

## Rise of digital marketing in higher education industry in India

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### Abstract

Higher Education is a sector that is growing at a tremendous pace in India. IBEF report for education sector January 2018 suggests that there are around 5500 registered business schools in India out of which about 2 Lac students graduate every year. The market size of the Higher Education Industry in India as of 2016-17 was \$ 15 Billion and the industry is expected to be valued at around \$ 35 Billion in 2025 year ending.

Before selecting a business school, an average student conducts a thorough research on the internet and through referrals so that she/he could make the best out of the huge investment she/he would make into higher education. Many management institutes have a dedicated sales department to physically sell the forms outside coaching institutes and examination centres. It has been observed the boom in the digital marketing sector is being exploited by the international education industry for their benefit which includes branding of the institutes at the time of annual admissions to pull large number of applications and staying visible to the corporates through continuous engagement on the internet. The objective of the study is to make an inference about the usage of digital marketing by popular, private higher education institutes in India and to know whether there is an association between the change in trend of the applicants looking for the best suited business school and the boom in Digital Marketing in the Higher Education Industry. This study is a descriptive research conducted through survey with the help of self-designed, structured questionnaire on various aspects of digital marketing. A sample size of 958 applicants has been selected through non probability, convenient sampling carried throughout the Indian subcontinent. The study has concluded that some of the most popular business schools as per the primary survey are already practicing digital marketing while some are yet growing in this field.

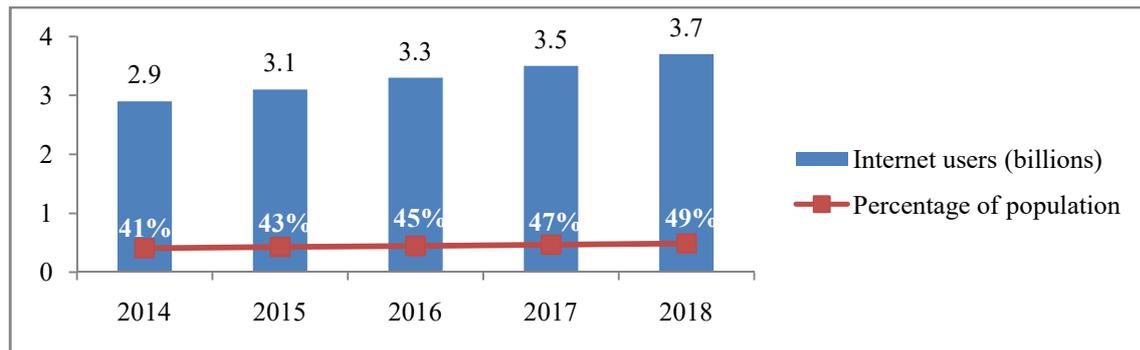
**Keywords:** Higher Education in India, PGDM Courses, Digital Marketing, Change in trends in marketing

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**Introduction of the topic:**

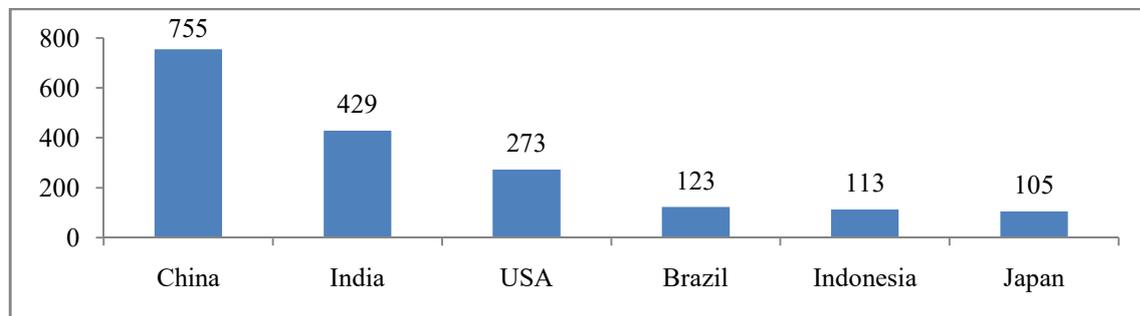
Even though digital marketing has been around since quite a number of years but it is gaining the much deserved importance very recently. From being a sub-domain in the marketing department, it is shaping up to become a full-fledged department with its own research and development team. The world is growing at a really fast pace on the internet. Some factual figures about the world’s growth can be inferred from the graphs below.

1.1. The graph below shows internet users in the world (in Billions), also expressed as percentage of world population for the year.



**The CAGR of the Internet users from 2014 to 2018 is 6.2%.**

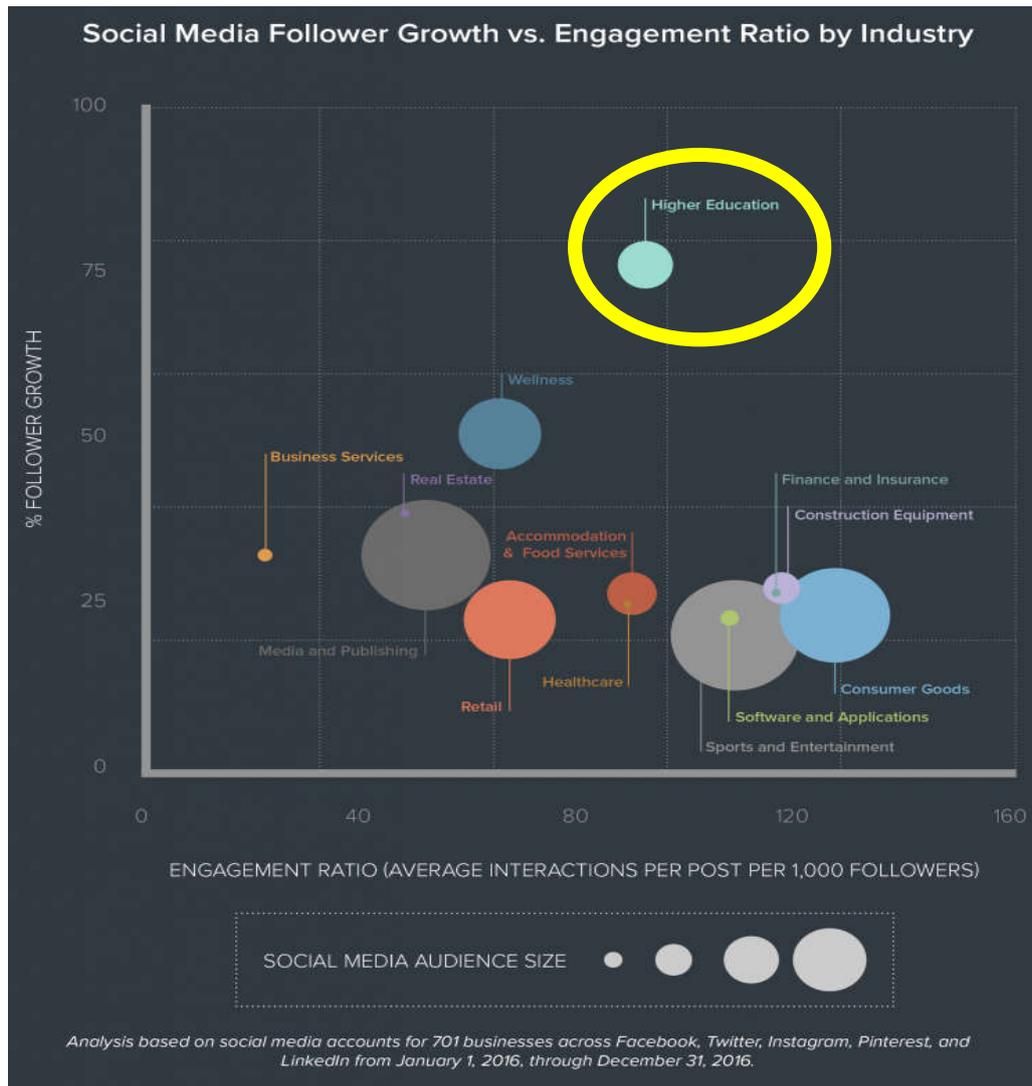
1.2. The graph below shows the ranking of companies on basis of respective internet users.



(Graph 1.1. and 1.2. ref. Book: Digital Marketing by Dr. Seema Gupta)

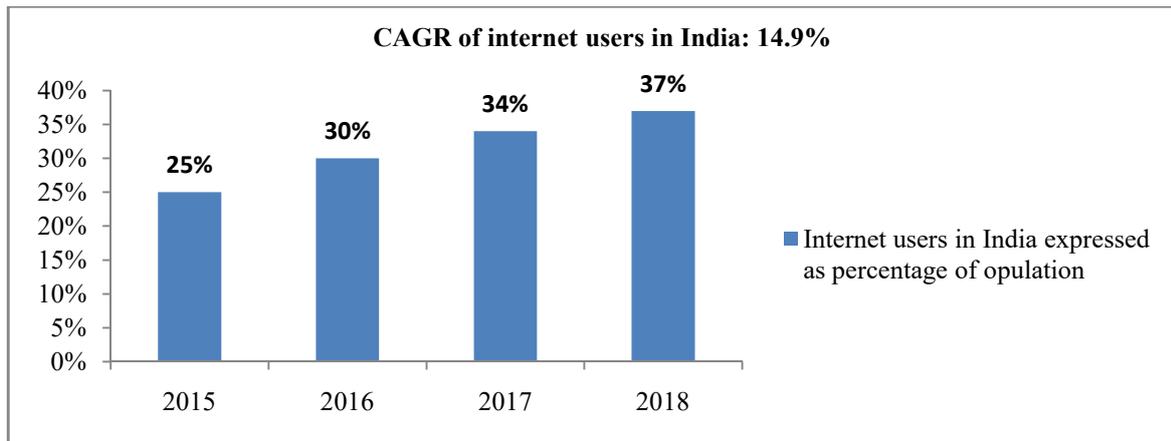
Inferring from the graphs above we can analyse that the world population is definitely looking more onto their internet devices than the world around and it is growing each day. The higher education industry internationally is doing tremendous on the digital platform. As per the 2017 report from Track Maven Digital Marketing Analytics and Benchmarking, higher education sector worldwide is sky rocketing. On the search engine platform, higher education sector is among the top 3 industries that occupy the top 50 percentile of the internet search engines. On the social media platforms, higher education skyrocketed from 2016 to 17 having a phenomenal 77% growth in the terms of followers and post engagement. Below is the data visualization from Track Maven.

1.3. The picture below shows 2017 report from Track Maven Digital Marketing Analytics and Benchmarking for social media growth in higher education sector worldwide

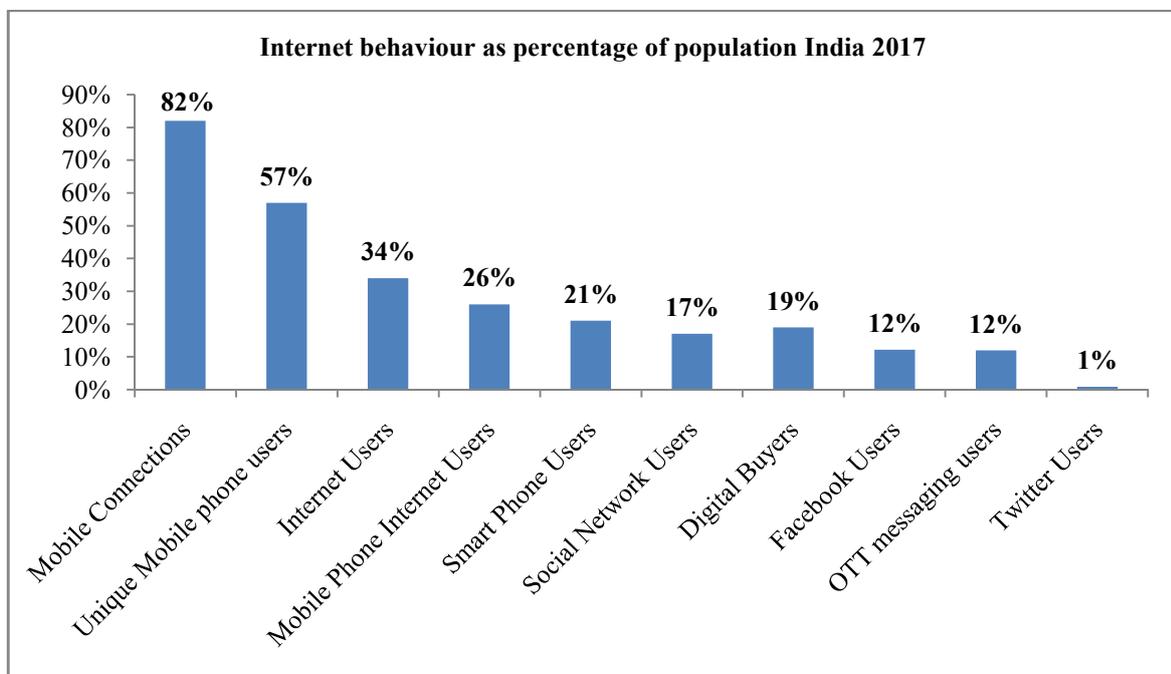


After establishing the background of international standing and growth, it is time we converge to what is the scenario in India and how the sector is growing. Inferring from the Graph 1.2. which shows that India ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in the number of internet users in the world, there is no wonder that digital marketing has huge scope in the country. With current population of 132 Cr., the graphs below show the internet growth and behaviour of the population of India on the internet

1.4. The graph below shows the percentage of population of India using internet for the respective years (Current population of India is approximately 132 Cr)



1.5. The graph below shows the behaviour of the population of India on the internet



(Graph 1.4 and 1.5 ref. Book: Digital Marketing by Dr. Seema Gupta)

Referring to the graphs above, it is safe to say that in India, the internet has penetrated deep enough through tyre one, tyre two and tyre three cities and is expanding in the rural areas as well. When referred to IBEF report for education and training sector January 2018, it was learnt that the market size of the higher education industry in India as of 2016-17 was \$ 15 Billion and the industry is expected to be valued at around \$ 35 Billion in 2025 year ending. The ASSOCHAM report of 2017 suggests that there are around 5500 registered business schools in India out of which about 2 Lac students graduate every year

**Literature review:**

According to the article published by 'Josh Spilker' about '14 digital marketing tips from higher education global leader institutes', digital marketing is extensively being used in this sector and there are various channels that are being looked into. Right from being visible to the applicants at the admissions time to generating awareness about the on campus activities to the current students and the world, there are various key performance indicators that are used to market the institutes on the digital platform like, cost per click, cost per lead, cost per acquisition etc. Search engine optimization is a very crucial part as well, as search engines like Google drive high intention visitors who are actually looking for either admissions or some relevant information about the institutes or the related subjects, on their websites. Social media marketing on the other hand helps the institutes to accurately target the audience with the desired targeting methods e.g. Geographical targeting, Demographical targeting or behaviour based targeting which goes a long way to generate external stimulus in the target group and attracts them to the institute's website.

The study is also greatly influenced by the article of 'Millennium Agency' about '3 ways digital marketing is influencing Higher Education Recruitment'. The article talks about how a strong institutional brand is built on the internet as 78% of the students reported that the first impression about the institute is built by its website. It throws some light on the fact that the majority of the population spends major time online, gathering information and it can be used by institutes to create awareness in students as well as the corporates for better recruitments. The article goes on and suggests that students have to be engaged throughout their student lifecycle starting from the admission cycle, to keeping the alumni updated about the recent happenings.

The facts of the industry on the digital marketing sector were referred from the report of 'Track Maven Digital Marketing Analytics and Benchmarking' to understand the current standing of the industry internationally to start the research.

A reference was also taken from the International level digital marketing competition that was conducted by 'Terminalfour' in 2017 among 200 different higher education institutes across 13 countries and the first three rankers were University of Tennessee, Cambridge University and Northern Oklahoma College respectively. This competition is held every year and the whole year's digital campaigns are considered for every institute and then the institute with the maximum successful campaigns are declared as winners. This promotes year-long learning of the student themselves through live campaigning and promotes the institute's glory to the new applicants, the recruiters or other interested website traffic.

**Objective:**

The objective of the research is to find out whether the Indian Higher Education industry already using digital marketing to its maximum potential.

**Hypothesis:**

The null hypothesis that is defined here is that the Indian Higher Education Industry (private institutes) is already in line with the international higher education sector in terms of digital marketing efforts.

The alternate hypothesis that is defined is that the Indian higher education industry (private institutes) is yet to adopt the digital tools of marketing.

**Research Methodology:**

The methodology adopted here is exploratory research through primary data collection and descriptive research through comparison with secondary data.

**Data source:** Primary data and comparison with secondary data

**Data collection method:** Sampling method

**Sample size for primary research:** 958

**Sampling Method:** Non random, convenience sampling

**Research tools used:** M.S. Excel; SPSS; Digital marketing data collection and comparison websites (mentioned in references)

**Scope of research:**

The scope of this research is seven of the most popular private business schools in India. The list was an outcome of the primary data collected from 958 respondents. The top government institutes are not a part of this research.

**Assumption:**

It is assumed that these popular, private business schools are the market leaders in this sector and the trend that they follow gets trickled down to other institutes as well who are late adopters of the trends.

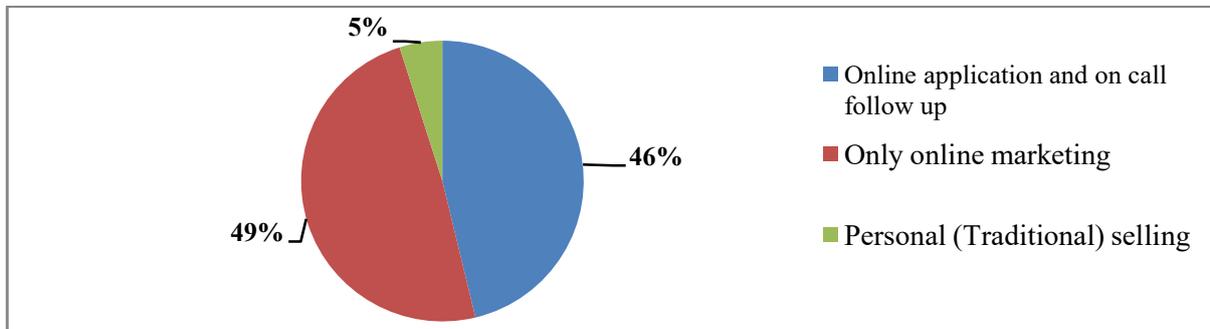
**Body of the research and analysis:**

Keeping the above findings in mind, a primary research and a secondary research were conducted to know what the trends are in India.

Before selecting an institute, an average student conducts a thorough research on the internet and through referrals so that they could make the best out of the huge investment they would make into higher education. To know where the applicants are looking at, a primary research on 1000 MBA applicants of the year 2018-19 was conducted and the following were the discoveries:

The management institutes have a dedicated sales department to physically sell the forms outside coaching institutes and examination centres. Through the survey, the marketing method that was most convenient for the targeted audience was asked to them.

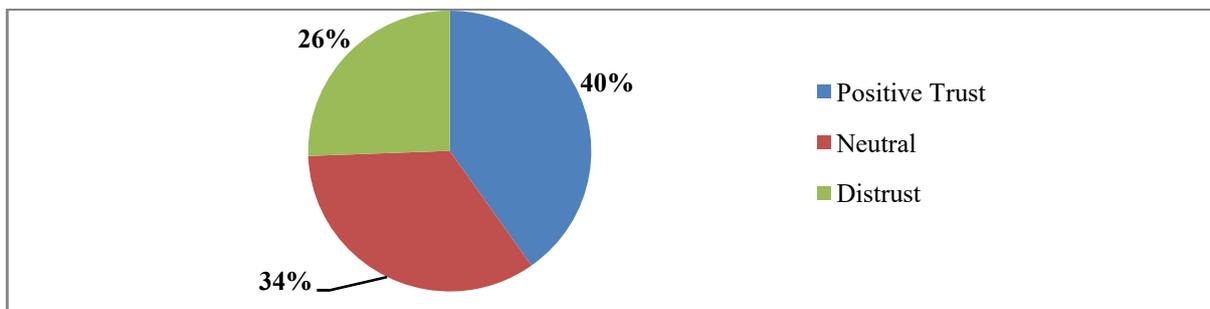
1.6. The below pie chart shows the most convenient style of marketing as chosen by respondents of the primary survey.



It can be inferred that digital platform has already beaten personal selling (Traditional marketing) and the applicants are looking for their comfort zone than being chased by individuals to buy forms for admissions.

When asked for the trust of the respondents on the banner advertisements that are put up by the respective institutions on the internet (search engines and 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites) the reply was as below.

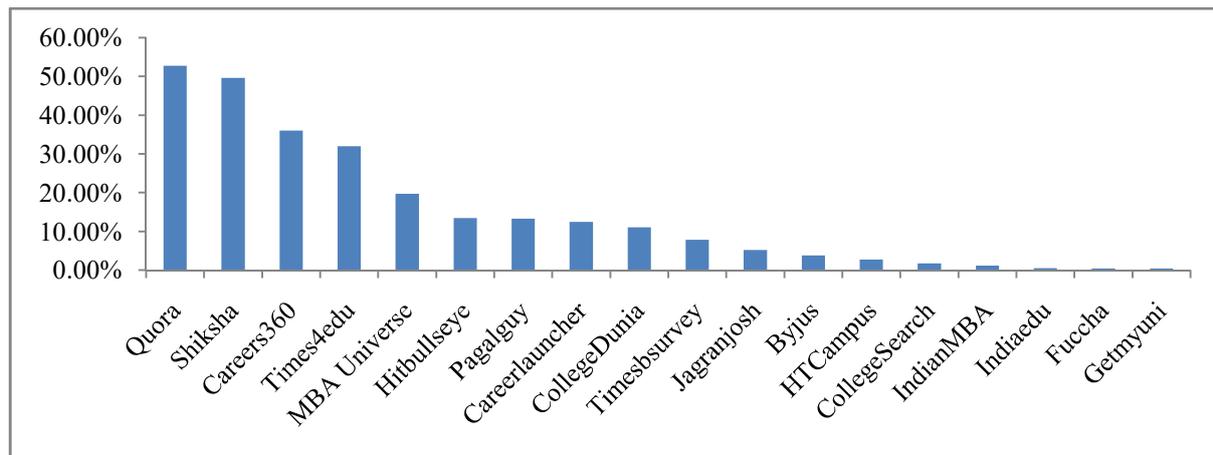
1.7. The pie chart below shows the trust of the respondents of primary research on banner advertisements shown on the internet



It can be inferred that there is a considerable trust and scope for the banner advertisements provided they are placed at the prime pages of the website and targeted well.

Whenever an applicant is in search of a best suited business school in India on any of the search engines, the top websites that appear on the search engines are not of any specific institutes but are of aggregators, business school rankings and feedback forums and so our research starts from here. When asked about which websites of 3<sup>rd</sup> party ranking they trusted the most, the following was the outcome:

1.8. The graph below shows the most trusted websites for selecting a business school as per the responses from the primary data collected.



The top four most trusted websites as per the primary data were cross verified with the secondary data from the internet if the websites were actually performing. Following were the results of the secondary research.

1.9. The table below shows the performance of the respective websites, Ref.: Similarweb.com

Website	Rank in India	Avg. monthly visitors	Avg. unique visitors
Quora.com	#15	57 Cr.	23 Cr.
Shiksha.com	#293	85 Lac	48 Lac
Careers360.com	#169	2 Cr.	1.1 Cr
Time4education.com	#2135	9.1 Lac	2.9 Lac

More than 3 Cr. websites were registered from India till 2017 out of which 10 Lac websites were active and significant as per Alexa.com`

It was observed that after participating in these rankings and through the word of mouth and display marketing, the management institutes create awareness about their brand presence and hence pull the traffic towards their website for selling application forms.

When the web traffic or the interested applicants are pulled to the websites of the respective institutes, it is their website that has to perform. The primary research showed us that

around 64.37% of the applicants used mobile devices to surf the websites of the institutes they get interested in. The same was supported by the secondary data that was pulled out of the websites of some of the popular private business schools in India.

2.0. Below table shows the traffic that flows into the websites of the respective institutes and the source device of the traffic, Ref.: Similarweb.com

Website	Traffic share from Computer	Traffic Share from mobile	Avg. monthly traffic	Unique monthly traffic
NMIMS Mumbai	36.45%	63.55%	5,85,864	3,19,096
KJ Somaiya	40.56%	59.44%	32,016	15,818
ICFAI Hyderabad (IBS)	41.99%	58.01%	35,362	18,414
Welingkar Mumbai	43.14%	56.86%	1,40,497	52,233
MDI Gurgaon	43.93%	56.07%	68,182	25,385
SIBM Pune	45.84%	54.16%	53,873	31,270
IMT Ghaziabad	52.85%	47.15%	61,050	27,169

It can be observed that nearly half or more traffic is being generated from mobile phones rather than computers. To keep up the pace, it is necessary for the institutes to make their websites mobile friendly and fast loading.

A Pearson's Correlation test was run on the replies to know if there was any difference in behaviour among the two genders and the website surfing device (mobile/ computer) which came out to be insignificant. Also a Pearson's Correlation test was run on the replies to know if there was any difference among the behaviour of the different states on the website surfing device (mobile/ computer) which also came out to be insignificant. Hence a conclusion was made that the devices (mobile/ computer) are used uniformly across the country with no influence of factors like geographical location and gender.

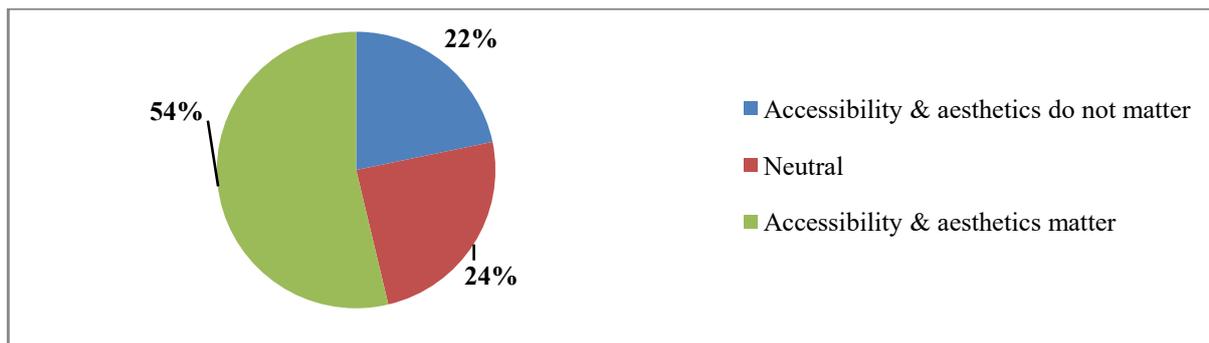
A peep into the websites' responding and loading capacity was made and the following were the results.

2.1. The table below shows the size and load time of the respective websites, Ref.: Pingdom.com

Website	Load Time in Seconds	Page Size in Mega Bytes (MB)
MDI Gurgaon	0.804	1.4
SIBM Pune	1.02	3.9
NMIMS Mumbai	1.34	2.8
ICFAI Hyderabad (IBS)	1.55	1.7
IMT Ghaziabad	4.9	2
Welingkar Mumbai	4.9	2.4
KJ Somaiya	6.17	0.511

This goes ahead to reaffirm that the websites of the popular private business schools in India are ready with the basics to handle the traffic diverting to their websites from any source which is much necessary. The conclusion on necessity of having a high performing website was derived from the primary research in which the respondents answered about the importance of accessibility and aesthetics of the websites and by the article of 'Millennium Agency' about '3 ways digital marketing is influencing Higher Education Recruitment' which also tells the same.

2.2. The graph below shows the impression of an accessible and aesthetically appealing website on the respondents of the primary research



It can be inferred that the looks of the website does matter to create the first impression. In addition to the looks, the applicants also look for easy accessibility. They look for quick reachability of the news releases and highlights of the updates.

In addition to the presence on 3<sup>rd</sup> party websites, all the institutes do a lot of activities on search engines to always stay at the top of search results of whatever queries a user enters into the search engine. There are various factors that lead to organic traffic to the websites of the respective institutes discussed as under:

#### 1) **Brand recall:**

Brand recall of the institute is the name it has established for itself in the past couple of years since it has been into existence. Brand recall is built mostly by offline activities like:

- a) Placements
- b) Hosting contests
- c) Annual festivals
- d) Participating and winning industry hosted quizzes
- e) Publishing research papers.

The brand recall on the internet is judged by 3 factors due to which the website traffic/ interested audience lands up on their respective websites:

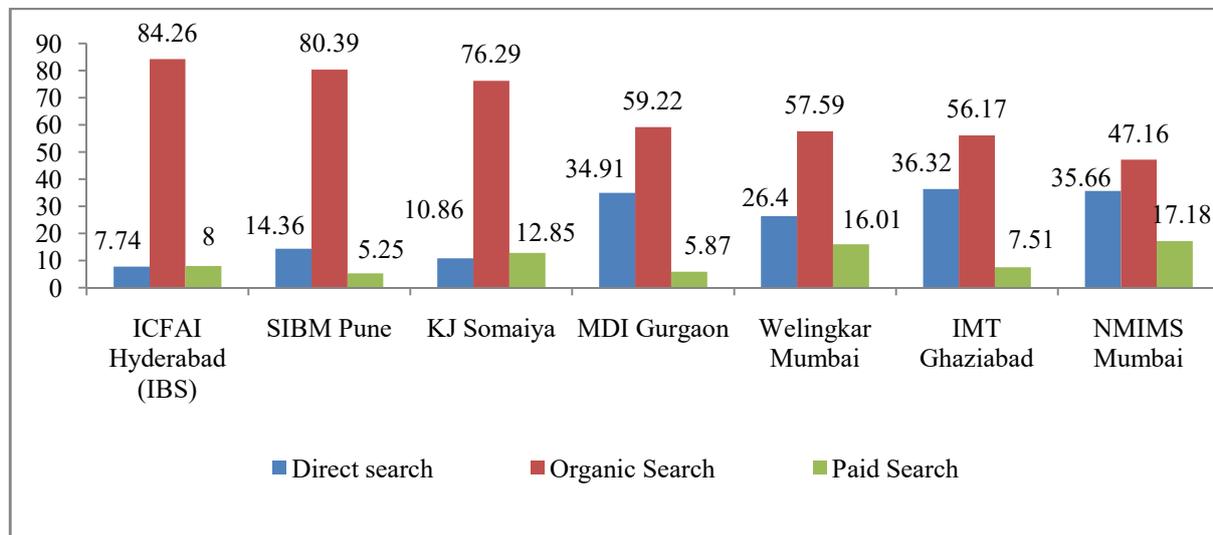
- a) **Direct search:** Direct search happens when the website visitors know which institute's website they want to go to and directly enter the URL address of the

website. This might happen mostly with repeat users and existing or ex-students and associates

- b) **Organic search:** Organic research happens when the interested visitors enter a keyword/ query in the search engine and the institute’s website comes on the top results and the visitor gets interested to visit the website to know more about the services offered.
- c) **Paid search:** It is the traffic/ visitors that land up on the website’s landing page through paid advertisement campaigns that are being run on the search engines or the display network websites.

A study on the brand pull was done by looking into how does the audience/ traffic landed at the homepage of the websites of the popular private business schools of India, the results are as below.

2.3. The graph below shows the percentage of total visitors on the respective websites through direct, paid and organic searches. Ref.: Similarweb.com



The above data is sorted by ‘Organic search’ on the search engines. The inference that can be drawn here is that the respective institute have established brand names for themselves which drives organic search for them. The institutes work towards making their website links be at the top of the search results for different search queries so that they are visible on every relevant query run by the applicants. It would be the best situation for the institutes if the traffic lands on their website through organic search as it would mean that the search engine optimization is working out for them along with their offline branding thus reducing the cost of paid advertising.

## 2) Keyword Tagging:

Keyword tagging plays the role of telling the search engine that the website has the relevant data to the query run on the search engine by the visitors. Keywords are basically queries which are in the form of words or phrases, run by an applicant/ visitor to get the desired results. Keywords are tagged on the website through coding and also on the content of the website which is read by the search engine bots when they crawl the websites. When the study on the respective websites was done, following were the findings:

2.4. The table below shows the keywords tagged on the respective websites at various places. Ref.: Smallseotools.com

Website	Broad keywords	Exact keywords	Keywords in title	Keywords in URL	Keywords in anchor	Keywords in text
Welingkar Mumbai	155	-	-	-	1	-
NMIMS Mumbai	-	1	-	1	-	-
IMT Ghaziabad	-	-	-	-	-	-
MDI Gurgaon	2,14,00,000	4	-	1	5	-
SIBM Pune	-	7	-	-	9	-
ICFAI Hyderabad (IBS)	2,08,000	885	-	817	58	-
KJ Somaiya	46,100	205	-	175	3	-

### a) Broad keywords:

A keyword setting that allows your ad to show when someone searches for that keyword or a variation of it. The broad match keyword "bicycle bell" can cause your ad/ website link to show if someone searches for variations like "bicycle bells," "buy a bell for a bicycle," and "bell reviews for bikes."

### b) Exact keywords:

A keyword setting that allows your ad to show only when someone searches for your keyword or close variants of your keyword. Close variants may include, Misspellings, Singular or plural forms, Stemming (for example, *floor* and *flooring*), abbreviations, accents, reordered words with the same meaning (for example, [*shoes mens*] and [*mens shoes*]), addition or removal of function words. function words are prepositions (like *in* or *to*), conjunctions (like *for* or *but*), articles (like *a* or *the*), and other words that don't impact the intent of a search. For example, [*shoes for men*] is a close variant of [*men shoes*] with the function word "for" removed.

### c) Keywords in Title:

These are keywords which are tagged in the title of the content in the website.

### d) Keywords in URL:

URL is the address of the website, tagging keywords on them is also helpful.

**e) Keywords in Anchor:**

An anchor is that part of the website that is a clickable button. It can be in the form of text or an image. It has a hyperlink attached to it that directs the visitor to a specific web address. Having text as anchors, specifically having keywords as anchors helps a lot.

**f) Keywords in Text:**

These are the keywords that are tagged in the content of the website.

Ranking keywords on the internet can be found through Keyword Finder Tool on the Google Adwords platform. When looked up for the competition on the ranking keywords in the industry, it was found that they had tremendously low competition which is in line with the findings mentioned in the *table 2.4*. that not too many of the 5500 registered business schools are using keyword tagging. This also indicates that there is a huge scope of growth and realizing the true potential of digital marketing in the education sector. Some of the keywords that were looked up are as under:

2.5. The table below shows the keywords that are searched the most on search engines like Google by the applicants or interested audience along with the online competition for them.

Keyword	Avg. monthly searches	Competition
mba colleges in pune	9900	medium
list of mba colleges in pune	1300	Low
mba	90500	Low
top mba colleges in india	27100	medium
mba courses	27100	medium
best mba colleges in india	14800	medium
top b schools in india	6600	Low
mba finance	12100	Low
best b schools in india	2400	Low
Mba Marketing	5400	Low
Mba colleges in Mumbai	9900	Medium

**3) Backlinking:**

Backlinking is basically having links of one's website on another website as a reference. This helps establish authority of a website whose backlink is given. This tells the search engine that the website that is being referred to has high quality and dependable content that other websites are referring to. The more backlinks a website has, the higher the authority the website exercises on the internet and the search engines would hence place the website higher in the search results. Having backlinks from other websites that already have higher authority makes a big difference. Some really effective backlinks come from:

**a) Editorial sections:**

If the content on the website is truly remarkable, it can be referred to by editorial sections which write about the industry or related topics and can give a link to one's content for reference.

**b) Related Blogs:**

Having backlinks from other similar blogs or articles which attract considerable traffic also works well.

**c) Testimonials:**

Having back links on testimonial websites or blogs is a great idea and is considered as having supreme quality that the traffic is reading the content and is spreading it through word of mouth.

**d) Aggregator websites:**

Aggregator websites see highest number of traffic as mostly people go there to compare two or more options. Aggregator websites in higher education sector are the 3<sup>rd</sup> party ranking websites about which we have discussed earlier.

**e) Twitter back links:**

Having a tweet by an influencer which is favoured and re-tweeted considerable number of times also creates backlinks on the internet by guiding traffic to the targeted website.

Positive backlinks can also be generated on higher ranking websites by conducting events that would invite other website owners to write news or articles about the institution, backlink can be generated by being in the news for some or the other break through findings, by conducting activities with market influencers and asking them to blog or vlog about one's website and lastly by participating in contests and winning them so that the organization hosting the event can mention a back link on their website.

2.6. The table below shows the number of backlinks the websites of the respective institutes have. Ref.: Smallseotools.com

Website	Number of backlinks pointing to page	Referring Domains	Referring IP's	Follow Links
Welingkar Mumbai	29,800	458	407	73%
NMIMS Mumbai	27,340	1,080	763	50%
IMT Ghaziabad	21,690	724	595	73%
MDI Gurgaon	11,070	644	516	72%
SIBM Pune	4000	462	387	60%
ICFAI Hyderabad (IBS)	902	153	146	68%
KJ Somaiya	816	85	87	69%

The reason why search engine and website marketing is high intention marketing is because only the visitors/ traffic who want to get some information run a search query on the search engines. This means that the intention is really high and if the visibility of one brand is more, there are higher chances for that brand to drive the click through and finally get a paid conversion. Benchmark for 'Google Search' leading to conversion is 3.39% out of total times the result is viewed on the search engine (impressions). Benchmark for 'Google Display Ad Network' is 0.50% out the total impressions. In pure marketing terms Search Engine Marketing arises from internal stimulus.

Having discussed website and search engine marketing which targets high intention search queries, we need to move further and discuss social media marketing which is done on high accuracy basis. Social media like Facebook and twitter play a major role in the visibility of the brand to the 'potential market'. The potential market may or may not become actual customer depending upon their personal interests. In the case of higher education, the potential market can be:

- a) The students who are in the final year of their graduation
- b) The students who appear for Chartered Accountant final examinations or Company Secretary final examinations after their graduation.
- c) The students who appear for Bank Entrance exams
- d) The students who appear for Combined Defence Services exam after their graduation

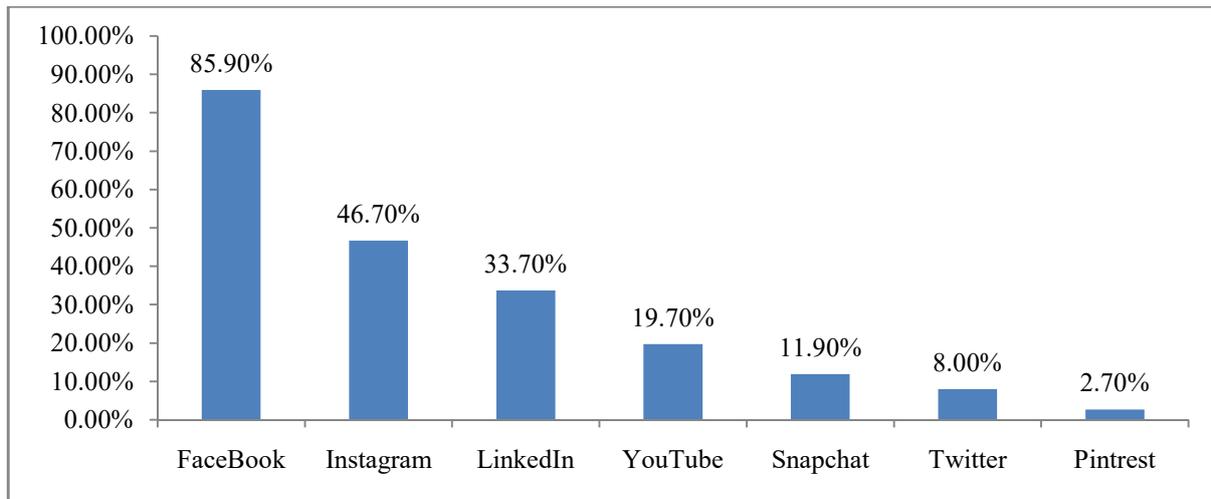
These are potential market segments as these students might consider pursuing MBA/ PGDM further in their career. They might or might not get converted into actual market depending upon their interests. But brand awareness has to be done for all the potential market segments so that the brand occupies a premium position on the psyche of the potential market whenever they think of pursuing MBA/ PGDM.

Social media marketing is like providing an external stimulus to the potential market and occupying the premium position on their psyche. Social media is highly accurate on targeting as all the users that are present on the various social media platforms feed their personal details like:

- a) Age
- b) Gender
- c) Location
- d) Interests
- e) Check-ins, etc.

To the social media platform which in turn can lead to high accuracy in targeting on all the basis mentioned above, their combinations and much more. Below is the graph of the primary research for presence of 958 respondents on different platforms of social media:

2.7. The graph below shows the presence of the respondents of the primary research on different social media platforms



As can be referred from the finding above, most of the respondents are present on Facebook and there is exactly where social media marketing is done the most.

In the further study, concentration has been done only on 2 social media platforms namely Twitter and Facebook. The reason behind discussing only 2 platforms in context to higher education industry in India is as under:

**a) Twitter:**

Twitter is power in one's hand. Twitter is a social networking and micro blogging site. The users write posts from their mobile phones or computers in a word limit of 140 words which can be tagged or targeted to any other twitter user without limitation. This feature makes Twitter the shortest mode of communication between two or more people/ organizations/ combination. Tweets by users are taken seriously by the corporate and all the levels of management throughout the world. They are liked, re- tweeted and replied to in priority by the corporates. Insights of company affairs, industrial problems, contests and updates can be taken on daily basis through twitter. Twitter is extensively used by some aware and active educational institutions to always remain visible to the industry, interacting with the CXO level people and placement cells of the different companies.

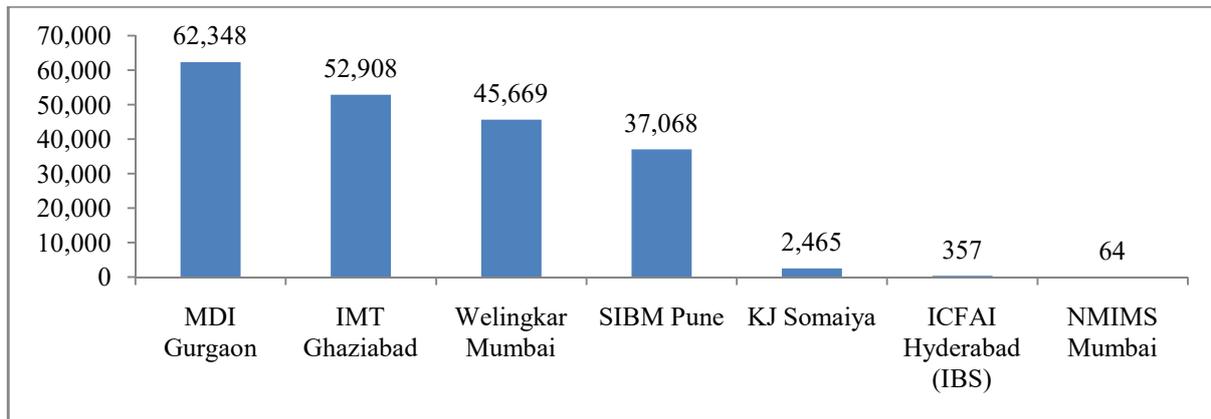
**b) Facebook:**

Facebook is the platform where the current and the prospective students are present. Through Facebook, the institutes target and create brand awareness among the prospective market and tell about their accolades, admissions and contests to the student fraternity.

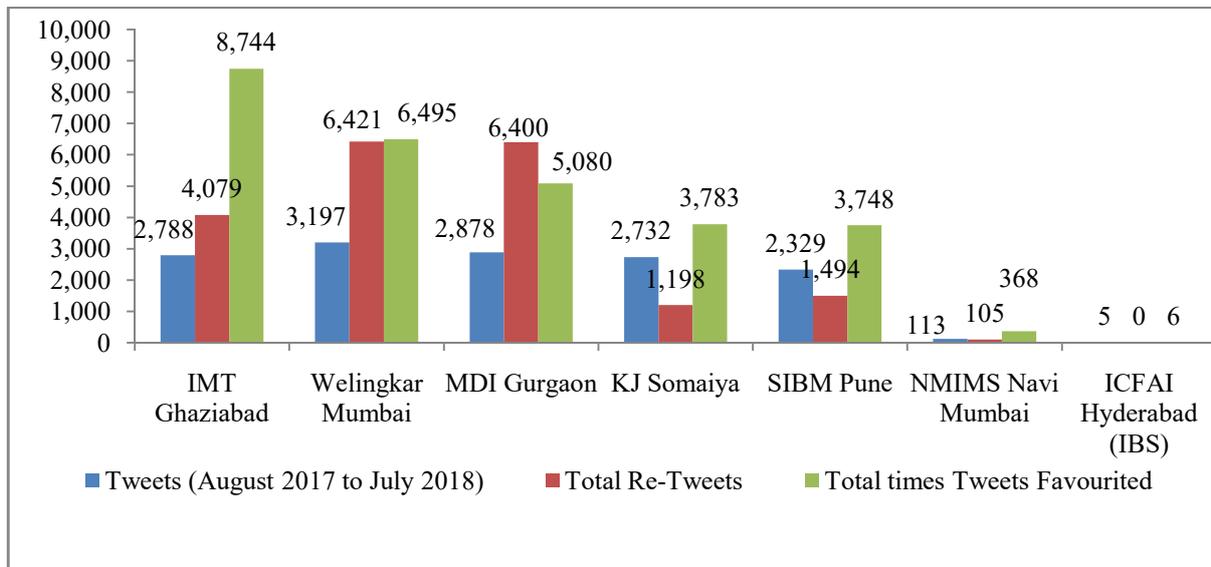
The difference between Twitter and Facebook is that Twitter is not limited to a specific circle like Facebook posts are usually limited to one’s friend list.

Linked In is also a platform that is used by the institutes but it is limited to finding job availabilities in the industry for the current students. So Linked In in general is not used for advertising but only by the placement cell of the institutes hence it is excluded from our study. Continuing further with Twitter marketing, the various twitter accounts of the abovementioned popular private business schools were checked to know their Twitter presence. Following were the results:

2.8. The graph below shows the number of Twitter followers of the respective institutes. Ref.: Tweetonomy.com



2.9. The graph below shows the tweets of the past year, the re- Tweets and the total times the tweets were favourite for the respective institutes. Ref.: Tweetonomy.com



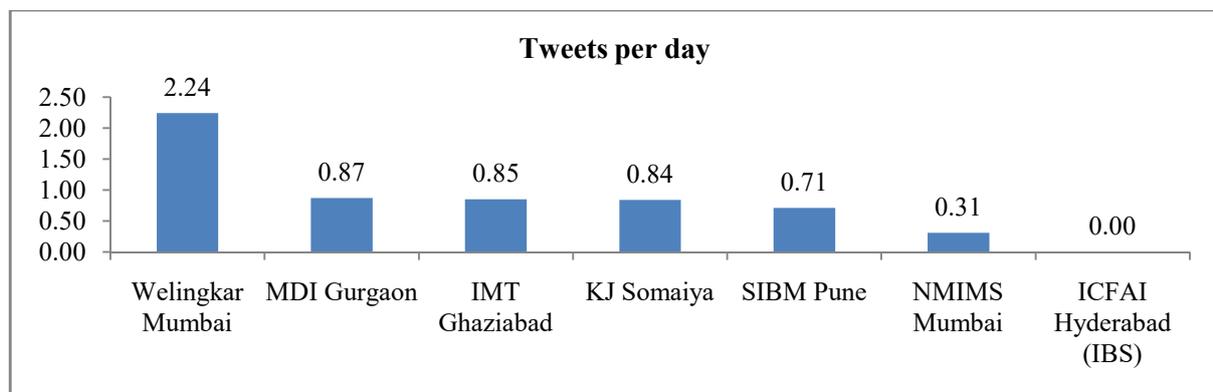
As it can be inferred from above that some of the institutes are highly active on Twitter and are posting on regular basis, many a times more than once in two days. Their Tweets are not only being pushed in quantity but also are superior in terms of quality/ information/ relevance

which can be observed by the times the Tweets are being re- Tweeted or marked favourite. It was keenly observed that Tweets related to:

- a) Seminars by industry leaders and alumni
- b) Contests and festivals held or won
- c) Successful placements
- d) Solutions and publications of case studies and live projects
- e) Approaching deadlines or dates of new program/ course registration

were being pushed aggressively. The aggressiveness of the business schools was checked and the results are as below:

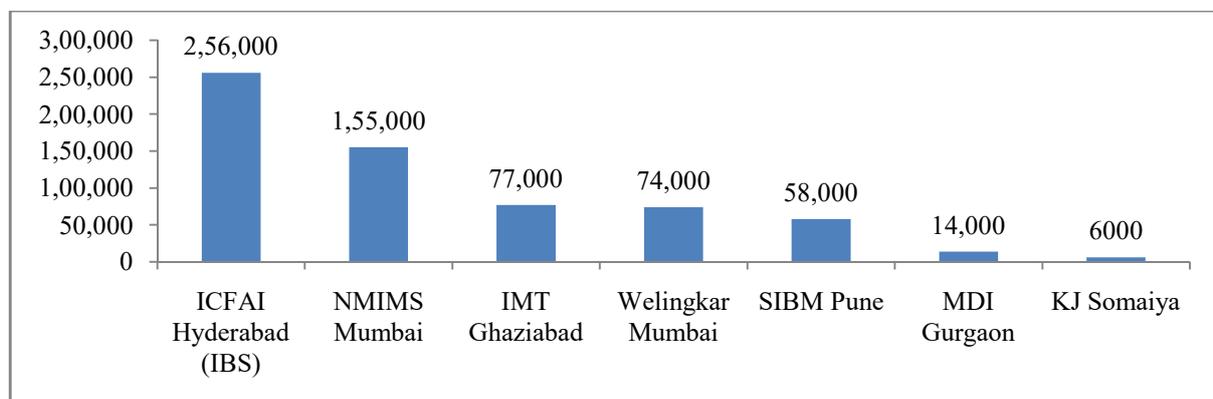
3.0. The graph below shows the Tweets per day that the respective institutes are posting. Ref.: Tweetonomy.com



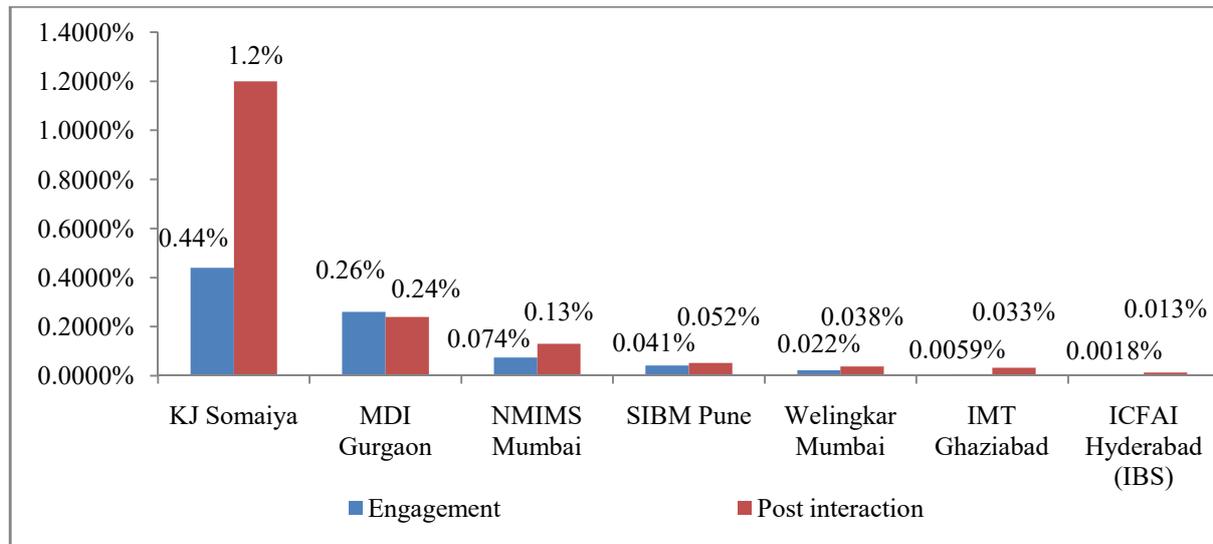
It can be observed here that Welingkar Mumbai is the most aggressive with its Twitter strategy while NMIMS is on a gradual growth.

Post discussing the interface of the education institutes with the industry i.e. Twitter, let us discuss in detail the interface of the institute with the prospect and current students i.e. Facebook. A study on the Facebook pages of the respective institutes was done to know the position they enjoy on Facebook. Below are the findings:

3.1. The graph below shows the number of fans the respective institutes have on Facebook. Ref.: Fanpagekarma.com



3.2. The graph below shows the engagement and interaction percentage of the respective Facebook pages. Ref.: Fanpagekarma.com



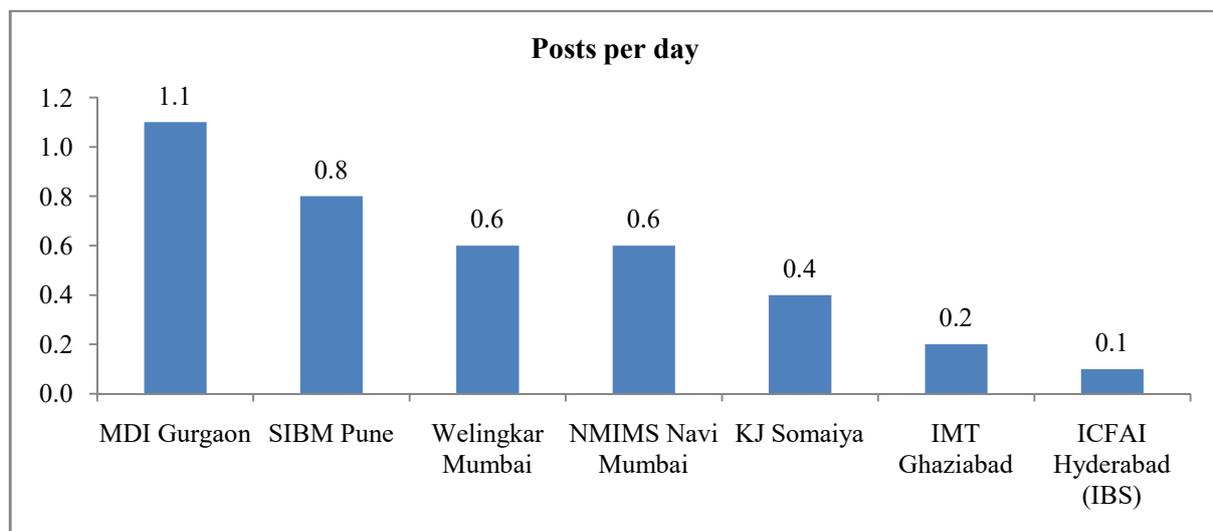
**1) Engagement:**

The Engagement shows an average amount of how often a fan interacts with the posts of a page. It is calculated by dividing the daily amount of likes, comments and shares by the number of fans. If you are looking at a longer period of time it takes the average of the daily Engagement rates.

**2) Post interactions:**

The post interaction shows how active the fans engage with a post of a page. It shows the average amount of all interactions (likes, shares, comments) for each fan per post. As opposed to the Engagement Rate, the Post Interaction ignores days without any posts.

3.3. The table below shows the posts being published per day by the respective institute on their Facebook channels. Ref.: Fanpagekarma.com



From the above three graphs (*Graphs 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3*) we can infer that the institutes that are low on the number of fans are more aggressive on Facebook to build a stronger brand for themselves. They ensure that relevant data is being published that catches the attention of the fans and hence results in higher engagement rate.

### **Discussion & Conclusion:**

1. Digital marketing has already started to influence the higher education sector in India. The sector is making its gradual shift from traditional marketing to digital marketing. Hence we fail to reject the null hypothesis.
2. The prospect customers/ applicants want the institutes to reach them on digital platforms rather than the traditional sales team chasing them outside the education institutes. The applicants trust banner ads and websites of the institutes to a great extent in the selection of the best suited business schools for themselves. This is a queue for the institutes to start pushing for higher digital visibility.
3. High performance websites are already in trend and tagging of the right keywords is starting to pick up pace for the business schools. Much attention needs to be given towards tagging of the right keywords to be relevant to search engine queries as still the competition is low on the related keywords.
4. Back linking is also picking up pace as institutes are now tying up with various companies for educational short courses and certifications along with association with foreign institutes for student exchange programs. Participation in industry related quizzes and having the institute's name on the company website is creating great effect. Holding competitions, quizzes, and festivals also effects in generating hype of the institute on the internet.
5. Answering to questions on the question and answer websites like Quora.com adds up to the brand image on the institutes on the internet as such websites are a big hit on the internet. This helps building a brand image if the current students or alumnus revert with some kind of insights to the applicants with query.
6. There is a huge scope on the social media where the business schools can build their image. Institutes that are behind in their social media platforms are now growing aggressively and with a very valid reason. This would help them to stay relevant to the industry and to occupy a premium position on the psyche of the applicants.

7. There is a huge scope of growth on the digital platforms for the Higher Education sector which the popular business schools have already started adopting but the remaining business schools are yet to adopt.

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- 8) Websites of the respective business schools as mentioned in the research paper.
- 9) Twitter handles of the respective business schools as mentioned in the research paper.
- 10) Facebook pages of the respective business schools as mentioned in the research paper.