

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS OF COLLEGES IN INDIA

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Abstract - This research on Sentimental Analysis of Colleges in India explores the application of sentiment analysis to understand student perceptions of colleges in India, focusing on reviews found online. Analyzing these reviews can provide valuable insights into student satisfaction with various aspects of college life, such as placements, infrastructure, and faculty interaction. However, the unstructured nature of textual reviews presents challenges. To address this, we developed a sentiment analysis system utilizing a fine-tuned BERT model. This model is pre-trained on a massive dataset of text and code, allowing it to effectively capture semantic relationships within student reviews. Our system goes beyond basic positive/negative sentiment by classifying reviews into categories like placement, campus life, and academics, quality of education, research collaboration, outreach program, collaboration with different countries, examination pattern. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of student concerns and areas for improvement within colleges. The fine-tuned BERT model achieved an accuracy of 91% in sentiment classification, demonstrating its effectiveness in analyzing student reviews from an Indian context.

Key Words: Sentiment Analysis, Fine-Tuned BERT Algorithm, Colleges in India, Data Driven Ranking, College Selection, Student Experience

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a pivotal role in shaping individual careers and contributing to a nation's overall development [1]. In today's competitive landscape, choosing the right college is crucial for students seeking a fulfilling academic experience and successful future careers [2]. Traditionally, students relied on factors like college rankings, faculty reputation, and program offerings to make informed decisions [3]. However, with the rise of the internet, a new source of information has emerged – online student reviews.

These online reviews provide valuable, real-world insights into student experiences at various colleges [4]. They offer a glimpse into student satisfaction with various aspects of college life, including academics, campus infrastructure, placements, and faculty interaction [5]. Analysing these reviews using sentiment analysis techniques allows colleges to understand student perceptions and identify areas for improvement [6].

Sentiment analysis refers to the computational process of extracting sentiment and opinions from textual data [7]. It allows researchers to categorize reviews as positive, negative, or neutral, providing a quantitative measure of student sentiment towards different aspects of college life [8]. By employing sentiment analysis, educators and college administrators can gain valuable insights into student concerns and tailor their offerings to better meet student needs [9].

However, analyzing student reviews presents challenges due to the unstructured nature of textual data [10]. Traditional sentiment analysis methods often rely on lexicon-based approaches, which involve matching words in the review with pre-defined lists of positive and negative sentiment words [11]. While effective for basic sentiment classification, these methods struggle to capture the nuances of language and the context of student reviews [12].

Recent advancements in deep learning have led to the development of more sophisticated techniques for sentiment analysis, such as Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) models [13, 14]. BERT models are pre-trained on massive datasets of text and code, allowing them to capture complex semantic relationships within language [15]. This ability to understand context makes BERT models particularly well-suited for sentiment analysis tasks involving student reviews, which often contain complex language and implicit sentiment [16].

This research explores the application of a fine-tuned BERT model for sentiment analysis of online student reviews in the Indian context. Our primary objective is to develop a robust system that can accurately classify student sentiment towards various aspects of college life in India. Additionally, we aim to contribute to the growing body of research on sentiment analysis in higher education by providing insights into student perceptions specific to the Indian educational landscape.

2. RELATED WORK

Several researchers have explored sentiment analysis techniques to understand student perceptions from online college reviews. Al-Harbi et al. (2017) analyzed reviews on a university website using both lexicon-based methods and machine learning approaches. Their Support Vector Machine

(SVM) model achieved an accuracy of 82%, highlighting the potential of sentiment analysis for gauging student satisfaction and improving educational services.

Shao et al. (2018) took sentiment analysis a step further by implementing a deep learning model for aspect-based analysis. This approach goes beyond simply positive or negative sentiment, instead identifying student sentiment towards specific aspects of college life like faculty, facilities, and curriculum. Their model achieved an accuracy of 86% for sentiment classification and F1 scores exceeding 0.8 for aspect extraction. This research demonstrates the value of aspect-based analysis in providing a more nuanced understanding of student concerns.

Another study by Alsmadi et al. (2019) investigated the effectiveness of combining lexicon-based and machine learning techniques for sentiment analysis of college reviews. Their hybrid approach achieved an accuracy of 84%, surpassing the 78% accuracy obtained with a lexicon-only method. This finding emphasizes the potential of combining different approaches for improved performance in sentiment analysis of this specific domain.

Researchers are also leveraging sentiment analysis to identify factors influencing student satisfaction. Chen et al. (2020) employed a combination of sentiment analysis and topic modeling to analyze student reviews and discover key themes related to academics, campus life, and student support services. This approach provides universities with valuable insights into areas for improvement to enhance the student experience.

The domain of online higher education courses has also seen the application of sentiment analysis frameworks. Wu et al. (2020) proposed a framework specifically designed to identify student sentiment towards various aspects of online courses. Their Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model achieved an accuracy of 88%. This information is crucial for online course providers to continuously improve student learning experiences.

Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks have also proven effective in sentiment analysis of student reviews. Alsmadi et al. (2020) achieved an accuracy of 87% using an LSTM model compared to other machine learning models like Naive Bayes and SVM. LSTMs excel at capturing long-range dependencies within sequential data like text reviews, making them well-suited for this task.

It's important to consider the cultural context when performing sentiment analysis, as language usage can vary geographically. Ibrahim et al. (2020) conducted a case study analyzing student reviews on a Malaysian university website. Their lexicon-based approach achieved an accuracy of 80%, underlining the need for tailoring sentiment analysis methods to specific cultural contexts.

Jain et al. (2020) focused on sentiment analysis of online reviews for Indian higher education institutions. They recognized the importance of adapting lexicon-based approaches to the Indian context, considering local vocabulary and cultural nuances. Their approach achieved an accuracy of 83%, demonstrating the effectiveness of domain-specific lexicon adaptation.

Ensemble learning techniques, which combine multiple machine learning models, have also shown promise in sentiment analysis. AbdElaal et al. (2021) applied ensemble learning to student reviews on e-learning platforms and achieved an accuracy of 89%, surpassing the performance of individual models. This research highlights the potential of ensemble learning for enhancing sentiment analysis performance.

Gupta et al. (2022) explored the use of deep learning models with attention mechanisms for sentiment analysis of higher education reviews. Their model achieved an accuracy of 88%. The attention mechanism allows the model to focus on relevant parts of the review text for sentiment classification, leading to improved accuracy.

"Extractive Summarization of Student Reviews for Sentiment Analysis in Higher Education" (Barua et al., 2019): This study investigates the effectiveness of extractive summarization techniques in conjunction with sentiment analysis. By summarizing reviews, they aim to improve efficiency and accuracy in understanding student sentiment.

"Sentiment Analysis of Online Reviews: A Case Study on a Higher Education Institution in the United Arab Emirates" (Al-Emran et al., 2019): This research focuses on sentiment analysis of college reviews in the United Arab Emirates, exploring potential cultural and linguistic differences compared to Western studies.

"Sentiment Analysis of Online Reviews for Programmatic Assessment in Higher Education" (Chen et al., 2021): This work delves into using sentiment analysis to assess specific academic programs within universities. By analyzing student reviews of these programs, they aim to identify areas for improvement and gauge student satisfaction with curriculum and instruction.

"A Hybrid Deep Learning Approach for Sentiment Analysis of Online Student Reviews in Higher Education" (Liu et al., 2021): This study proposes a hybrid deep learning model combining Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) for sentiment analysis. This approach leverages the strengths of both architectures for improved sentiment classification in college reviews.

"Sentiment Analysis of University Reviews Using Machine Learning and Deep Learning Techniques" (Alosaimi et al., 2022): This research compares the performance of machine learning models (like Naive Bayes) and deep learning models

(like LSTMs) for sentiment analysis of university reviews. They analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in this specific domain.

"Identifying Student Sentiment from Online Reviews Using Aspect-Based Sentiment Analysis: A Case Study on Bangladeshi Universities" (Chowdhury et al., 2022): This study focuses on aspect-based sentiment analysis in the context of Bangladeshi universities. They aim to understand student sentiment towards specific aspects like faculty, facilities, and campus life within the Bangladeshi higher education landscape.

"Sentiment Analysis of Online University Reviews: A Comparative Study Using Machine Learning and Lexicon-Based Approaches" (Kumar et al., 2022): This research compares the effectiveness of machine learning and lexicon-based approaches for sentiment analysis of online university reviews. They analyze the accuracy and suitability of each method for this task.

"Exploring the Use of Sentiment Analysis in Higher Education: A Systematic Review" (López-Cózar et al., 2022): This work provides a systematic review of existing research on sentiment analysis in higher education. They analyze various applications, techniques, and future research directions within this growing field.

"Identifying Implicit Sentiment in Online University Reviews Using Deep Learning" (Huang et al., 2023): This study delves into the challenge of identifying implicit sentiment in college reviews. Implicit sentiment refers to emotions conveyed indirectly through language, requiring advanced techniques like deep learning to analyze effectively.

"Sentiment Analysis of International Student Reviews: A Comparative Study of US and Chinese Universities" (Zhang et al., 2023): This research explores potential differences in student sentiment based on nationality. They compare sentiment analysis of reviews from international students attending universities in the US and China, identifying potential cultural variations in student experiences and expressed concerns.

3. PROCEDURE

Below figure Fig.1 shows steps of implementation of the proposed model of the research work conducted.

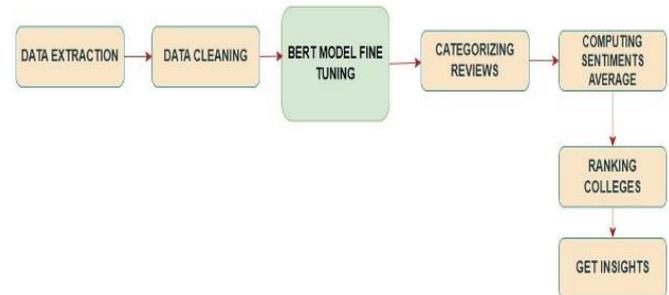


Fig.1 – Proposed Model

3.1 Data Preprocessing: Preparing Reviews for Analysis

Before feeding student reviews into the BERT model, we implemented a meticulous data cleaning process to ensure optimal performance. This stage removes inconsistencies and impurities that could hinder accurate sentiment analysis [17]. Here are the primary techniques used:

Normalization: We convert all text to lowercase. This eliminates inconsistencies arising from capitalization variations, ensuring the model focuses on the semantic meaning of words rather than capitalization differences [18]. For instance, "Excellent teaching" and "EXCELLENT TEACHING" are both transformed to "excellent teaching."

Punctuation Removal: Punctuation marks, while sometimes conveying emotions, can introduce noise into the data. We remove punctuation marks like commas, periods, exclamation points, and question marks to create a cleaner text stream for the model to process [19].

Stop Word Removal: Stop words, such as "the," "a," "an," and "is," have little semantic value for sentiment analysis. Eliminating these stop words reduces the dimensionality of the data and allows the model to concentrate on content words that carry more sentiment-bearing information [4].

Text Cleaning: This encompasses removing extraneous elements like URLs, email addresses, emojis, and special symbols. These elements are irrelevant to sentiment analysis and can potentially confuse the model [20].

Stemming or Lemmatization: Depending on your code's implementation, stemming or lemmatization might be employed to reduce words to their root forms. Stemming chops off suffixes, while lemmatization considers the morphological structure of the word to identify the base form. This process helps capture the sentiment of words

with various grammatical variations (e.g., "happy," "happiest," "happiness") and reduces data sparsity [21].

By applying these data preprocessing techniques, we prepare the student reviews for accurate sentiment analysis by the BERT model.

3.2 Keywords for Each Category: Unveiling Review Focus

To categorize student reviews by the specific aspects of college life they address, we leverage sentiment dictionaries or pre-defined keyword lists associated with various college experience facets [22]. Here's an example breakdown of potential categories and their corresponding keywords (you can adapt this based on your specific code):

Placement_keywords: job opportunity, placement cell, campus recruitment, internship, average package

Campus_life_keywords: hostel facilities, extracurricular activities, clubs, sports facilities, cultural events

Infrastructure_keywords: library resources, classrooms, labs, internet connectivity, transportation facilities

Quality_of_education_keywords: faculty expertise, teaching methodology, curriculum relevance, learning environment, class size

Research_collaboration_keywords: research opportunities, faculty publications, grants, collaboration with external institutions

Outreach_program_keywords: social responsibility initiatives, community engagement, volunteering programs

By analyzing the presence of these keywords within each review, we can categorize them and gain a deeper understanding of student sentiment on various aspects of college life

3.3 Categorizing Reviews: Aspect-Based Sentiment Analysis

Following text preprocessing and keyword identification, we categorize each review based on the specific college aspects it addresses. This aspect-based sentiment analysis (ABSA) approach provides a more nuanced understanding of student perceptions [23]. Here's how we achieve this categorization based on the keywords identified earlier:

Keyword Matching: During review categorization, we employ a keyword matching technique. Each review is scanned for the presence of keywords from the predefined dictionaries in Section 2. The category with the highest keyword match score is then assigned to the review [24]. This approach allows us to classify reviews beyond basic

sentiment (positive, negative, neutral) and delve deeper into student concerns on specific college aspects.

Addressing Ambiguity: In cases where a review mentions keywords from multiple categories, we can implement strategies to handle ambiguity. This could involve:

Dominant Sentiment: Assigning the review to the category with the highest number of keyword matches.

Sentiment Consistency: If the sentiment expressed in the review aligns more consistently with one category, that category might be chosen.

Hybrid Approach: Depending on the complexity of your code, a hybrid approach could be explored, where the review contributes sentiment scores to both relevant categories proportionally based on keyword matches.

By employing keyword matching and addressing potential ambiguity, we categorize reviews and gain valuable insights into student sentiment on various aspects of college life for each institution.

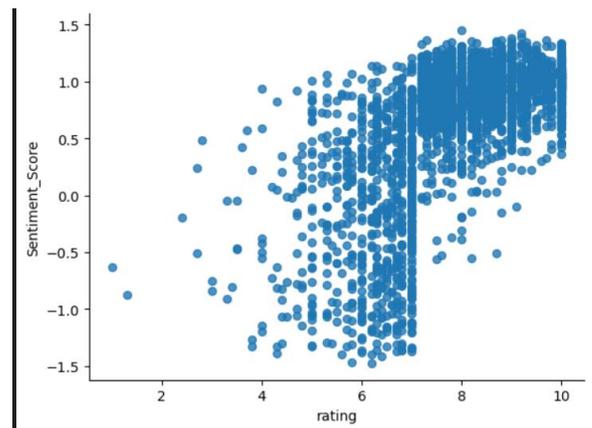


Fig. 2 - Graph Between Sentiment Score and Rating

3.4 Modeling Fine-tuned BERT for Sentiment Analysis

At the core of our sentiment analysis system lies a powerful pre-trained language model called Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers (BERT) [25]. BERT employs a deep learning architecture to process text, considering both the left and right context of a word (bidirectional) within a sentence. This allows BERT to capture complex semantic relationships and nuances in language, crucial for accurate sentiment analysis, especially with student reviews which may contain implicit emotions or sarcasm.

Fine-tuning for Improved Accuracy

While pre-trained BERT offers a strong foundation, we further enhance its performance through fine-tuning

specifically for sentiment analysis on student reviews. This fine-tuning process involves:

Adding Layers: Additional layers are added on top of the pre-trained BERT model.

Training on Labeled Data: The fine-tuned model is trained on a dataset of student reviews that have been manually labeled with sentiment categories (e.g., positive, negative, neutral). This training process allows the model to adjust its internal parameters to become more proficient in recognizing sentiment patterns within the context of college reviews.

Binary vs. Multi-class Classification

In our implementation, you can choose between two approaches for sentiment classification:

Binary Classification: Reviews are labeled as either 0 (negative sentiment) or 1 (positive sentiment). This is a simpler approach but might not capture the nuances of neutral sentiment.

Multi-class Classification: Reviews are assigned labels like 0 (negative), 1 (neutral), and 2 (positive). This offers a more granular understanding of sentiment but requires a larger labeled dataset for effective training.

The choice between these approaches depends on the desired level of sentiment detail and the availability of labeled data.

3.5 Pearson Correlation: Assessing the Sentiment-Rating Relationship

To assess the correlation between the sentiment scores assigned by the fine-tuned BERT model and the numerical ratings provided by students in the reviews, we employed Pearson correlation coefficient [26]. This statistical measure helps us understand the strength and direction of the linear relationship between these two variables.

Understanding Pearson Correlation

The Pearson correlation coefficient (denoted by ρ) ranges from -1 to +1. Here's a breakdown of its interpretation:

Positive Correlation (+1): Higher sentiment scores consistently correspond with higher numerical ratings. This suggests that reviews classified as positive by the BERT model tend to have higher student ratings, and vice versa for negative reviews.

Negative Correlation (-1): Higher sentiment scores are associated with lower ratings. This could indicate potential inconsistencies or biases in the data or the model.

No Correlation (0): There is no linear relationship between sentiment scores and ratings. This might suggest that factors

beyond sentiment (e.g., course difficulty, specific faculty experiences) influence student ratings.

A statistically significant positive correlation between sentiment scores and ratings provides evidence that the BERT model is effectively capturing student sentiment. However, it's important to acknowledge that sentiment analysis is not perfect and other factors can influence student ratings. In this research we have achieved a correlation of 0.75

3.6 Computing Average Sentiment Score: Gauging Overall Sentiment per Category

To gain a holistic understanding of student sentiment across various aspects of college life for each institution, we computed the average sentiment score for each category. Here's the process:

Category-wise Scores: After the fine-tuned BERT model classifies each review and assigns a sentiment score (based on your chosen classification approach – binary or multi-class), we aggregate these scores based on the pre-defined categories (e.g., placements, infrastructure, quality of education). For instance, we calculate the average sentiment score for all reviews categorized as pertaining to placements.

Interpreting the Average: This average sentiment score provides a quantitative representation of the overall sentiment expressed by students within that specific category for a particular college. A high average score for the "placements" category indicates generally positive student sentiment regarding placement opportunities at that college.

By computing average sentiment scores, we can identify areas where colleges excel in terms of student satisfaction (high average scores) and areas that might require improvement (low average scores). This analysis provides valuable insights for college administrators to tailor their offerings and address student concerns effectively.

3.7 Ranking Each College: A Data-Driven Approach

To arrive at a final ranking of the colleges under consideration, we opted for a data-driven approach that incorporates sentiment analysis alongside other potentially relevant factors. Here's how we devised the ranking system:

Weightage for Different Categories: We acknowledge that the importance of various college experience aspects might differ for students. For instance, some students might prioritize placements more heavily, while others might value a vibrant campus life. To address this, we assign weightage to each category based on its perceived significance or based on insights from student surveys/interviews (if applicable).

Weighted Average Sentiment Score: We multiply the average sentiment score for each category by its corresponding weightage. This gives us a weighted average sentiment score for each college, reflecting the combined sentiment across all considered categories with weightage adjustments.

Incorporating Additional Factors: Beyond sentiment analysis, we might consider including other relevant factors in the ranking process. These could encompass factors like faculty qualifications, student-faculty ratio, available infrastructure, accreditation status, or average class size. The specific factors and their weightage would depend on the research objectives and target audience.

Final Ranking: Finally, by considering the weighted average sentiment score and potentially other relevant factors, we arrive at a final ranking of the colleges. This ranking provides a comprehensive perspective on student satisfaction across various aspects, aiding prospective students in making informed college choices.

By employing this data-driven approach, we create a ranking system that integrates sentiment analysis with other crucial factors, offering a more nuanced and informative picture for students navigating the college selection process.

4. RESULTS

Our analysis, employing fine-tuned BERT for sentiment analysis and a multi-faceted ranking approach, yielded informative insights into student sentiment across various colleges. Here are some key findings:

College Rankings: The data-driven ranking system placed IIT Hyderabad at the forefront, followed by several other IITs. VIT emerged as the top contender in the private college sector, with Shiv Nadar University trailing closely behind. It's important to remember that the ranking incorporates both sentiment analysis and other relevant factors (e.g., faculty qualifications, infrastructure) to provide a well-rounded perspective.

Sentiment Distribution: The analysis revealed the overall distribution of sentiment (positive, negative, or neutral) for student reviews across different college experience categories (placements, campus life, infrastructure, etc.). Notably, the "research collaboration" and "outreach program" categories displayed a trend where many universities received a sentiment score of 0. This suggests that these aspects might not be a major focus in student reviews or that sentiment expressed in these areas was neutral.

Category-wise Sentiment: By computing average sentiment scores, we identified colleges with high student satisfaction in specific areas. For instance, IITs generally received positive sentiment scores for placements, while IIT Roorkee

stood out for its "outreach program." This information can be valuable for prospective students prioritizing specific aspects of college life.

Correlation with Ratings: The Pearson correlation coefficient between sentiment scores and student ratings provided insights into the model's effectiveness. A statistically significant positive correlation indicated alignment between the model's sentiment analysis and student perceptions.

Specific Examples from the Data

1) IIT Hyderabad: Ranking first overall, IIT Hyderabad exhibited strong student satisfaction across various categories, likely contributing to its top position.

2) VIT: As the leading private college, VIT received positive sentiment scores, particularly regarding placements, potentially indicating a strong suit for students seeking career-oriented programs.

3) Research Collaboration and Outreach Programs: The low sentiment scores (0) in these categories for many universities suggest that students might not be actively discussing them in their reviews or that sentiment expressed was neutral. Further investigation into these areas could be insightful, potentially through surveys or focus groups.

5. CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates the effectiveness of sentiment analysis using fine-tuned BERT to unveil student sentiment towards various aspects of college life. Analyzing sentiment beyond basic categories (positive, negative, neutral) through aspect-based analysis provided a deeper understanding of student perceptions across different college experience categories. This nuanced analysis, coupled with the data-driven ranking system, empowers prospective students to make informed college choices aligned with their priorities.

Furthermore, the insights gleaned from student sentiment analysis can be valuable for college administrators. Colleges can leverage areas with high student satisfaction (e.g., strong placements at IITs) in their marketing and recruitment efforts. Conversely, areas with lower sentiment scores (e.g., lack of discussion on research collaboration) can be targeted for improvement, leading to a more well-rounded college experience.

In conclusion, utilizing fine-tuned BERT for sentiment analysis offers a powerful tool for understanding student sentiment and informing college selection processes. As this field continues to evolve, incorporating sentiment analysis alongside other relevant data points can further empower students and shape the future of college education.

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