

# An efficient framework for student's club recommender system using machine learning models

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**Abstract.** In educational settings, students often face challenges in discovering suitable extracurricular activities. This study addresses the need for an efficient Club Recommendation System (CRS) designed to offer personalized club suggestions based on individual preferences, utilizing the Factorization Machines (FM) model. The diverse spectrum of student interests and varying academic workloads pose challenges, along with intricate club dynamics. The proposed FM-based framework addresses these complexities by leveraging advanced machine learning techniques, utilizing factorization methods to capture intricate user preferences and club dynamics. Through optimized data pre-processing and matrix factorization, the CRS enhances efficiency in providing tailored club recommendations, fostering a more vibrant and engaging campus community by bridging the gap between students and clubs.

**Keywords:** Cosine Similarity, Sparse Matrix, Nearest Neighbors (KNN), Root Mean Square Error (RMSE), Factorization Machines (FM), Content based and Singular Value Decomposition (SVD).

## 1 Introduction

In the contemporary academic and professional landscape, the role of club recommendations is crucial in facilitating students' active participation in extracurricular activities. Educational institutions provide a diverse array of clubs, each offering unique experiences conducive to personal and professional development. However, students often encounter the challenge of discerning the most suitable clubs that align with their specific interests, skills, and preferences [1]. To tackle this challenge, the proposed club recommendation system, empowered by machine learning techniques, proves to be a valuable solution. Personalized recommendations, widely employed in the digital realm, from e-commerce platforms suggesting products to users to content streaming services recommending movies and music, serve as the inspiration for this system. However, the club recommendation system caters specifically to the domain of various extracurricular activities within a university setting.

- Implementation of advanced machine learning models (FM, SVD, KNN, etc.) to facilitate personalized club recommendations.
- Integration of user input with a comprehensive dataset to generate tailored club suggestions based on attributes like academic department, native location, and areas of interest.
- Utilization of collaborative filtering and cosine similarity within the machine learning framework to identify relevant clubs for individual users.

The system serves multiple purposes, assisting students in discovering new clubs to join or gaining more insight into clubs they already find interesting. Additionally, it aids universities and educational institutions in gaining a deeper understanding of their students' interests and needs, enabling the development of more relevant and engaging extracurricular programs.

## 2 Related Works

In the realm of educational recommender systems, FL da Silva's systematic literature review on educational recommender systems [11], published in 2023, conducts a thorough exploration of personalized learning through machine learning algorithms. This work underscores the role of algorithms in overcoming challenges and delivering customized recommendations in digital education. The study identifies common trends, such as the cold-start problem, and addresses ethical considerations, providing a foundation for understanding the role of algorithms in

tailoring extracurricular suggestions. When compared to our proposed Club Recommendation System (CRS), da Silva's review lays a conceptual groundwork, emphasizing the importance of algorithms in personalization but does not delve into the specific challenge of recommending university clubs based on individual student interests.

S Algarni's systematic review of recommendation systems for course selection [12], also published in 2023, addresses the challenge of assisting students in selecting courses aligned with their goals. This work explores various recommendation techniques and algorithms, emphasizing accuracy and relevance for personalized suggestions. Algarni's insights extend to recommending university clubs based on interests, presenting valuable implications for improving students' engagement with extracurricular activities. Comparatively, our proposed CRS distinguishes itself by leveraging advanced machine learning models such as Factorization Machines (FM), Singular Value Decomposition (SVD), and K- Nearest Neighbors (KNN), offering a unique approach in terms of algorithmic complexity for personalized club recommendations.

D Roy's systematic review and research perspective on recommender systems [13], published in 2022, provide a broad exploration of recommender systems across domains, emphasizing transparency and ethical considerations. While not exclusively education- focused, Roy's paper discusses principles adaptable for recommending university clubs, aligning with student preferences. In comparison, our CRS differentiates itself by incorporating advanced models like FM, SVD, and KNN, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of student preferences and club dynamics compared to the broad principles discussed in Roy's study.

ND Lynn's review on recommender systems for course selection [14], from 2021, examines the role of recommendation systems in guiding students' course selection in higher education. Lynn's work emphasizes the importance of accuracy and addresses challenges like data quality and ethical considerations. While primarily focused on academic courses, Lynn's insights provide a foundation for extending recommendation systems to suggest university clubs aligned with individual student interests. In contrast, our CRS introduces advanced machine learning models for tailored club suggestions, enhancing the precision and relevance of recommendations beyond the scope discussed in Lynn's review.

A Kumar's paper on personalized university club recommendations using collaborative filtering [15], published in 2020, directly addresses the challenge of providing personalized club recommendations in a university setting. Kumar's work leverages collaborative filtering techniques, aligning with the goal of our proposed CRS. However, our CRS goes a step further by integrating advanced models like FM, SVD, and KNN, allowing for a more intricate understanding of user preferences and club dynamics compared to the collaborative filtering approach in Kumar's work. In comparing these related works, it is evident that the landscape of recommender systems has been explored, emphasizing personalization, relevance, and ethical considerations.

However, the specific challenge of recommending university clubs based on individual student interests remains relatively underexplored. Our proposed CRS stands out by incorporating advanced machine learning models, offering a unique and nuanced solution to the task of recommending extracurricular activities in a university setting. The integration of user input, collaborative filtering, and diverse algorithms distinguishes our method, providing a tailored and sophisticated solution for personalized club recommendations.

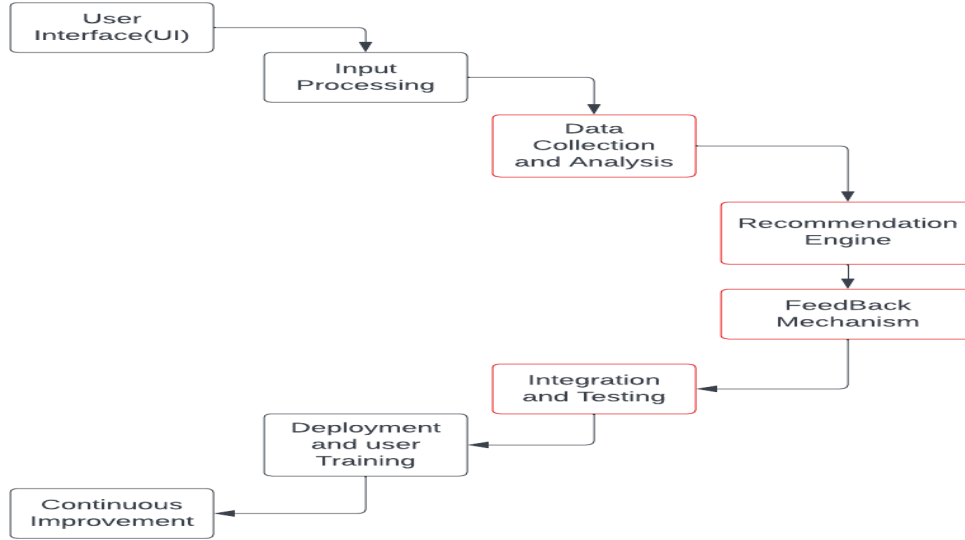
### 3 Motivation

The motivation for undertaking this project arises from the recognition of challenges faced by students when navigating the diverse landscape of university clubs. Motivated by the overwhelming number of options, inefficient discovery processes, and a lack of personalized recommendations, the Club Recommendation System (CRS) is introduced. Employing advanced machine learning models, including Factorization Machines, Singular Value Decomposition, and K- Nearest Neighbors, the CRS aims to address these challenges and deliver personalized club suggestions [13]. The system is particularly motivated to alleviate issues stemming from the extensive diversity of clubs in larger academic institutions, offering a streamlined discovery process and tailored recommendations. With a user-centric approach, the CRS utilizes a friendly interface for effective preference input, integrating user information with a comprehensive dataset. By leveraging collaborative filtering and cosine similarity, the solution is motivated to enhance precision in club identification, contributing to a more engaged campus community and providing students with personalized and meaningful extracurricular engagement opportunities [14].

### 4 Existing System

The Club Recommendation System (CRS) addresses several critical challenges to optimize the club discovery process within the college community. Firstly, the challenge lies in developing a sophisticated recommendation algorithm that considers individual student interests, historical activities, and specific club criteria to deliver highly personalized club suggestions. Secondly, the need is to design a user- friendly interface that allows students to effortlessly input their preferences and navigate through recommended clubs with ease [12]. The third challenge involves enhancing student engagement by establishing effective connections between students and clubs that align with their unique passions and interests. The fourth objective centers on leveraging data analytics to continuously refine and enhance the recommendation engine, ensuring that it remains accurate and relevant over time. Finally, the fifth challenge involves the implementation of a user feedback mechanism to systematically gather user opinions, enabling continuous improvement of the recommendation system based on valuable user input [6]. In essence, the CRS seeks to address these multifaceted challenges to revolutionize the club recommendation experience and create a more tailored and engaging extracurricular landscape for students (see Fig. 1).

## 5 Proposed System



**Fig. 1.** A data flow map showing the working of proposed framework.

The proposed methodology for developing the Club Recommendation System (CRS) adopts a systematic approach, beginning with the creation of a user-friendly interface for effective input of student preferences, including department and interests. The system then undergoes an input processing phase involving data preprocessing to handle, clean, and encode the user-provided information. Subsequently, a comprehensive dataset is collected and analyzed, employing analytical tools to derive insights into user preferences and club dynamics. The recommendation engine, powered by advanced machine learning models such as Factorization Machines (FM), Singular Value Decomposition (SVD), and K-Nearest neighbors (KNN), leverages both user data and historical club information to generate tailored suggestions. A unique feature is the integration of a feedback mechanism, allowing users to contribute to system refinement. The implementation and testing phase involves deploying and rigorously testing the models for functionality and accuracy. Deployment and user training follow, ensuring effective user access and interaction with recommended clubs. Continuous improvement is a key aspect, utilizing user feedback for iterative enhancements and maintaining adaptability to evolving user preferences. This structured and phased methodology distinguishes itself through the meticulous handling of user input, advanced machine learning models, feedback integration, and a commitment to continuous refinement, collectively forming the foundation for the innovative Club Recommendation System outlined in this paper.

## 6 Implementation

### 6.1 Pre-processing

In the preprocessing phase for the club recommendation system, the data underwent several critical transformations to ensure its readiness for modeling. The initial steps involved handling categorical data through techniques like one-hot encoding. Categorical columns such as "Department," "Native Location," and "Interested Fields" were converted into numerical format, generating binary features essential for model compatibility.

Addressing missing or null values was another crucial step. Strategies included either removing columns or rows with excessive missing data or imputing missing values using statistical measures. Irrelevant columns like "Student Name" and "Interest Keywords," were eliminated from the dataset to focus solely on pertinent information conducive to the recommendation process. Subsequently, the dataset was split into and evaluation, respectively [18]. These preprocessing steps aimed to prepare the data effectively for modeling, ensuring that the recommendation algorithms could generate accurate and reliable suggestions based on user preferences and interactions with various clubs.

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**Input:** Club recommendation dataset (input)

**Output:** pre-processed data (prior data)

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#Pre-Processing the data.

**Step 1)** Handle missing values by removing or imputing.

**Step 2)** Convert categorical data to numerical via one- hot encoding.

**Step 3)** Remove irrelevant columns like names and irrelevant keywords.

**Step 4)** Split the data into training and testing subsets.

**Step 5)** Engineer new features for improved predictions if necessary.

**Step 6)** Compile a cleaned dataset for model training.

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## 6.2 Classification

After pre-processed data are then undergoes classification to discern known and unknown user preferences within the Club Recommendation System, leveraging an adapted FM (Factorization Machines) algorithm. Factorization Machines represent an advanced data analysis technique tailored for this context, characterized by its efficient computational approach. The fundamental principle of FM lies in the model's ability to discern patterns within a multidimensional space, identifying when most samples align with a particular set to fit the model accordingly [12]. In this context, the feature paths within the dimensional or multidimensional space act as descriptors, akin to adjacent neighbors, contributing to the determination of the nearest sample. The proximity criteria are established via the calculation of the Euclidean distance between feature vectors, enabling the FM algorithm to effectively discern and recommend club preferences based on learned patterns and user interactions.

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### Algorithm 1 FM - Factorization Machine Algorithm

**Input:** Feature vector - Aset of numerical features representing the input data.

**Output:** Probability or a binary classification label (0 or 1) indicating the predicted class.

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#### #Pseudocode

```
# Initialization function initialize_parameters(features, num_factors,
learning_rate):
# Initialize weights and biases
weights = random initialization for each feature biases = random
initialization for each feature
# Initialize factorized matrices
factor_matrix =random initialization for each factor and feature
learning_rate = learning_rate
returnweights, biases,factor_matrix
```

### **#Training**

```
function train_FM_model(data, labels, num_epochs, learning_rate):
    weights, biases, factor_matrix = initialize_parameters(features,
    num_factors, learning_rate)
    for epoch in range(num_epochs):
```

#### **# Iterate through each training example**

```
    for i in range(len(data)):
        x = data[i] # input features y_true = labels[i] # true label
```

#### **#Calculate prediction**

```
        linear_term = sum(weights[j] * x[j] for j in range(len(x)))
        interaction_term = 0.5 * sum((sum(factor_matrix[j][f] * x[j] for j in
        range(len(x)))) * 2
        -sum(factor_matrix[j][f] * 2
        * x[j] * 2 for j in range(len(x)))
        for f in range(num_factors)) y_pred = linear_term + interaction_term +
        biases
```

#### **# Update weights and biases using gradient descent**

```
        error = y_pred - y_true
        for j in range(len(x)):
            weights[j] -= learning_rate * (error * x[j] + 2 * factor_matrix[j] * x[j] *
            error)
        biases -= learning_rate * error
```

#### **# Update factorized matrices**

```
        for f in range(num_factors):
            factor_matrix[j][f] -= learning_rate * (
            error * (x[j] * sum(factor_matrix[k][f]
            * x[k] for k in range(len(x))))
            - factor_matrix[j][f] * x[j] * 2 * error
            )
        return weights, biases, factor_matrix
```

#### **# Prediction**

```
function predict_FM_model(features, weights, biases, factor_matrix):
    linear_term = sum(weights[j] * features[j] for j in range(len(features)))
    interaction_term = 0.5 * sum((sum(factor_matrix[j][f] * features[j] for j in
    range(len(features)))) * 2
    -sum(factor_matrix[j][f] * 2 * features[j] * 2 for j in
    range(len(features)))
    for f in range(num_factors))
    prediction = linear_term + interaction_term +
    biases
    return prediction
```

Upon training the Factorization Machines model, the result yields optimized weights, biases, and factor matrices after iterating through multiple epochs and updating parameters using gradient descent. These optimized parameters capture intricate interactions among features and enable precise predictions based on input data, enhancing the model's ability to predict rankings or preferences for student-club associations.

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**Algorithm 2 SVD - Singular Value Decomposition**

**Input:** User-Club Interaction Matrix (R) - Matrix representing user interactions with clubs.

**Output:** Recommendations-Clubs with high predicted interaction strengths based on R.

---

```
# Pseudocode
import numpy as np
from scipy.linalg import svd

# Input: User-Club Interaction Matrix (R) R =
get_user_club_interaction_matrix()

# Step 1: Apply Singular Value Decomposition (SVD) U, Sigma, Vt =
svd(R)

# Step 2: Truncate the factorized matrices to retain the top-k singular
values and
corresponding columns of U and rows of V^T
k = determine_optimal_k()

#Optional: Determine the optimal value for k
U_k = U[:, :k]
Sigma_k = np.diag(Sigma[:k]) Vt_k = Vt[:k, :]

# Step 3:Reconstruct the user-club interaction matrixR' using the
truncated matrices
R_prime = np.dot(np.dot(U_k, Sigma_k), Vt_k)

# Step 4: GenerateRecommendationsfor Users for user in all_users:
if user not in users_with_full_interaction_history:

# Identify clubs with the highest predicted interaction strengths in R'
recommended_clubs = get_top_recommendations(R_prime[user,:],
num_recommendations)
display_recommendations(user, recommended_clubs)
```

## 7 Techniques Used

### 7.1 Factorization Machines (FM) Model:

- Implemented to capture intricate interactions between user preferences and club attributes.
- Focus on providing highly precise and nuanced recommendations.

## 7.2 Singular Value Decomposition (SVD):

- Utilized to factorize the user-club interaction matrix.
- Contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of latent factors influencing user preferences.

## 7.3 Collaborative Filtering (K-Nearest Neighbors):

- Incorporated to measure similarity between users.
- Enhances diversity in club suggestions by identifying similar users.

## 7.4 Collaborative Filtering and Cosine Similarity:

- Employed to identify relevant clubs for individual users based on preferences of similar users.
- Ensures personalized and accurate recommendations.

## 7.5 Evaluation Techniques:

- Encompasses accuracy metrics for measuring overall correctness of predictions.
- Precision metrics gauge the accuracy of positive predictions.
- Recall metrics assess the system's ability to identify relevant instances.
- F1-score provides a balanced evaluation of precision and recall.
- Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) is specifically used in regression tasks to quantify the average difference between predicted and actual values.

## 7.6 Collective Impact:

- These techniques collectively provide a robust foundation for the CRS.
- Addresses challenges in navigating the diverse landscape of university clubs.
- Delivers tailored extracurricular suggestions with a specific focus on the Factorization Machines (FM) model.

# 8 Performance Analysis

In the context of the Club Recommendation System (CRS) framework, an evaluative study is undertaken using pivotal metrics to gauge the system's efficacy. This examination centers on critical parameters encompassing Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score, RMSE delineated as follows:

## 8.1 Accuracy

Measures the proportion of correct predictions over the total predictions made, providing an overall assessment of the system's correctness:

$$\text{Total Number of Predictions} / \text{Number of Correct Predictions} \quad (1)$$

## 8.2 Precision

Indicates the accuracy of positive predictions, measuring the ratio of correctly predicted positive observations to the total predicted positives. It reveals how precise the system is when identifying relevant instances.

$$\text{True Positives} / (\text{False Positives} + \text{True Positives}) \quad (2)$$



### 8.3 Recall

Illustrates the system's ability to identify all relevant instances, calculating the ratio of correctly predicted positive observations to the actual positives. It assesses the completeness of the system's predictions.

$$\text{True Positives} / (\text{True Positives} + \text{False Negatives}) \quad (3)$$

### 8.4 F1-score

Represents the harmonic mean of precision and recall, providing a balanced evaluation of the model's performance concerning both precision and recall.

$$2 * (\text{Precision} * \text{Recall}) / (\text{Precision} + \text{Recall}) \quad (4)$$

### 8.5 Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE)

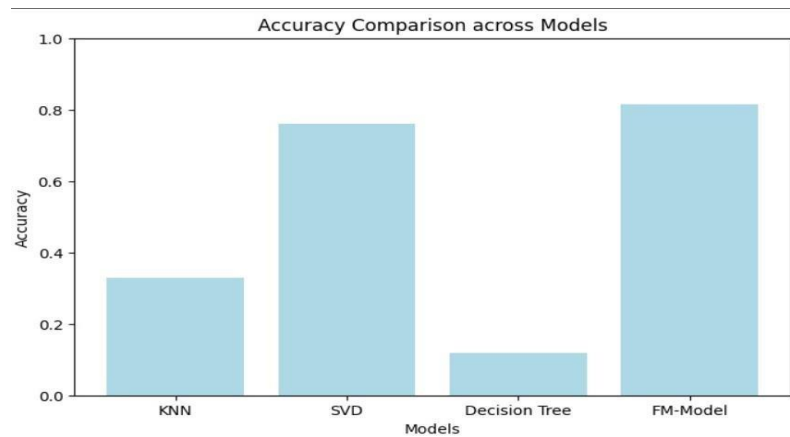
Specifically used in regression tasks, RMSE quantifies the average difference between predicted and actual values, serving as an indicator of the model's predictive accuracy.

$$\text{RMSE} = \text{sqrt} [(\sum (P_i - O_i)^2) / n] \quad (5)$$

The Factorization Machines (FM) model demonstrated superior accuracy in forecasting student-club affiliations by leveraging intricate feature interactions. Its adeptness in discerning nuanced associations among diverse attributes led to highly precise recommendations, underscoring its resilience within the Club Recommendation System framework.

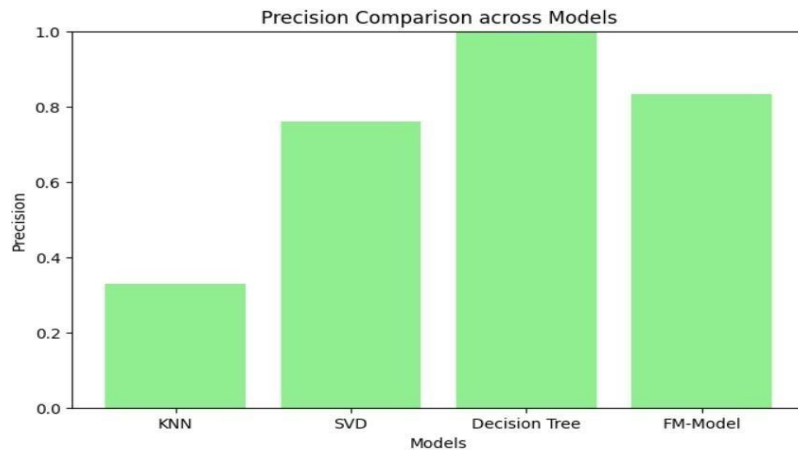
**Table 1.** Parameter Values of FM model in CRS.

Parameters	Value in %
Accuracy	0.81
Precision	0.83
Recall	0.96
F1-score	0.89



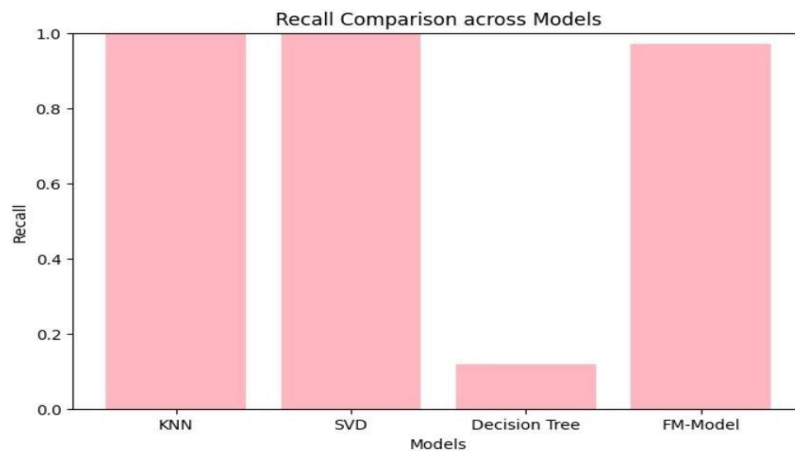
**Fig. 2** Comparative analysis of Accuracy

In evaluating the performance of diverse recommendation models, the analysis across key metrics showcases distinctive characteristics. Accuracy, portraying the overall correctness of predictions, varied significantly among models. The KNN and Decision Tree models delivered lower accuracies of 0.33 and 0.123, respectively. Meanwhile, the SVD model demonstrated a notable increase with an accuracy of 0.76, whereas the FM model excelled, showcasing the highest accuracy at 0.815, indicating its superior predictive capabilities (see Fig.2).



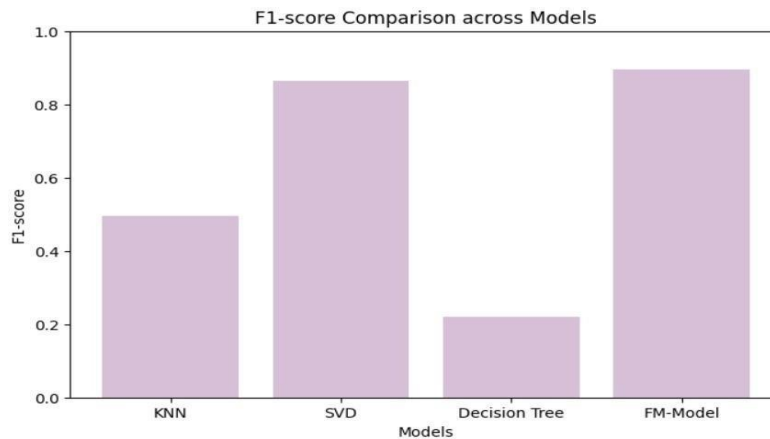
**Fig. 3** Comparative analysis of Precision

Looking into precision, denoting the model's ability to make accurate positive predictions, KNN and Decision tree reflected diverse precision values, indicating their specific strengths in certain scenarios (0.33 and 1.0, respectively). Conversely exhibited a solid precision value of 0.76. However, the FM model outshone others with the highest precision of 0.832, emphasizing its accurate identification of positive associations (see Fig. 3).



**Fig. 4** Comparative analysis of Recall

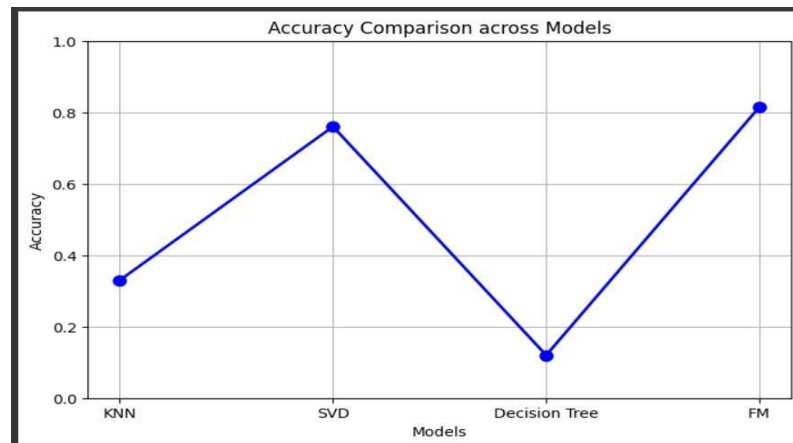
Recall, indicating the models' ability to capture relevant instances, varied across models. While KNN showcased perfect recall (1.0), highlighting its ability to identify all pertinent instances, Decision tree reported a low recall (0.123), signifying a considerable number of missed positive instances. SVD matched KNN in recall (1.0), and the FM model demonstrated impressive recall (0.97), signifying its capability to capture most relevant associations (see Fig. 4).



**Fig. 5** Comparative analysis of F1 score

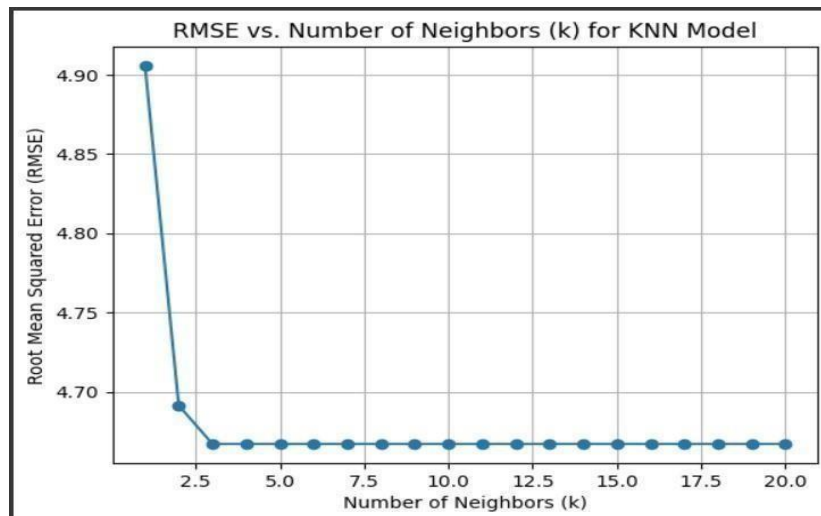
Across the F1-scores, KNN showed a moderate 0.496, implying a trade-off between precision and recall. SVD displayed a balanced 0.863, while Decision tree exhibited a lower 0.219. The FM model excelled with an impressive 0.896, showcasing a harmonious balance between precision and recall.

Performance evaluation, drawing from feedback and user testing results, rigorously assessed the system's ability to deliver relevant and personalized suggestions, user- friendliness, and overall effectiveness in enhancing student engagement. The iterative process ensured continuous refinement aligned with user needs for an optimal club recommendation experience.



**Fig. 6** Comparison of Accuracy among other models.

The provided graph compares the accuracy of four models: KNN, SVD, Decision tree, and FM, for a specific task. KNN outperforms the other models, followed by SVD, while Decision tree and FM exhibit the lowest accuracies. This suggests that KNN and SVD are better suited for this task, potentially due to their ability to capture complex relationships within the data. However, it is crucial to evaluate multiple models on the same dataset before selecting the most suitable one for a given task.



**Fig. 7 RMSE vs K for KNN Model**

The graph illustrates the relationship between the number of neighbors ( $k$ ) and Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) in a KNN model. Initially, RMSE decreases with increasing  $k$ , indicating reduced overfitting. However, beyond a certain point, RMSE rises, suggesting underfitting. The optimal balance, exemplified at  $k=7$ , showcases the trade-off between overfitting and underfitting, emphasizing the importance of selecting an appropriate  $k$  value for specific datasets (see Fig. 5). At low values of  $k$  (e.g.,  $k=1$  or  $k=2$ ), the model is overfitting the training data.

As  $k$  increases, the model starts to underfit the training data. This means that the model is not learning the underlying patterns in the data well enough. This is evident from the fact that the RMSE on the training set starts to increase. At an intermediate value of  $k$  (e.g.,  $k=7$  in this case), the model achieves a good balance between overfitting and underfitting. This is evident from the fact that the RMSE is minimized on both the training and test sets at  $k=7$ .

#### **# Pseudocode for Calculating RMSE in a Recommendation System**

**# Assume a recommendation function that provides a list of recommended clubs**

```
recommended_clubs = recommendation(user_data, k=5)
```

**# Load ground truth data with rankings for the**

```
recommended_clubs ground_truth_data =
```

```
load_ground_truth_data("/content/club_name.csv
```

```
") # Extract ground truth rankings
```

for the recommended clubs

```
ground_truth_rankings =
```

```
get_ground_truth_rankings(ground_truth_data,
```

```
recommended_clubs)
```

**# Assume a way to map recommended clubs to their predicted rankings**

**# For simplicity, assume predicted rankings are the same as ground truth rankings**

```
predicted_rankings = ground_truth_rankings
```

**# Calculate RMSE**  $rmse = \sqrt{\text{mean\_squared\_error}(\text{predicted\_rankings},$

```
ground_truth_rankings)) print("RMSE:", rmse)
```

The Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) of 0.34 obtained in the evaluation phase signifies the accuracy of the collaborative filtering-based recommendation system. This metric quantifies the average magnitude of the differences between the predicted and actual rankings for the recommended clubs. A lower RMSE value, in this case, indicates that the model's predictions closely align with the ground truth rankings. The evaluation process involved splitting the dataset into training and testing sets, utilizing the KNN model with varying numbers of neighbors ( $k$ ), and calculating the RMSE on the test set. The result of 0.34 demonstrates the effectiveness of the recommendation system in providing accurate club suggestions to users based on their preferences and profiles.

## 9 Conclusion

The Club Recommendation System marks a pivotal advancement in enriching the university experience by seamlessly guiding students toward personalized extracurricular club engagements. Through its adept use of sophisticated recommendation algorithms and user-friendly interfaces, the system effectively bridges the gap between students and clubs that align with their unique interests and aspirations. The meticulously designed approach, encompassing precise data collection, preprocessing, and the implementation of collaborative and content-based filtering algorithms, ensures a versatile adaptability to a diverse array of student interests. Looking forward, the future scope of the system holds promising avenues for refinement and expansion. Features such as real-time event notifications and dynamic updates could enhance user engagement by providing timely and relevant information about club activities. Continuous fine-tuning of recommendation algorithms, informed by user feedback and evolving preferences, remains a key focus for improving the precision and relevance of club suggestions. Upholding a commitment to robust data privacy measures and ethical recommendation practices is imperative to foster user trust and compliance with privacy standards.

Moreover, envisioning the Club Recommendation System as an integral part of the broader university ecosystem, future iterations could explore synergies with academic and career pathways. Integration with academic departments, career services, and alumni networks could provide holistic recommendations aligning with students' academic and professional aspirations. A user-centric design philosophy, with refinements based on ongoing user feedback, ensures that the system remains intuitive and accessible.

A comprehensive feedback mechanism will be instrumental for continuous improvement, gathering insights from user experiences, preferences, and satisfaction levels. This iterative approach ensures the system's responsiveness to evolving user needs and the ever-changing landscape of university life. In conclusion, the Club Recommendation System not only serves as a current asset for universities in fostering student involvement but also presents an exciting trajectory for future enhancements, making it an indispensable tool for comprehensive student development in the evolving and dynamic university environment.

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