An analysis of the factors influencing the attitude of social media users on online education and online purchasing in Namakkal district of Tamilnadu, India

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ABSTRACT
Social media is the new upcoming area in marketing and education that has blogs, micro blogs, pages, groups etc. Social Media is a just like any other form of media is a tool used for communication but at the larger scale for social interaction using highly accessible and scalable communication techniques. The main objective of this study was to identify the factors influencing attitude of social media users. The study was conducted in Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu. Data were collected using questionnaire to find out the factors affecting the attitude of the social media users. All the responders were social media users as they have the knowledge of the research issues and are able to provide informed responses. It was found that there is positive attitude towards online education and online marketing due to social media. Majority of the respondents (91.70 %) feels social media helps in educational development, similarly (73.30 %) prefer shopping in social media sites. Most of them (70.00 %) prefer to see/click on authorized dealers online advertisements in social media. Hence the necessary information to be disseminated could be given in personalized way which plays an important role in forming a positive attitude of the users towards the advertisement.

INTRODUCTION
Now a day's social media plays important role in one's life from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tool. Social media has a vital role in transforming people's life style. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. The emergence of social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook as key tools for news, journalists and their organizations have performed a high-wire act (Asough, 2012). These sites have become a day to day routine for the people. Social media is the invention of Internet-based applications that shape on the technological foundations of Web 2.0. Its content contributes to creation of text, pictures, videos, and networks (Kietzman et al., 2011).

Social media refers to the internet-based digital tools for sharing and discussing information among people. It refers to the user generated information, opinion, video, audio, and multimedia that is shared and discussed over digital networks (Andres and Woodard, 2013). Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, consume and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks (Akram and Kumar, 2017). Merriam-Webster (2020) defines social media as forms of electronic communication through which users can create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages and other content.

For the purpose of education social media has been used as an innovative way. Students should be taught to use this tool in a better way, in the educational classes' media just being used for messaging or texting rather than they should learn to figure out how to use these media for good (Kalia, 2013).

Marketers are increasingly beginning to understand and use social media as a component of their marketing strategies. Promotions, marketing intelligence, public relations, marketing
communications, and product and customer management are sub-disciplines of marketing that may use social media. Research that is more recent has examined the use of social media to communicate sustainability themed messages (Tugrul and Gocer, 2017). With consideration an analysis was conducted with the following objectives

1. To study the profile characteristics of social media users
2. To identify the factors influencing attitude of social media users towards online education and
3. To identify the factors influencing attitude of social media users towards online purchasing.

### METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto research design was used in this study by considering the objective and type of information needed. The target sample for this research was social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, Telegram, Instagram and YouTube) using respondents residing in Namakkal district of Tamil Nadu. The data were collected by using a pre tested and well structured interview schedule consisting of 30 questions related to social media usage, factors influencing attitude of social media users towards online education and online marketing. The questionnaire was prepared as Google forms and were distributes to the respondents through social media such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook. The district has fifteen blocks out of which three blocks viz Mohanur, Namakkal, and Tiruchengode were selected randomly. One village from each block such as Aniyapuram from Mohanur block, Kondichettipatti from Namakkal block and Chitalandur from Tiruchengode block were selected randomly. At first key-informant from each village was identified. The link for Google form was sent to key-informants through social media such as WhatsApp, Telegram and Facebook. After submitting their responses, they circulated the questionnaire among other social media users in their village like snowball sampling. The link was disabled after 2 days of circulation. In this way 20 social media using respondents per village were selected using snowball sampling representatively. Hence a total number of 60 social media using respondents were selected for the study.

The analysis was carried out by applying suitable statistical tools such as frequency and percentage analysis.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data regarding the profile characteristics of social media using respondents were analyzed using percentage analysis and the results are presented in the Table 1. From Table 1, It is evident that about threefifth (66.70 %) of the respondents belonged to young age category aged between 17 and 30 years old, this shows that social media users are more of lesser age, which is consistent with social media studies (Sohail and Al-Jabri, 2017) and over half of them were female (55.00%). Majority of them (86.70%) were educated up to college level. As for the occupation, 31.70% were employed and another 21.70 % were students with an average family income of Rs.50,000 to Rs.1,00,000 (63.30%).

The information about social media usage behavior of the respondents was analyzed using percentage analysis and the results are presented in the Table 2.

### Table 1. Profile characteristics of social media users (n= 60).

| Characteristic | Category       | Respondents |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|
|                | Frequency (Number) | Percentage |
| Age            | Young age       | 40          | 66.70       |
|                | Middle age      | 14          | 23.30       |
|                | Old age         | 6           | 10.00       |
| Gender         | Male            | 27          | 45.00       |
|                | Female          | 33          | 55.00       |
| Education qualification | Primary school | 1 | 1.70 |
|                | Middle school   | 3           | 5.00        |
|                | High school     | 4           | 6.70        |
|                | Graduate        | 52          | 86.70       |
| Occupation     | Employed        | 19          | 31.70       |
|                | Self-employed   | 10          | 16.70       |
|                | Student         | 13          | 21.70       |
|                | Home maker      | 9           | 15.00       |
|                | Unemployed      | 9           | 15.00       |
| Average Annual family income | $< 50,000 | 7 | 11.70 |
|                | $50,000 - $1,00,000 | 38 | 63.30 |
|                | $> 1,00,000     | 15          | 25.00       |
Table 2. Information about Social media usage behavior of the respondents (n= 60)

| Component                                      | Category                  | Respondents | Frequency (Number)* | Percentage |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------|------------|
| Awareness of different social media platform  | Yes                       |             | 48                  | 80.00      |
|                                                 | No                        |             | 12                  | 20.00      |
| Do you have account on any one of the social media sites available | Yes                      |             | 60                  | 100.00     |
|                                                 | No                        |             | 0                   | 0.00       |
| Frequency of checking social media              | All the time              |             | 13                  | 21.70      |
|                                                 | Every three hours once    |             | 13                  | 21.70      |
|                                                 | At least once a day       |             | 20                  | 33.30      |
|                                                 | Once in a week/ less      |             | 10                  | 16.70      |
|                                                 | Occasionally              |             | 4                   | 6.70       |
|                                                 | Never                     |             | 0                   | 0.00       |
| Perception about the effect of social media on information transfer | Positive     |             | 7                   | 11.70      |
|                                                 | Mixed (both)              |             | 50                  | 83.30      |
|                                                 | Negative                  |             | 3                   | 5.00       |
| Extended usage of social media at night         | Never (Sleep is a priority) |             | 26                  | 43.30      |
|                                                 | Rarely                    |             | 27                  | 45.00      |
|                                                 | Always                    |             | 7                   | 11.70      |
| Purpose of using social media                   | Communicate               |             | 55                  | 91.70      |
|                                                 | Collaborate               |             | 11                  | 18.30      |
|                                                 | Educate                   |             | 33                  | 55.00      |
|                                                 | Engage                    |             | 20                  | 33.30      |
|                                                 | Monitor                   |             | 19                  | 31.70      |
|                                                 | Entertainment             |             | 50                  | 83.30      |
|                                                 | Others                    |             | 0                   | 0.00       |
| Motivating factors for usage                    | Personal Utility          |             | 41                  | 68.30      |
|                                                 | Information seeking       |             | 44                  | 73.30      |
|                                                 | Convenience               |             | 18                  | 30.00      |
|                                                 | Entertainment             |             | 50                  | 83.30      |
|                                                 | Altruism                  |             | 8                   | 13.30      |
|                                                 | Others                    |             | 0                   | 0.00       |
| Problems faced due to social media usage        | Fear of secretly maintenance of messages | 39 | 65.00 |
|                                                 | Fear of losing personal information | 30 | 50.00 |
|                                                 | Indirectly health issues  | 22 | 36.70 |
|                                                 | Less reliability on the information | 32 | 53.30 |
|                                                 | More time on social media indirectly leads to wastage of time | 34 | 56.70 |
|                                                 | Others                    |             | 0                   | 0.00       |

* Multiple responses

From Table 2, it could be inferred that majority of them (80.00 %) are aware of different social media platforms. All (100.00%) reported that they own account in any one of the social media sites, most of them (33.30 %) checks social media platforms atleast once a day and 83.30 percent has mixed (both positive and negative) perception about the effect on information transfer using social media. Nearly half of the respondents (45.00 %) rarely extended the usage of social media at night when something interesting is present online, and (43.30 %) never extended the use of social media platforms at night. The main purpose of using social media platforms are for Communication (91.70 %), Entertainment (83.30 %) and for Education purpose (55.00 %) and the main motivating factors are Entertainment (83.30 %), Information seeking (73.30 %) and personal utility (68.30 %). Major problem felt by the social media users are Fear of secretly maintenance of the messages (65.00 %), more time on social media sites leads to wastage of time (56.70 %) and less reliability on the information available in social media sites (53.30 %) respectively.

The data regarding Knowledge about social media among the social media users were analyzed using percentage analysis and the results are
presented in the Table 3. From Table 3, it could be inferred that majority of them (95.00%) agreed that social media platforms is useful for the purpose of education and marketing and most of them (93.30%) feels that are important to have social media for the purpose of education and marketing.

The information about the attitude of social media using respondents towards education with social media was analyzed using percentage analysis and the results are presented in the Table 4.

From Table 4, it could be inferred that majority of the respondents (91.7%) feels social media helps in educational development. The role of social media in educational development as listed by the respondents are facilitate remote teaching and learning (73.30 %), help to exchange up-to-date information (73.30%), facilitate for online evaluation (71.60 %), enhance learning experience (66.70 %) and creation of awareness on various online mode of education technology (63.30%). Effects of Social media usage on children and young age as mentioned by the respondents are 63.30 percent felt reduced rate of academic performance in certain aspects, 62.70 percent of them felt social media usage prone to go for other unwanted media usage, 60.00 percent of them felt wastage of time, 56.70 percent of them felt reduction in real human contact by children and young age group and 55.00 percent said is causes some health related issues.

The information about the attitude of social media users towards marketing were analyzed using percentage analysis and the results are presented in the Table 5. From Table 5, it could be inferred that most of them (73.30 %) prefer shopping with social media, most of them (70.00 %) prefer seeing /clicking authorized dealers online advertisements in social media. Most of them (90.00 %) feels marketing with social media as a good idea, similarly (76.70 %) of them agreed that social media marketing as future marketing. Majority of them (83.30 %) were of the view that companies must have social media for marketing purpose. More than half of them (51.70 %) feel public relation provided by internet affects their purchasing decision and majority of them agreed that lots of fake advertisement from internet (68.30 %). Nearly threefourth of the social media users (76.70 %) regularly looks for review before buying a product and most of them (75.00 %) felt review of products on internet affects their purchasing decision. Majority of them disagree the statements social media marketing is waste of time (81.70%) and social media marketing sometimes is worrisome (56.70%).

**Table 3. Knowledge about social media (n= 60)**

| Component | Category | Respondents |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
|           |          | Frequency (Number) | Percentage |
| Social media platform useful for the purpose of education and marketing | Yes | 57 | 95.00 |
|          | No      | 3 | 5.00 |
| It is important to have social media for the purpose of education and marketing | Yes | 56 | 93.30 |
|          | No      | 4 | 6.70 |

**Table 4. Social media users attitudes toward education with social media (n= 60)**

| Component | Category | Respondents |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
|           |          | Frequency (Number)* | Percentage |
| Social media helps in educational development | Yes | 55 | 91.70 |
|          | No      | 5 | 8.30 |
| Role of social media in education | Create awareness on various online mode of education technologies | 38 | 63.30 |
|          | Enhance learning experience | 40 | 66.70 |
|          | Facilitate remote teaching and learning | 44 | 73.30 |
|          | Facilitate for online evaluation | 43 | 71.60 |
|          | Help to exchange up-to-date information | 44 | 73.30 |
|          | Facilitate to pick out the Talented ones in unbiased manner | 27 | 45.00 |
|          | Others | 0 | 0.00 |

**Effects of social media usage on children and young age group**

| Component | Category | Respondents |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
|           |          | Frequency (Number) * | Percentage |
| Reduced rate of academic performance in certain aspects | 38 | 63.30 |
| Distraction of attention and reduced ability of retaining information | 19 | 31.70 |
| Prone to go for other unwanted media | 37 | 61.70 |
| Health related issues | 33 | 55.00 |
| Reduction in real human contact | 34 | 56.70 |
| Wastage of time | 36 | 60.00 |
| Loss of motivation | 16 | 26.70 |
| Others | 1 | 1.17 |

*Multiple Responses*
Table 5. Social media users attitudes toward marketing with social media (n= 60)

| Component                                                      | Category       | Respondents |
|                                                               |                |             |
|                                                               | Frequency (Number) | Percentage |
| Preference of shopping with social media                      | Yes            | 44          | 73.30 |
|                                                               | No             | 16          | 26.70 |
| Preference of seeing/clicking authorized dealers online advertisements in social media | Yes            | 42          | 70.00 |
|                                                               | No             | 18          | 30.00 |
| Good idea to market with social media                         | Yes            | 54          | 90.00 |
|                                                               | No             | 6           | 10.00 |
| Social media marketing is the future marketing                 | Yes            | 46          | 76.70 |
|                                                               | No             | 14          | 23.30 |
| Companies must have social media for the purposes of marketing | Yes            | 50          | 83.30 |
|                                                               | No             | 10          | 16.70 |
| Public relations provided by the internet affect my purchasing decision | Yes            | 31          | 51.70 |
|                                                               | No             | 29          | 48.30 |
| Lot of fake advertisements from internet affect my purchasing decision | Yes            | 41          | 68.30 |
|                                                               | No             | 19          | 31.70 |
| Regularly look for review of products on internet before buying something | Yes            | 46          | 76.70 |
|                                                               | No             | 14          | 23.30 |
| Review of products on internet affect my purchasing decision   | Yes            | 45          | 75.00 |
|                                                               | No             | 15          | 25.00 |
| Social media marketing is waste of time                        | Yes            | 11          | 18.30 |
|                                                               | No             | 49          | 81.70 |
| Social media marketing sometimes is worrisome                  | Yes            | 26          | 43.30 |
|                                                               | No             | 34          | 56.70 |

CONCLUSION

Social media support enthusiasm in a common space around sharing interests, collaborations, resource sharing, communications and interactions. It was revealed from the study that most of the respondents belong to the young age category aged between 17 and 30 years old. There is a positive attitude towards education and marketing with usage of social media. The impact of social media is radically changing the way education has been traditionally delivered. Social media marketing has been included by almost all the marketers world-wide; to promote products and services over social media and even have brand pages over the social networking sites. Fear of secretly maintenance of messages and more time on social media which leads to wastage of time are the top most problem felt by the social media users. Students should develop the cognitive and intuitive ability to analyze how much time they spent with social media.

Limitations and directions for future research

The study may have suffered from certain limitations. There are differences in the sample size of the two groups which might have hampered the accuracy of tests applied (Byrne et al., 2007). The generalizability of the results of the research may also have been limited because of the geographic extent of the study. However, the above mentioned limitations of the study are likely indicators for various other new areas of research. The results of the study can be further validated on a large sample. Future researchers can check the differences in the different groups used for the research.

DECLARATIONS

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Author's contribution
Dhivy and Rajasekaran participated in the design of study. Dhivy performed the experiments and analyzed the data. Rajasekaran critically revised the manuscript for important intellectual contents. Dhivy wrote the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Competing interests
The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
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