, future study may examine the alumni engagement tactics implemented by higher education institutions in Kerala as components of their branding initiatives. Analysing alumni opinions, experiences, and donations may reveal critical insights into the determinants of alumni loyalty, engagement in fundraising efforts, and advocacy for their alma mater's brand, therefore guiding effective alumni relations strategies.

6. Influence on Educational Quality: Subsequent study may examine the correlation between institutional branding methods and educational quality results in higher education institutions in Kerala. Researchers can evaluate the impact of branding initiatives on academic excellence, institutional performance, and overall educational quality by analysing indicators such as student learning outcomes, faculty quality, research productivity, and institutional accreditation status.

7. Sustainability and Social Accountability: The incorporation of sustainability concepts and social responsibility programs into institutional branding strategies is a viable avenue for future research. Examining the integration of sustainability messaging, environmental stewardship, community engagement, and ethical practices in the branding strategies of higher education institutions in Kerala can illuminate the contribution of higher education to societal challenges, sustainable development, and responsible citizenship.

The future scope of the research paper "A Study on Strategies Adopted by HEIs in Kerala State for Branding Their Institutions" includes various avenues for further investigation, such as longitudinal analysis, comparative studies, stakeholder perspectives, technological innovations, alumni engagement, impact on educational quality, and sustainability initiatives. Through the exploration of these pathways, academics may augment our comprehension of institutional branding dynamics within Kerala's higher education sector and contribute to the enhancement of institutional effectiveness, competitiveness, and social impact.

Conclusion

This research work has examined the critical domain of institutional branding in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Kerala. A thorough investigation of the tactics utilised by these institutions to improve their brand image and reputation has yielded useful insights, benefiting both academic research and practical applications.

This study's findings highlight the importance of branding in the competitive realm of higher education, especially in Kerala, where many higher education institutions compete for visibility and acknowledgement. This study identifies and clarifies the diverse branding

techniques employed by institutions, offering a detailed comprehension of the intricate dynamics within Kerala's educational sector.

This research work addresses a significant gap in the literature by concentrating on branding techniques particular to Kerala, therefore enhancing the current understanding of institutional branding in higher education. Through empirical inquiry and analysis, it has provided practical implications for higher education institution administrators, marketers, policymakers, and other stakeholders, facilitating informed decision-making and the formulation of effective branding strategies customised to the distinct socio-cultural context of Kerala.

This study report strictly complies with ethical norms, guaranteeing complete originality and maintaining the integrity and legitimacy of the research findings. By recognising and accurately referencing existing literature and sources, it upholds scholarly rigour and transparency, hence enhancing the study's credibility.

This study paper's observations enhance academic discourse and provide practical guidance for higher education institutions in improving branding strategies. The conclusions of this study are a significant resource for enhancing quality, innovation, and competitiveness in Kerala's evolving higher education industry.

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