

Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing: A Cognitive Study for Colleges Affiliated Under GGSIP University

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Abstract

With advancements in technology and adaptation by users, social media has taken a leap rise and has become a key constituent in marketing campaigns. It's a powerful tool for tapping new and younger audiences.

Existing researches illustrate that Social media is driven by word of mouth only. It's a dynamic duo, helping spread buzz faster and more efficiently than face-to-face communications.

In this research, factors which determine the choice criteria of selecting any college have been derived. The research identified the dimensions which predict student perceptions about the colleges under study. Since, Youth is engaged in almost all the social platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn or even Instagram. These platforms can be used to create interesting content and initiatives, harnessing the influencers' large audiences to create buzz and awareness virally.

Keywords: Word of mouth marketing, Social Media Marketing, selection criteria, Student Perception.

Introduction

Word of mouth (WOM) has been acknowledged for many years as a major influence on what people know, feel and do. WOM is person-to-person communication between a receiver and a communicator. WOM differs from advertising. WOM involves the exchange of ephemeral oral or spoken message. Word-of-mouth marketing is based on the simple premise that a recommendation from a friend carries more weight than an ad message. If a Product satisfies a consumer, then he himself becomes the brand ambassador of that particular product.

Word of Mouth Marketing in the Digital Space

It's safe to say that social media has forever changed the way we make recommendations about any product or brand.

Marketers have known for years that word of mouth marketing (WOMM) is the most credible form of advertising because promoters don't stand to gain anything personally by recommending the product and are even willing to put their own reputations on the line.

Social Media Marketing

Social media has become the method of statement in the 21't century, enabling us to express our belief, ideas and manner in an absolute new way. The meteoric growth of community websites, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, have usher the world into a new era of social media. Social media plays a hybrid role in the promotion mix. Social media is seen by Marketers today as a great opportunity to boost market share figures.

This year's Buyer sphere Report, from Base One and B2B Marketing, takes all the guesswork out of what B2B decision makers really want by going directly to the source, i.e. the buyers themselves. In this year's report, the survey compiles responses from 800 participants with the intent of uncovering what all marketers want to know: How do buyers find information that will help them identify the right suppliers for their business? Buyers are seeking out content more and more regularly.

This year's report shares that "87 percent of buyers go out and look for advice before choosing."

It's worth noting that word of mouth dominates all information channels in terms of usefulness, ranking at a level 8 out of 10 — a top way to find information and advice that helps in the decision-making process:

Not only are these channels sought out, but they are ranked as most influential in a buyer's decision-making process, as well.

Mobile Marketing

20 years ago, people were just using computers and the internet, online shopping was a new concept, and social media, digital media, podcasts, and mobile marketing weren't even on anybody's mind. Many great organizations focused on the advertising campaign. Those days are gone and a technological revolution has heralded in a host of vehicles that organizations are trying to adapt.

According to Greg Stuart the CEO of the Mobile Marketing Association "Mobile is arguably the closest you can get to the consumer. There is no other device that is as personal, as pervasive, and provides the opportunity for proximity. Mobile devices have the potential to be a tremendous enabler as main aim is to understand consumer's path to purchase. In a 2011 study, Americans spent 2.7 hours per day socializing on their mobile phones. 75% of the globe now has a mobile phone offering access to developed markets as well as emerging regions. Mobile truly enables marketers to connect at the right time, in the right place, with the right individual."

An example of the Ford F150 relaunches campaign from nearly a decade ago. The contribution of each media channel and found that online delivered 10x the value of TV in driving purchase consideration. When

Ford increased their online budget from 2% to 6%, they sold an incremental \$1.4 billion in trucks. Marketers are supposed to go where the consumers are and get there first. Consumers are looking to their mobile device for shopping, searching, entertainment, socializing and brand interaction.

Brief Overview of Colleges under Study

- **Maharaja Agrasen**

The Society was promoted in 1998 by a group of well known industrialists, professionals and philanthropists with an aim to promote quality education. Courses offered are: BJ (MC) 1st shift & 2nd shift, BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift, BBA (B&I), B.Com (H)

- **Maharaja Surajmal**

Surajmal Memorial Education Society was founded in 1972 at Janakpuri to emulate the great qualities of Maharaja Surajmal with an aim to impart quality education in rural as well as urban areas. Academic Programmes were started with the introduction of certificate and Diploma courses in various technical streams in 1982. 'Maharaja Surajmal Institute of Technology' was established in 2001. Courses offered by the institute are: BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift, BBA (B&I) 1st shift & 2nd shift, B.Tech. (Electronics & Communication Engineering), B.Tech. (Computer Science & Engineering), B.Tech. (Information Technology)

- **Jagannath Institute of Management Studies**

Established in 1993, Jagannath Gupta Memorial Education Society has been an academic leader since then, with 8 higher educational institutes of academic excellence in Delhi/NCR and 3 in Rajasthan. Courses offered are: BCA 1st shift & 2nd shift, BJ (MC) 1st shift & 2nd shift, BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift

- **Institute of Information Technology And Management**

Mata Leelawati Shikshan Sansthan, registered education societies setup The "Institute of Information Technology and Management" in 1999. Courses offered are: BCA 1st shift & 2nd shift, MCA, BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift, MBA.

- **Tecnia Institute of Advanced Studies**

TIAS was established in 1998. TIAS is one of the premier institute set up under the aegis of the Health and Education Society (Regd.) is approved by All India Council for Technical Education, Ministry of HRD, Government of India and is affiliated to Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi. Courses offered by the institute are: BJ (MC) 1st shift & 2nd shift, BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift, MBA

- **Rukmini Devi Institute of Advanced Studies**

Dureth Pokhar Mal Educational Society, established in 1986, operates several institutes of repute under the name “Rukmini Devi”. Courses offered are: MBA, MCA, BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift

- **Vivekananda Institute Of Professional Studies**

Established in 1998 and is registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.

Strength India Educational Society started Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies (VIPS) in year-2000, which is affiliated to G.G.S.I.P. University and duly recognized by Bar Council of India. Courses offered by the institute are: B.A.LL.B (H) (BCI approved course), B.B.A. LL.B (H) (BCI approved course), LL.M (Corporate Law), BCA 1st shift & 2nd shift, BJ (MC) 1st shift & 2nd shift, MCA (AICTE approved course), BBA (G) 1st shift & 2nd shift, BBA (B&I), B.Com (H).

Review of Literature

Dr. M. Saravanakumar and Dr. T. Sugantha Lakshmi (2012) conducted a research on Social-Media-Marketing (SMM). The meteoric growth of community websites, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, have usher the world into a new era of social media. The global reach is nothing short of marvelous, so much so that if Facebook were a country, it would be third largest, next to China and India. The social media phenomenon has a profound impact. Social media has transformed research methods. This allows brands to communicate better with their consumers, and intensify their association with them. The advertising world has not been spared from social media influence. Social media plays a hybrid role in the promotion mix. It allows companies to talk to their clientele and, at the same time, it allows regulars to talk to one another. Social media is about ordinary people taking control of the world around them and finding creative new ways to bring their collective voices together to get what they want. SMM is primarily internet based but has similarities with non-internet based, marketing methods like word-of mouth marketing. SMM is the way of promoting a website, brand or business by interacting with or attracting the interest of current or prospective customers through the channels of social media. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the most popular social media that are widely used by the companies and the celebrities in promoting themselves and their brands.

Shu-Chuan Chu(2011) contend that internet based WOM transmitted through social media drives Return on Investment (ROI), eWOM branding via SNSs is seen as a necessary element in the promotional mix. The structural equation model indicates that trust, normative influence and informational influence are positively associated with SNS users. Tie strength is positively associated with eWOM behaviour but there was one negative relation between homophile and eWOM in SNSs. Two theoretical implications are drawn from the results of this study. First, this study advances our understanding of product-related eWOM behaviours by delineating the eWOM process in an emerging online advertising medium: the SNS context. Second, the present research investigated empirically social relationship factors as an important antecedent for eWOM behaviour in SNSs. This finding highlights a notable difference between eWOM via social media and other online platforms such as product reviews and emails.

Robert V. Kozinets(2010) emphasized on Word of Mouth Marketing(WOMM) firms' intentional influencing of consumer to consumer communications has become a very important technique. It studied the marketing campaign of mobile phones which were seeded with prominent bloggers. The findings said that network of communication offers four social media communication strategies—evaluation, embracing, endorsement, and explanation. Each is influenced by character narrative, communications forum, communal norms, and the nature of the marketing promotion. He concluded that each blog contains a particular history and perspective in its character narrative; this narrative attracts a certain audience and plays a part in setting the audience's expectations. Some bloggers attempt to share their good fortune; others write as if they are entitled to receive this honor. Still others analyze WOMM as an important development in blogging or explain their recruitment as a lucky opportunity in light of their dire need.

Feng Zhu and Xiaoquan Zhang (2010) examines on how product and consumer characteristics moderate the influence of online consumer reviews on product sales using data from video game industry. The findings indicate that online reviews are more influential for less popular games and games which have more internet experience. They concluded that online reviews are more influential for less popular games suggests that the informational role of reviews becomes more salient in an environment in which alternative means of information acquisition are relatively scarce. As such,

marketers of less popular products may benefit more from allocating resources to managing online consumer reviews. It also finds evidence to support the notion that online reviews are more influential when consumers have relatively greater internet experience. As the internet population continues to grow so marketing managers thus devote more time and resources in online channels.

Michael Trusov (2009) conducted research on the effect of word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing on member growth in social networking sites and compared it with traditional marketing. The purpose was to increase the understanding the effect of WOM marketing by tracking the detailed information provided by Internet. The findings of the research were that WOM referrals have strong impact on new customer acquisition. The goal was to shed new lights on the true effectiveness of WOM marketing. They do this by quantifying the dynamic performance effects of WOM in an Internet social network setting--a setting that offers researchers and managers a direct way to observe this phenomenon. Thus, they are among the first to link WOM to new customer acquisition. The elasticity results add further evidence to the view that WOM communication is a critical factor for firms seeking to acquire new customers and that WOM can have larger and longer lasting effects than traditional marketing activity.

Johra Kayeser Fatima and Md. Habib Uz-Zaman Khan (2008) contend that word of mouth is more influential promotional tool than different commercial advertisements for choosing desired university. They conducted a research on this sector in Dhaka, Bangladesh. They concluded that a successful, well designed and specifically targeted word of mouth can bring local as well as foreign students in Bangladesh. Universities should emphasize on various strategies which will help in developing word of mouth and which will help in gaining good market share. Consumers tend to be influenced by the people who have greater knowledge about universities (it can be professors as well as students), so university should identify these leaders and inspire and influence them for spreading good word of mouth. Universities should focus on the academic performance as well as good academic performance automatically attracts students.

Research Objectives

The Primary objective of research is to carry out a comparative analysis of colleges under IP University on Word of mouth marketing and social media marketing; and the secondary research objectives are as follows:

- Overall comparison of different colleges under IP University.
- Conducting a survey for knowing the distances between each college.
- Rating different colleges on aspects such as Infrastructure, ranking, faculty, placements, proximity to home, preferred level of strictness, crowd and facilities.
- Draw a perceptual map and find out the place of colleges in students' perception by conducting multi dimension scaling.
- Evaluating the reliable sources of information for each factor derived.

Research Methodology

The concerned research study was more or less exploratory but it has some part of descriptive study as well as it was desired to have some quantitative analysis as well to draw perceptual map of colleges of IP University, so in order to arrive at quantified results. Hence, the research comprises of both the elements of exploratory as well as the descriptive part but in order to be precise; Survey was conducted among students of IP University colleges, Non- probability sampling technique by using a convenient sample.

The research was carried out in three parts:

Part-A - To calculate the brand scores for each college under study, to compare the perceptions of students towards the respective colleges through non- attribute based questionnaire

Part-B - To rank the colleges on the eight attributes considered while selecting any college through MDS or attribute based questionnaire.

Part-C - To determine the source of information for each dimension derived through a different structured questionnaire.

Concept of Multi Dimensional Scaling

Understanding the raw perception of consumer without any aid or stating any attribute to respondent is called multi dimensional scaling. MDS is primarily used to create perceptual map of product in the

minds of the consumer for a particular group of products. Positions of competing brands in a product category are found out through MDS. Raw perception: It knows consumer preference without influencing your view or attribute.

Respondent may be thinking about the attribute, that we might don't know, but the important thing is that we don't have to tell any of the attributes.

Need of Applying MDS

In this we get perceptual map of each brand. Normally it may be possible to identify for a particular product category the important attribute form a customer point of view. These attribute may have an impact on the positioning of each brand in the customer mind and on the customer buying behavior. Further these attribute may be taken „2 / „3 at a time the plot created to understand specific position of each brand. Such plot or map may be relatively straight forward but it may not capture the consumer mind completely.

This is because customer thinks simultaneously on multiple product dimensions/ attributes while evaluating the products. Hence such a procedure is an approximation. A better technique is MDS. So MDS would capture complex interaction between attributes, brands and would derive dimensions which explain the position given by customer to various brands.

There are two methods of MDS:

- I. Attribute based.
 - II. Non attribute based.
- I. The **Non attribute based procedure** is based on similarity or preference. It is also called the similarity - dissimilarity approach. In similarity and dissimilarity approach: Conceptual distance measure is used between brands being rated through MDS Questionnaire. Distance measure could also be a ranking of distances between specific brand and other brands.
 - II. In **Attribute based** -Dimensions are found which are derived from attribute using DRAS table and MDS responses.

The research was conducted in two parts in part A MDS Questionnaire was shown to respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate on scale of 0-10, the conceptual Distances between each brand pair as per their perception. The data obtained was then average out across respondent & is converted into matrix. In part B a match sample was shown a DRAS based questionnaire on a set of attribute. Respondent were asked to evaluate the same 7 brands on the 7 point Semantic differential scale

Then these matrices are compared to identify the major dimension of attributes, which then become the axis of perceptual map.

Data Collection

Two Months have been given to Data Collection. Data Collection has been done through online as well as offline source. Online data has been collected through online questionnaire from a Social Networking site and offline data has been collected from various college campuses. Out of 350 questionnaires, 336 were received (96%) from which 18 responses have been put aside in the filtration phase and only 318 responses (91%) are used in the study. These 318 responses comprise of data from all the three research parts.

Data Analysis

The first area which was taken up was more of qualitative analysis. Under this, visits were made to different colleges under Indraprastha University –to analyse the factors considered while selecting any particular college or educational institute. Hence students are the target population for this research. The interaction with students and alumni gave the insight into the lives of students in all colleges of IP University. Every college had its own positives and negatives, and the best way to find out is by talking to people who have experienced it.

The research was carried out in three parts:

Part-A - To calculate the brand scores for each college under study, to compare the perceptions of students towards the respective colleges.

Part-B - To rank the colleges on the eight attributes considered while selecting any college.

Part-C - To determine the source of information for each dimension derived.

The next step is to calculate the brand score of each college to find out the overall satisfaction level from each college by knowing the distances between each college through non attribute based technique of MDS.

The brand scores are as follows:

Table 1: Brand Scores

	<u>TECNIA</u>	<u>VIPS</u>	<u>SURAJMAL</u>	<u>JIMS</u>	<u>RDIAS</u>	<u>AGARSEN</u>	<u>IITM</u>
<u>TECNIA</u>	0	3	4	4	4	6	3
<u>VIPS</u>	3	0	4	1	5	7	5
<u>SURAJMAL</u>	4	4	0	6	3	3	5
<u>JIMS</u>	4	1	6	0	5	7	6
<u>RDIAS</u>	4	5	3	5	0	3	3
<u>AGARSEN</u>	6	7	3	7	3	0	3
<u>IITM</u>	3	5	5	6	3	3	0

These distances gives the perception of the students about different colleges, larger the distance between colleges, depicts that the students feel those particular colleges are completely different from each other. The most similar pair gets 1; the second most similar pair gets 2 and so till 10. And if we try to interpret from above matrix, it can be seen that VIPS is similar to JIMS and dissimilar to TECNIA.

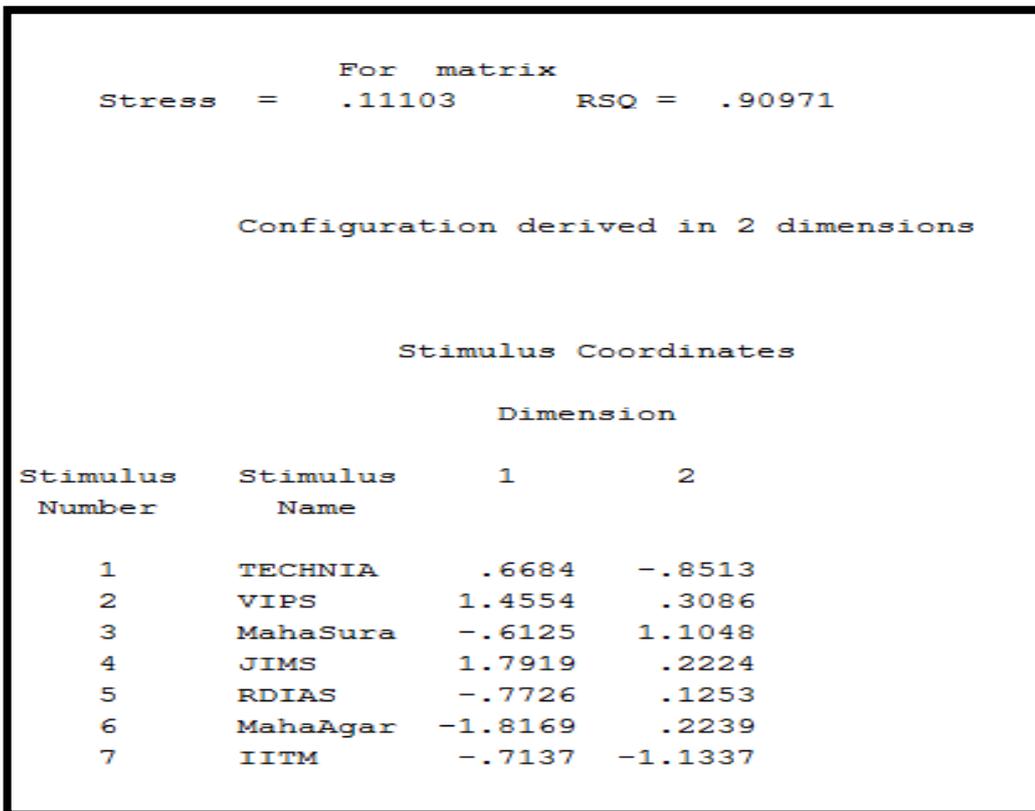
These distances can be taken as input for creating the perceptual map using SPSS software. By applying the analyzing tool- ALSCAL, we get the number of dimensions considered by the respondents and their respective stimulus coordinates of each college. This solution is only acceptable when:

1. Kruskal Stress < 0.15
2. $R^2 > 0.70$

Using the above data scores of colleges, two dimensions are identified, which the students have used while giving the above mentioned scores.

Moreover, dimensions cannot increase beyond 2 as this research considers 7 brands only.

DERIVED STIMULUS COORDINATES THROUGH MDS TECHNIQUE



Following is the “Direct response attribute scale” table obtained:

Table 1: DRAS TABLE

Attributes	LOW				HIGH
Infrastructure	IITM/Surajmal	Tecnia	RDIAS	JIMS	Agrasen/VIPS
Ranking	RDIAS/IITM	Tecnia/Agrasen	VIPS/JIMS	NA	Surajmal
Faculty	IITM/ Tecnia	RDIAS/Agrasen	JIMS	Surajmal	VIPS
Placements	IITM	Rdias /Tecnia	Agrasen/Surajmal	NA	JIMS/ VIPS
Proximity to Home	RDIAS	Surajmal/Agrasen	Tecnia/ IITM	JIMS	VIPS
Facilities	IITM/ Tecnia	RDIAS	Agrasen/Surajmal	JIMS	VIPS
Preferred level of strictness	Agrasen/Surajmal	RDIAS	IITM	Tecnia/JIMS	VIPS
Crowd	Surajmal	IITM/ RDIAS	Agrasen	VIPS/Technia	JIMS

By comparing derived stimulus coordinates through part A and DRAS table through part B, two dimensions have been derived.

DIMENSION 1 = Faculty + Ranking + Placement

= **QUALITY OF EDUCATION (QoE)**

DIMENSION 2 = Infrastructure + Facilities + Proximity to Home + Preferred Level of Strictness + Crowd

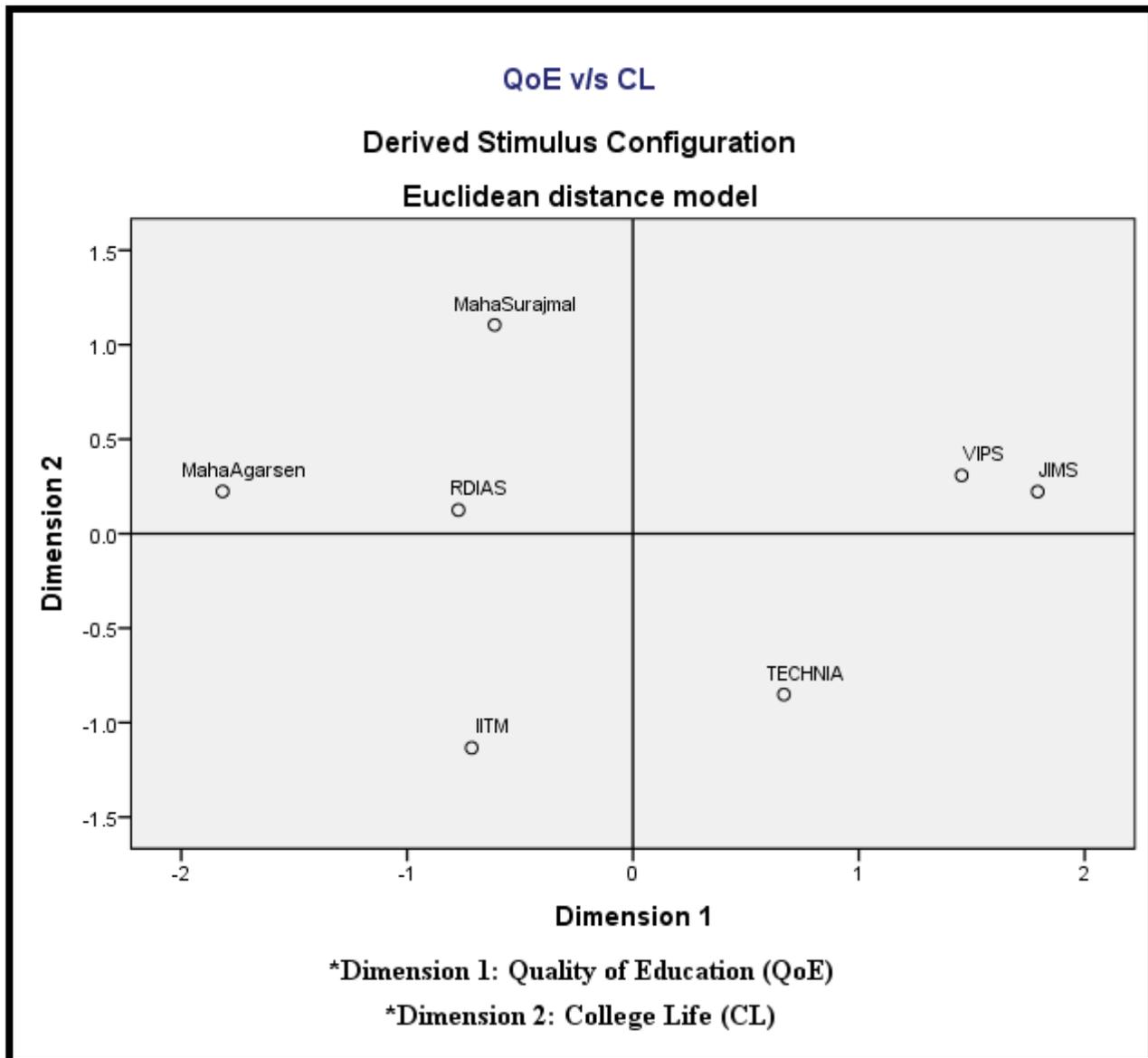
=**COLLEGE LIFE (CL)**

Table 2: STIMULUS COORDINATES

Stimulus no.	Stimulus name	CL	QoE
1	TECNIA	.6684	-.8513
2	VIPS	1.4554	.3086
3	SURAJMAL	-.6125	1.1048
4	JIMS	1.7919	.2224
5	RDIAS	-.7726	.1253
6	AGARSEN	-1.8169	.2239
7	IITM	-.7137	-1.1337

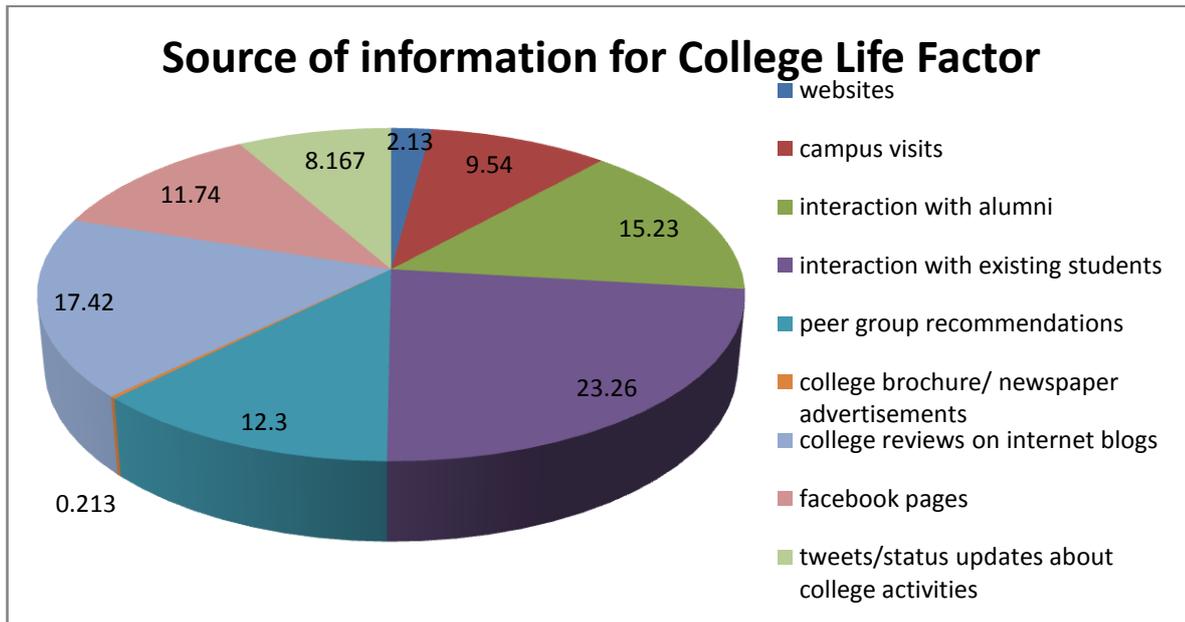
Table 2 represents stimulus coordinates for the two dimensions namely, College Life and Quality of Education. These stimulus coordinates are the bases for forming Perceptual map for colleges under study. Perceptual Map hence formed is the description of student perception towards colleges (TECNIA, VIPS, SURAJMAL, JIMS, RDIAS, AGARSEN, and IITM) on the two dimensions which are decomposed from the choice criteria factors (Infrastructure (A/C campus, class rooms, canteen, library, sports ground etc.), Ranking among other colleges, Placements, Faculty, Proximity to home, Facilities (sports and cultural activities), Preferable level of strictness, Crowd)

Chart 1: Perceptual Map



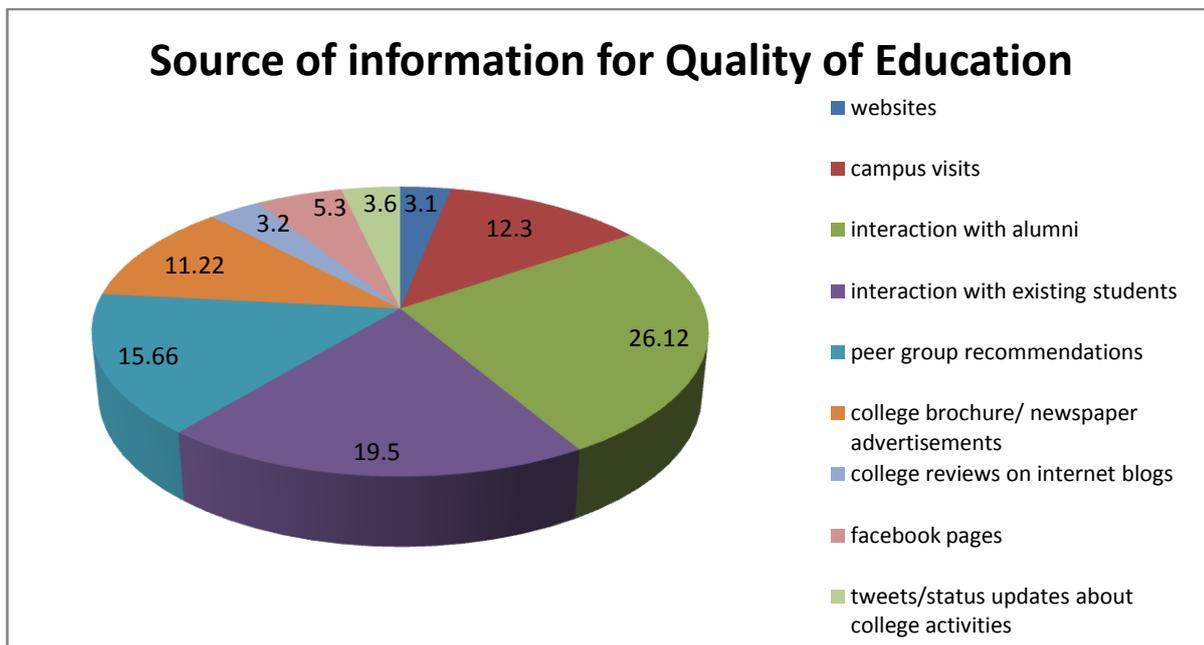
By data analysis of part C, reliable source of information for both the dimensions has been derived.

Chart 2



Through interaction with existing students, alumni and from internet blogs reviews, give most of the information about the attributes under college life.

Chart 3



Along with the common sources like existing students, alumni and peer group; campus visits are also a major source of information to convey quality of education

Conclusion

As according to the research graphs, tables and charts, it is concluded that JIMS provides the best college life, however, the best quality of education is provided by Maharaja Surajmal. Amongst all the options Maharaja Surajmal provides the best quality of education however is behind in comparison of college life. IITM is ranked last both in terms of college life and quality of education. VIPS and JIMS are in close proximity of one another but JIMS has a better college life rank as compared to VIPS however VIPS holds a better rank in quality of education in comparison to JIMS. As the ranks are almost equal

between Maharaja Agrasen, RDIAS, VIPS, JIMS in context of quality of education, the colleges differ in ranks due to extreme variations seen in college life. Tecnia holds better college life in comparison to Agrasen and RDIAS but is not as good as VIPS and JIMS. Tecnia also does not provide good quality of education.

The close proximity seen in the positioning of JIMS and VIPS is based on some major variables in both the dimensions. Major contribution in:

- Quality of Education dimension is due to the factor of FACULTY
- And in College Life dimension is because of STRICTNESS LEVEL

Both the dimensions suggest that the main sources were interactions with students, peer groups and alumni. Apart from these, internet blogs and campus visits also turned out to be extremely reliable sources of information for students.

Hence, it can be concluded that existing students and alumni play a major role as a reliable and maximum source of information for the choice of selection and Review for colleges by students on blogs and social networking sites are most accessible while searching information.

Recommendations

Apart from interactions with existing students and alumni, which are part of word of mouth marketing, the colleges should also invest in the following areas which hold high credibility amongst students while selection of colleges.

- First we recommend that an application can be developed which can hold reviews about colleges given by students and alumni, as students are a valuable asset to their college. People opting for colleges can download this application and check out the reviews of colleges given out by existing students and choose the best option. The bases for application could be the attributes derived through this research.
- Secondly, as seen in the research, a significant share was held by social media services in framing the mindset of students towards a particular college, so colleges should take active participation in the social media websites and circles and keep themselves updated about the reviews and views going on about their college.
 - 3 tips for amplifying social media marketing efforts through word of mouth:
 - **Creating quality content:** Always think about what your customers would want to read and what they will get value out of and ultimately what they will want to share.
 - **Be active:** Social media marketing relies on engagement between brands and its audiences to be successful.
 - **Create good buzz, not bad:** Poor customer service, bad reviews and company insensitivities become public and can have devastating effects on small businesses.
 - And lastly, as this research doesn't consider the university perspective; in terms of the support and benefits to the students as well as to the colleges affiliated to GGS IP University. In further research, this perspective can be a pivotal research variable to be studied for understanding the holistic student perception.

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