The Role of Online Reputation Management in Student's Higher Education Decision making Process

Samuel Giftson Rajkumar[1], Dr C. Samuel Joseph[2], Dr. J. Clement Sudhahar[3], Desmen. A[4], Prashanth John[5]

Abstract

The reputation of a college or university serves as a gauge of public perception regarding the institution's actual excellence. University reputation is built on three pillars: excellent instruction, significant research activity, and a commitment to civic engagement. For tiny, low-funded schools, the reputation of a university is not only based on the connections, experiences, comments and opinions of students and employers, but also on actual assets, which is a major concern. Strategic planning also takes into account the university's reputation. In order to effectively manage a university's scientific reputation, one must first study the theoretical underpinnings of the topic, learn what factors determine a university's reputation, create a model for evaluating a university's reputation, and then move on to the practical side of things - managing the university's scientific reputation. Studying the role of online reputation management in university with special reference to student's decision-making process is the primary objective of the project.

Keywords: *public perception, Online Reputation Management (ORM).*

1. Introduction

The reputation of a college or university serves as a gauge of public perception regarding the institution's actual excellence. University reputation is built on three pillars: excellent instruction, significant research activity, and a commitment to civic engagement. For tiny, low-funded schools, the reputation of a university is not only based on the connections, experiences, comments and opinions of students and employers, but also on actual assets, which is a major concern. Strategic planning also takes into account the university's reputation. In order to effectively manage a university's scientific reputation, one must first study the theoretical underpinnings of the topic, learn what factors determine a university's reputation, create a model for evaluating a university's reputation, and then move on to the practical side of things - managing the university's scientific reputation. Studying the role of online reputation management in university with special reference to student's decision-making process is the primary objective of the project.

Online Reputation Management (ORM) has emerged as a critical component of any institution or college's overall inbound marketing strategy. A university's reputation is one of its most precious assets since it has a significant impact on the purchasing choices of

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[1] Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore
[2] Professor & Director, Department of Management Studies, American College, Madurai.
[3] Professor & Dean, Department of Management Studies, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore.
[4] Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore.
[5] Research Scholar, Department of Management Studies, Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences, Coimbatore.

its intended audience. A good or negative effect might be had on the brand's acceptability by its intended audience.

Effective online reputation management is increasingly important in today's digitally driven environment since millennial are continuously connected to numerous online gadgets. These platforms make it easy for them to find information about the school. Timely maintenance of internet platforms can assist to deliver appropriate information about the institution to all the stakeholders.

2. Research Methodology

Purpose of the study:

Online Reputation Management (ORM) has emerged as a critical component of any institution or college's overall inbound marketing strategy. As the head of admissions/marketing extensively for attracting students and to make them join the course offered at the university/ college. This study is to understand how online reputation management help in students' higher education decision making.

A)   The Questionnaire based on Head of Admissions/ marketing and Communications

Research Objective:

1.   Studying the impact of online reputation management after utilization.

2.   To analyze benefits to college/university through utilization of online reputation management.

3.   To study impact of digital marketing in educational decision-making process.

B)   The Questionnaire based on Students

Research Objective:

1.   To identify the preferred digital marketing channels used by students (college goers) during their higher education decision making journey

2.   To measure the student's attitude towards digital marketing communication tools

3.   To understand the impact of digital marketing communication tools on student higher education decision process

4.   The aspects that a college/university must possess while decision making for a student to choose a particular college/university

Scope of the study:

As discussed in the previous sections, digital marketing in the education sector is relatively newer concept as compared to other sectors. In today's technology is changing rapidly every day we see new innovations that are taken place in the education sectors, if the education institutions want to promote and market themselves with the most cost-effective strategies. As general techniques like-SEO, SEM, SMM continue to rule the roost, marketing strategies for education sector in India will rely on these fundamental ingredients of digital marketing to enrol more students and grow.

Survey method:

The data and information has been collected from primary source and secondary source like online questioner, journals, magazines, business newspapers, periodicals, reports, text books and websites. Further face to face interviews for the related area were also taken into consideration for the study. We use random sampling method with random sample 30.
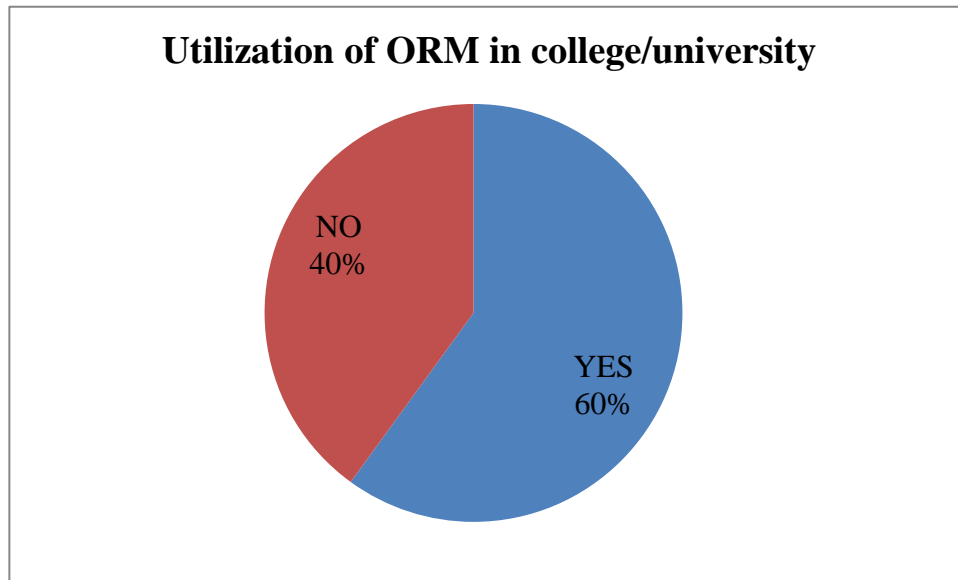
3. Data Analysis

a) <u>The Questionnaire based on Head of Admissions/ marketing and Communications</u>

1. Utilization of Online Reputation Management

Table 1: Opinion about utilization of online reputation management for your college/university

Opinion	Response	Percentage (%)
Yes	18	60
No	12	40

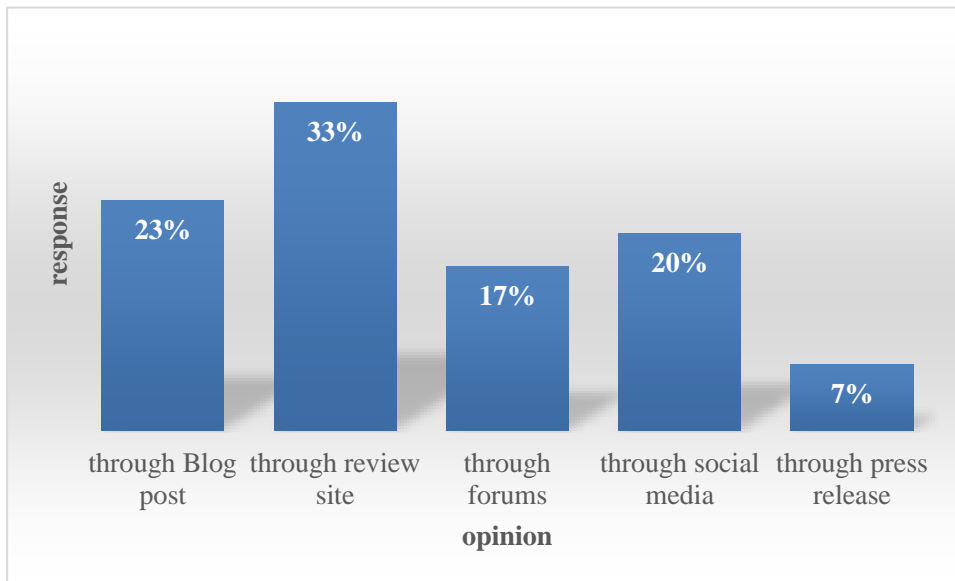Graph 1: Opinion about utilization of online reputation management for your college/university

The above data focuses on utilization of online reputation management in the college/university. The analysis interpreted that 60% of college/university utilize online reputation management whereas, 40% college/ university yet not utilize online reputation program in their college/ university. Hence the researcher concluded, most of the college/university utilize online reputation program.

2. Performance of Online Reputation Management for College/University

Table 2: opinion about how do you perform online reputation management for your college/ university

Opinion	Response	Percentage
through Blog post	7	23%
through review site	10	33%
through forums	5	17%
through social media	6	20%
through press release	2	7%

Graph 2: opinion about how do you perform online reputation management for your college/ university


The above data represents the opinion about how do you perform online reputation management for your college/ university. The researcher found that, through review sites, and through blog post are mainly used by college/university for performing online reputation management that are around 33 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. Through review sites is preferred over all other mediums closely followed by through blog post. Also, institutions can use 20% through social media, 17% through forums, and 7% through press release.

Objective 1: Studying the impact of online reputation management after utilization

Table 3: Opinion about how do you utilize online reputation management for your college/ university

ORM utilization	Response	Percentage (%)
create blog post to increase reputation about the college	6	20
remove negative reviews	4	13
look upon actual people check	3	10
check with competing college website	9	30
utilize social media to create brand image	8	27

Graph 3: opinion about how do you utilize online reputation management for your college/ university
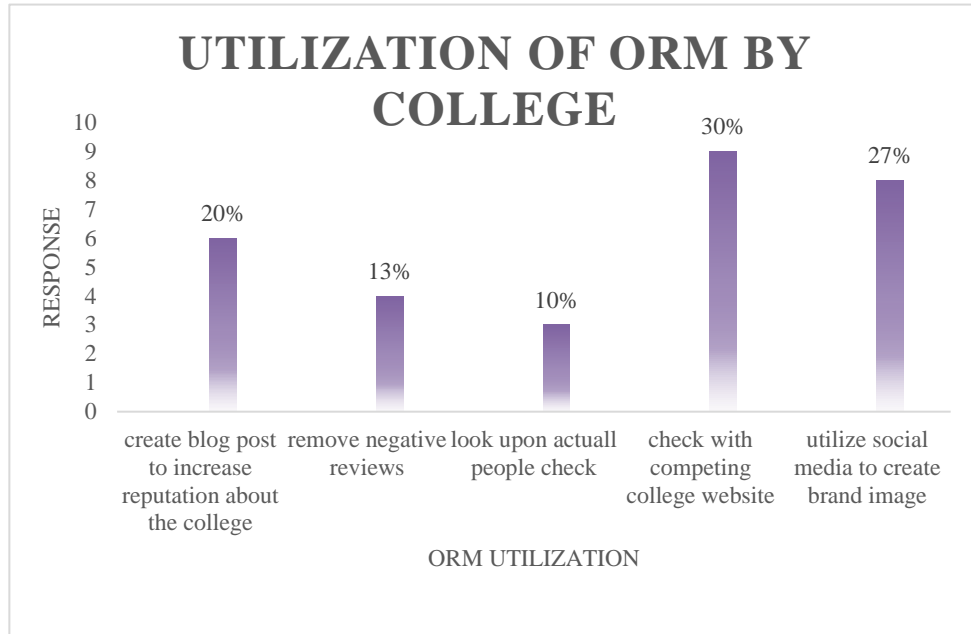
The analysis interpreted that utilization of online reputation management by college/university is mostly by check with competing college website (30 per cent) and utilize social media to create brand image (27 per cent). Also, they utilize online reputation management by creating blog post to increase reputation about the college (20 per cent), removing negative reviews (13 per cent) and look upon actual people check (10 per cent).
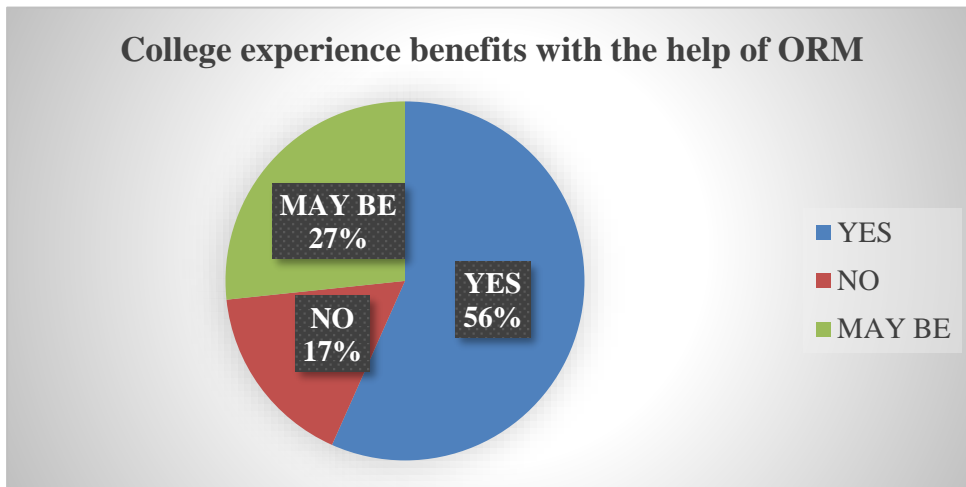
Objective 2: To analyse benefits to college/university through utilization of online reputation management.

1.   The College Experienced any Benefits with the help of Online Reputation Management

Table 4: Opinion about have your college experienced any benefits with the help of online reputation management

Opinion	Response	Percentage (%)
YES	17	56
NO	5	17
MAY BE	8	27

Graph 4: opinion about have your college experienced any benefits with the help of online reputation management


College experience benefits with the help of ORM

From the above analysis it is interpreted that, 56 per cent of institutions experienced benefit with the help of online reputation management. 17 per cent experienced less benefit after utilization of online reputation management and 27 per cent is with neutral opinion about benefits with online reputation management.

2.   Benefits given to college/university through ORM

Table 5: opinion about what are the benefits given to college/university through online reputation management

Benefits obtained through ORM	Response	Percentage (%)
Increase in admission	12	40
keep connected with the audience	6	20
brand creation of the college	7	23
other	5	17

Graph 5: Opinion about what are the benefits given to college/university through online reputation management

Benefits to college/ university
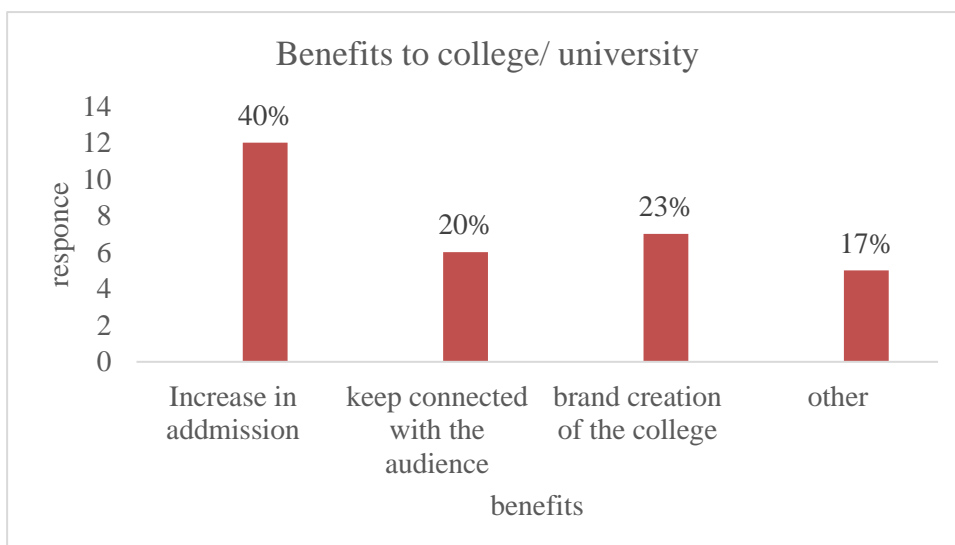
From the above analysis we interpreted that maximum benefit given to college/university through online reputation management is increase in admission (40 per cent). By utilization of online reputation management institution have face other benefits like brand creation of the college (23 per cent), and keep connected with the audience (20 per cent).

Objective 3: To study impact of digital marketing in educational decision-making process.

1.   Digital Marketing Channel used by Students for Higher Educational Decision-Making Process

Table 6: opinion about which digital marketing channel used by students for higher educational decision-making process

Marketing channels	Frequency	Rank
Website	10	1
social media	9	2
SEO	5	4
online review	6	3

Graph 6: Opinion about which digital marketing channel used by students for higher educational decision-making process.
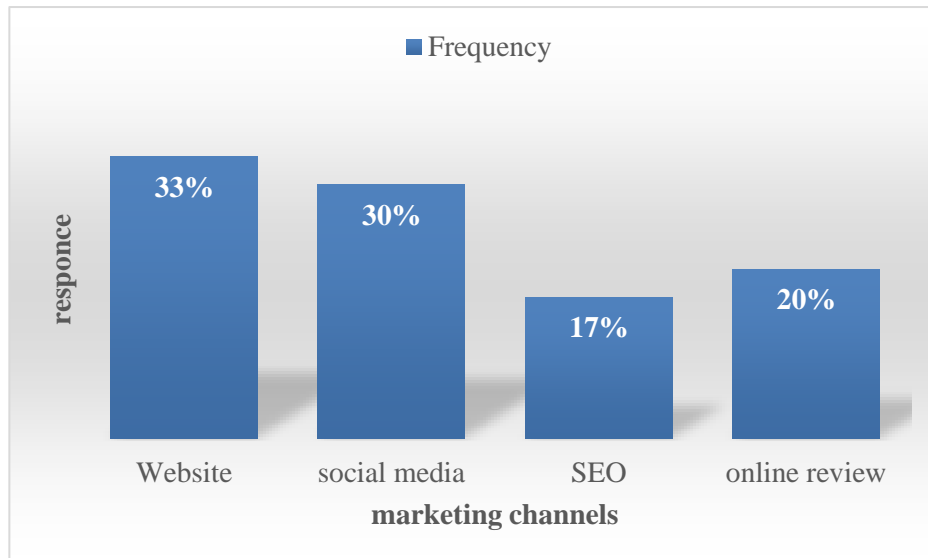
From the above analysis the researcher interpreted that, the institute website and social media are very important for the elevated viability of the institution. For admission related decision institution website (33 per cent) is preferred over all other mediums closely followed by social media (30 per cent). Moderately referred mediums are SEO, online reviews which are on an average referred by 17 per cent, 20 per cent of the respondents.
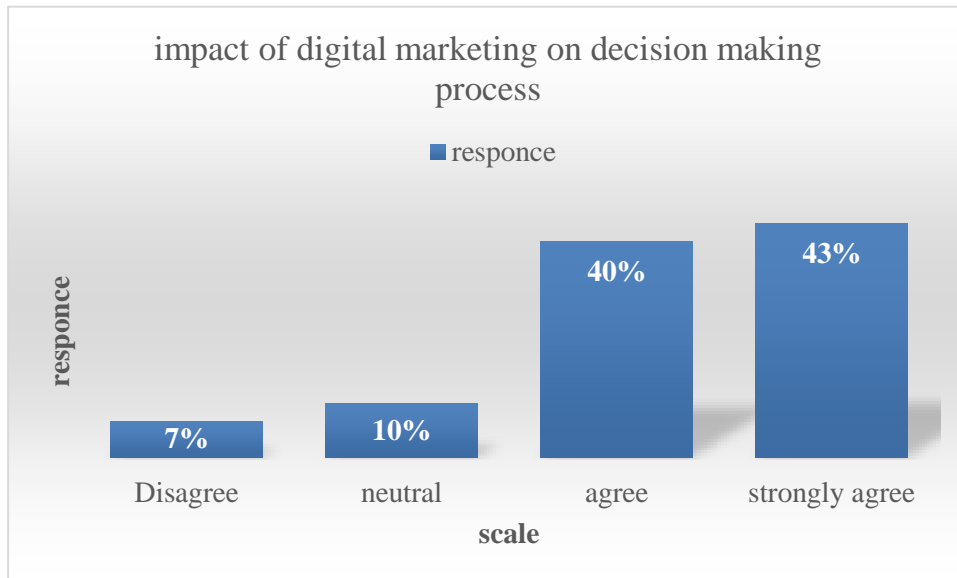
2.   Impact of Digital Marketing for Selecting Educational Institution

Table 7: Opinion about is there any impact of digital marketing for selecting educational institution

Scale	Response	percentage (%)
Disagree	2	7
Neutral	3	10
Agree	12	40

strongly agree	13	43

Graph 7: Opinion about is there any impact of digital marketing for selecting educational institution

From the above analysis, we interpreted that majority that is 83 per cent of the respondents strongly agree and agree that digital marketing had an impact on selecting the education institution. While, 10 per cent of respondents are neutral and 7 per cent disagree that digital marketing never had impact on selecting the institution.

3.   Utilization of ORM in college/university and Benefits of ORM after Utilization

Table 8: Correlation between utilization of ORM in university/ college and benefits of ORM after utilization

	utilize ORM	benefit from ORM
utilize ORM	1	0.022
benefit from ORM	0.022	1

The above correlation analysis shows the relationship between utilization of online reputation management and benefit from online reputation management. The r value is 0.02 means it is close zero. It shows that there is very week correlation in between utilization of online reputation management and benefit from online reputation management. Hence, the institutions utilize online reputation management then they have different benefits.

b)   The Questionnaire based on Students

Objective:

1. To identify the preferred digital marketing channels used by students (college goers)

during their higher education decision making journey

2. To measure the students attitude towards digital marketing communication tools

3. To understand the impact of digital marketing communication tools on student higher education decision process

4. The aspects that a college/university must possess while decision making for a student to choose a particular college/university

1.   Gender of Respondents

Table 1: Gender of Respondents under study

Gender	Respondents
Male	16
female	16

Graph 1: Gender of Respondents under study
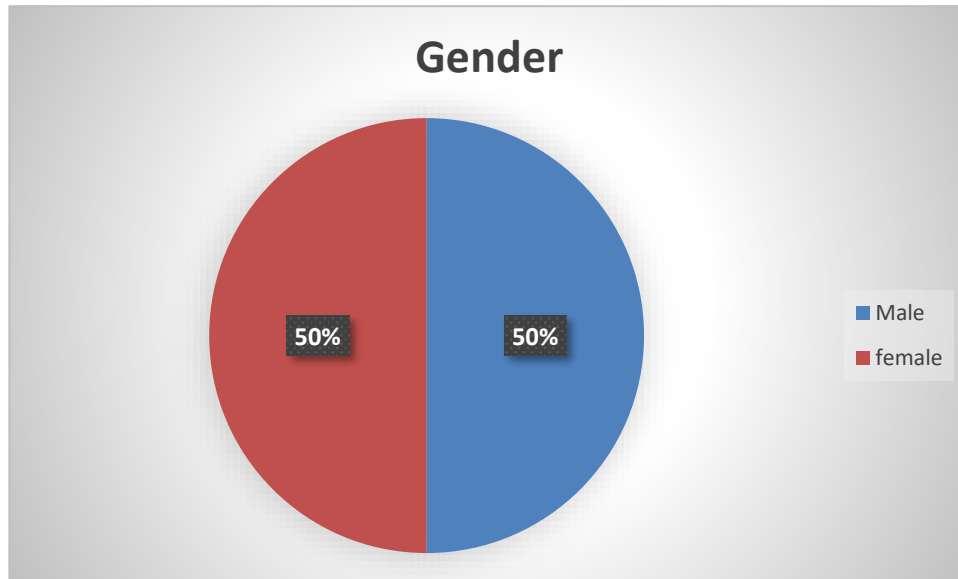
The above figure represents gender of the respondents under the study. The researcher observed that the male respondents and female respondents are responded in same proportion that are 50 per cent and 50 per cent respectively.

2.   Education of Respondents

Table 2: Education of respondents under study

| Education	respondents	percentage
Graduation	16	48%
Post graduation	17	52%

Graph 2: Education of respondents under study
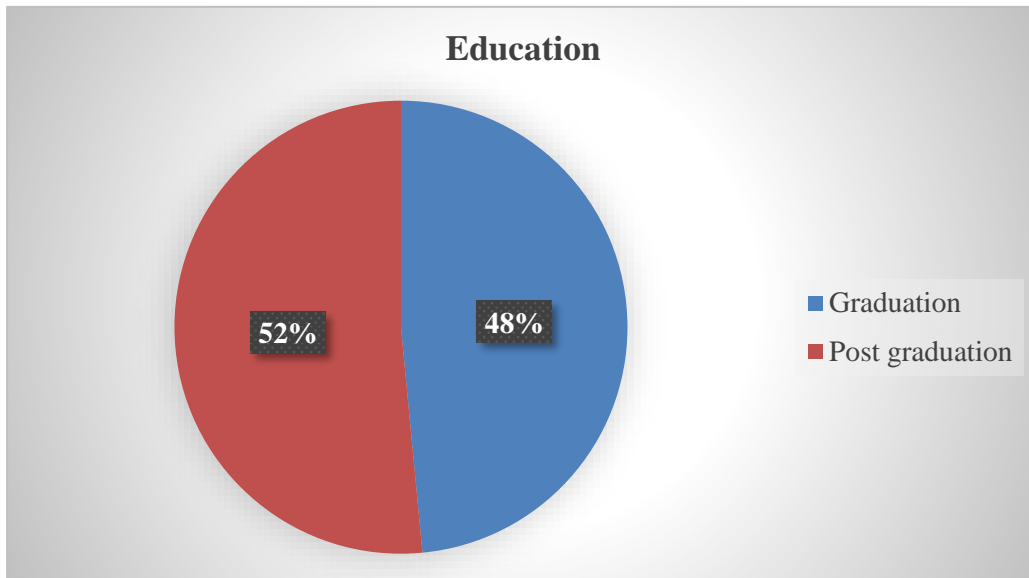
The data studies the educational qualification of the respondents under study. Most of the respondents are completed post-graduation (52 per cent) followed by the graduation degree (48 per cent). This indicates that the respondents under study are well-qualified.

3.   Type of information/aspects use while selecting college/university

Table 3: Opinion about what type of information/aspects (about the college/university's reputation) use while selecting college/university

Aspect for selecting college/university	respondents	percentage
Online information	1	3
other information	6	19
Both	25	78

Graph 3: Opinion about what type of information/aspects (about the college/university's reputation) use while selecting college/university
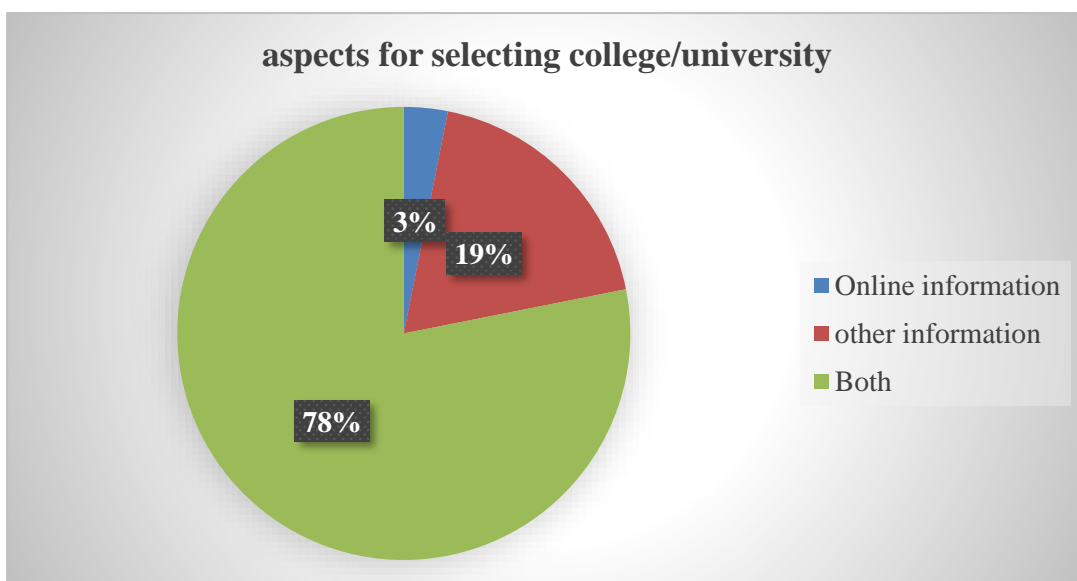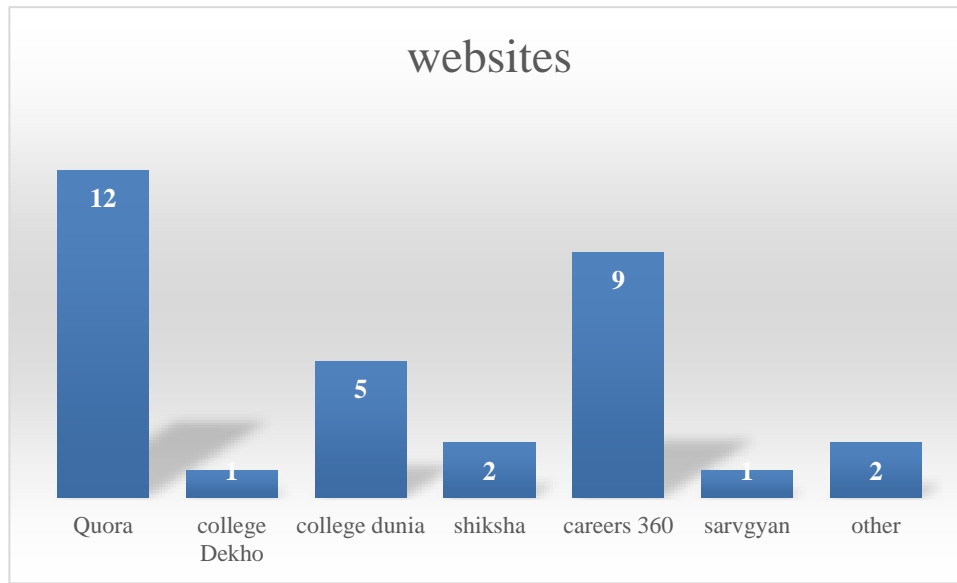
From above analysis the researcher interpreted that most of the students use both online information (like post, reviews, social media) and other information (like word of mouth, information obtained from alumni) that are around 78 per cent. While, 3 per cent respondents use online information and 19 per cent respondents use other information for selecting college/ university.

Objective 1: To identify the preferred digital marketing channels used by students (college goers) during their higher education decision making journey

Table 4: Opinion about to identify the preferred digital marketing channels/ websites used by students (college goers) during their higher education decision making journey

Websites	Respondents	Rank
Quora	12	1
college Deco	1	6
college dunia	5	3
Shiksha	2	4
careers 360	9	2
Sarvgyan	1	6
Other	2	4

Graph 4: Opinion about to identify the preferred digital marketing channels/ websites used by students (college goers) during their higher education decision making journey
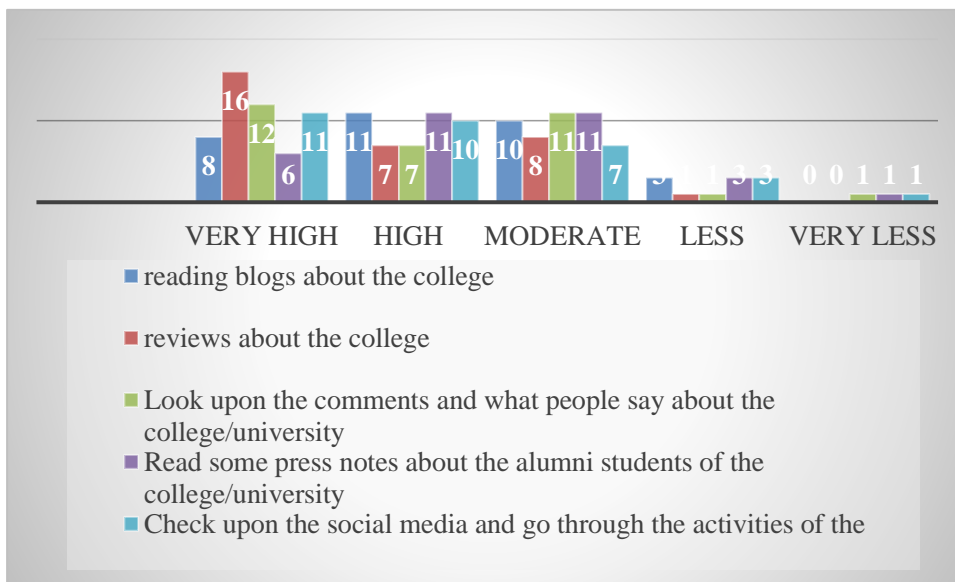

From the above analysis, the researcher interpreted that maximum students use quora website for selecting college/ university. And mean while other websites used by students in selection process in ranking order like careers 360, college dunia, shiksha, sarvgyan , and college dekho.

Objective 2: To measure the student's attitude towards digital marketing communication tools

Table 5: Opinion about students' attitude towards digital marketing communication tools/ information for selection process

Rating	reading blogs about the college	reviews about the college	Look upon the comments and what people say about the college / university	Read some press notes about the alumni students of the college / university	Check upon the social media and go through the activities of the
very high	8	16	12	6	11
high	11	7	7	11	10
Moderate	10	8	11	11	7
Less	3	1	1	3	3
very less	0	0	1	1	1

Graph 5: Opinion about students' attitude towards digital marketing communication tools/ information for selection process

From above analysis, the researcher analyses that the information relating to reviews about the college is very highly used by students. And meanwhile students attitude towards other information like reading blogs, look upon the comments, reading some press notes and check upon the social media is as shown in graph.

Objective 4: The aspects that a college/university must possess while decision making for a student to choose a particular college/university

Table 7: Opinion about the aspects that college/university must possess while decision making for a student to choose a particular college/university.

Aspects	response
Academic quality	27
Faculty	15
Skilled certificate programs	19
Industries partnership	19
Transparency	11

Reviews and ratings	16
Academic research	9
Reliable/trustworthy	17
No. of students graduating every year	8

Graph 7: Opinion about the aspects that college/university must possess while decision making for a students to choose a particular college/university.
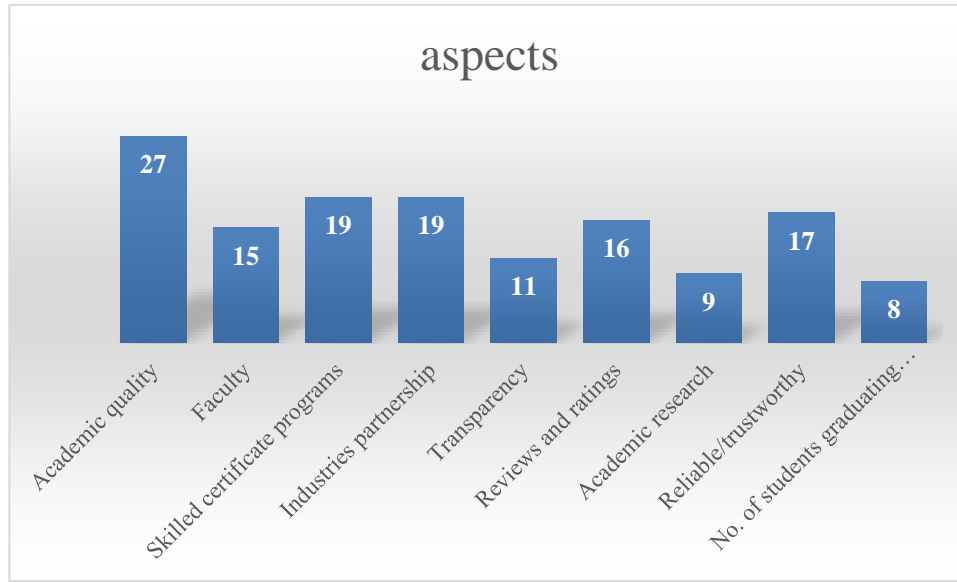
From the above analysis, the researcher interpreted that the aspects that maximum effects on students' decision i.e., academic quality. And the aspects that is less affects are no. Of students graduating every year. And other aspects which are also affects students' decision-making process which are industries partnership, skilled certificate, reviews, and rating.

4. Result, Discussion and Conclusion

The present study relating to role of online reputation management in students' higher education decision making process. Digital Marketing is relatively newer concept in this era. Though it has already captured many sectors, Education sector is still at nascent stage to adopt Digital Marketing Strategies. Though it has made its entry in Education sector, the throw is still limited. More research is still needed to assess the impact of digital marketing strategies on various aspects of education sector. This paper was an attempt to assess the impact of digital marketing strategies on admission scenario and the perception of student towards digital marketing strategies. Digital marketing is the online promotion of businesses and their brands through digital media channels which include websites, social media, radio, television, mobile and even forms of traditionally non-digital media such as billboards and transit signs. In simpler, any marketing media that is delivered electronically is considered digital marketing. The increased use of the internet and digital media has been a major influence in the field of education. The education sector is a revolutionized sector because the majority percentage of students is the users of the internet. This has a direct implication on the way that educational institutions and colleges need to utilize the web and cell phones to connect with more students. And digital marketing is the best strategy that can be embraced by the educational institutions to reach out to prospective students.

The objective of the study is to understand studying the impact of online reputation management after utilization, to identify the preferred digital marketing channels used by students (college goers) during their higher education decision-making journey, to analyse benefits to college/university through utilization of online reputation management, to study impact of digital marketing in educational decision-making process has been proven by above analysis.

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