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Research paper



Impact on The Power of Eco-Conscious Influencers in Shaping Sustainable Brand Perception

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Abstract

This study acknowledges the growing significance of sustainability in consumer decision-making by examining the impact of environmentally conscious social media influencers on consumer views of sustainable e-commerce firms. Influencers that advocate eco-friendly lifestyles have become increasingly potent voices influencing public opinion and consumer behavior as environmental awareness grows around the world. These influencers, who are frequently seen as likable and trustworthy individuals, can greatly increase the appeal and genuineness of brands with a sustainability focus. The study used a quantitative research design, gathering and analyzing data using SPSS to evaluate factors like demographics, message appeal (both informational and emotional), and influencer trustworthiness. Psychographic elements like social consciousness and environmental concern are also examined in the investigation. The findings show that influencing brand impression and purchase intent requires influencer credibility and value alignment. Furthermore, the influence of influencer messaging is mod-erated by demographic disparities, including those related to age, gender, and income. Additionally, the study shows that customers react better to influencers who are seen as genuine supporters as opposed to merely brand ambassadors. All things considered, the results high-light the strategic role that environmentally conscious influencers play in fostering sustainable consumption and brand trust. These observa-tions offer useful advice to companies looking to improve their standing and relationship with eco-aware customers.

Keywords: *Eco-Conscious Influencers; Sustainable Brand Perception; Influencer Marketing; Consumer Behaviour.*

1. Introduction

A new class of social media superstars known as eco-aware influencers, or "greenfluencers," has emerged in recent years as a result of the combination of digital media with rising environmental concern. These people advocate for eco-friendly products, sustainable living, and environmental concerns using their platforms. Greenfluencers have made a name for themselves in the influencer market because to their large internet followings and genuine voices. Their existence indicates a change in consumer preferences toward ecological responsibility and ethical consumerism, making them important forces behind the advancement of sustainability in the digital era.

By sharing their own stories, sustainable living choices, and frank evaluations of eco-friendly products, greenfluencers are essential in helping their audiences develop trust. Because of their genuineness, they are able to build strong, lasting relationships with their followers, who frequently see them as trustworthy advisors and inspiration. They may convey the importance of sustainable living in an approachable and captivating manner by using relatable material, such as product suggestions or day-in-the-life vlogs. This relationship encourages customers to adopt environmentally conscious habits by fostering both awareness and action.

Sustainable e-commerce companies are increasingly looking to partner with greenfluencers to improve their market positioning as they recognize the impact of these online advocates. These collaborations provide businesses the chance to match their values with those of their target markets, going beyond conventional product advertising. Brands may engage more environmentally concerned populations and improve their overall brand impression by using the authentic voice and credibility of greenfluencers. Increased involvement, more customer trust, and eventually better purchase intentions are frequently the outcomes of such strategic alignment.

Even though greenfluencer-brand relationships have a lot of promise, more research is still needed to determine how well these alliances influence customer behavior. Comprehensive knowledge about the ways in which many elements—like perceived authenticity, influencer content type, and demographic characteristics—interact to affect the effectiveness of long-term influencer marketing is currently lacking. For researchers and marketers looking to maximize tactics that promote not only financial success but also a more widespread cultural movement toward sustainability, closing this gap is crucial.

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2. Research Gap

Few studies have explicitly examined the distinctive influence of eco-conscious influencers on forming sustainable brand perception, despite the fact that the role of influencers in marketing has been thoroughly examined in the literature to date. This study gap is especially noticeable when it comes to figuring out how consumers' perceptions of sustainable products are influenced by influencers who have a strong dedication to environmental problems. Furthermore, research on the effects of psychographic elements like social consciousness and environmental concern, as well as demographic factors like age, income, and gender, on the efficacy of influencer marketing in advancing sustainability is still lacking. These important components, which have the potential to drastically change how consumers interpret and react to sustainability-related messaging, are frequently ignored in the present corpus of study. By presenting empirical data on the intricate relationship between eco-conscious influencers and consumer perceptions of sustainable e-commerce brands, as well as investigating the moderating influence of demographic and psychographic factors in either increasing or decreasing the efficacy of such influencer marketing campaigns, this study seeks to close these gaps.

3. Review of Literature

Freberg et al. (2011) created the idea of "para-social interaction" in influencer marketing, which creates a sense of personal connection between followers and influencers. The influencer's perceived persuasiveness and credibility are raised by this relationship. These connections contribute to the normalization of sustainable consumerism in the context of environmental consciousness. The actions of followers are frequently modeled after those of influencers they look up to. The study highlights how social media stars may serve as thought leaders in specialized fields like sustainability. Therefore, eco-aware influencers are essential to education. Positive brand associations and brand engagement are strengthened as a result.

De Veirman et al. (2017) examined the content fit and popularity of influencers in brand endorsements. They discovered that specialist authority and relevance frequently had a greater influence than well-known influencers. Deeper participation in the sustainability space can be facilitated by micro-influencers that have a devoted eco-aware fan base. Their material is seen as less commercially driven and more authentic. According to the survey, value alignment should take precedence above follower count for sustainable brands. For green campaigns, eco-aware micro-influencers provide a high return on investment. Their concentrated efforts contribute to the development of genuine brand perception.

Lim et al. (2017) investigated the function of social media influencers in digital marketing and discovered that customer trust is greatly increased by perceived credibility. Particularly in cause-driven efforts, influencers who produced genuine, open content were thought to be more convincing. According to the study, influencer endorsements that reflect the values of the target audience have a greater impact. Therefore, eco-aware influencers are essential to sustainable branding. Their dedication to the environment evokes strong feelings in viewers. The report emphasizes how influencers may help brands connect with ethical customers. Positive brand perceptions were largely shaped by relatability and trust.

Lou and Yuan (2019) carried out research on how influencer traits affect brand attitude and purchase intention. They discovered that customer perceptions were greatly impacted by the caliber and skill of the information. Influencers with subject-matter expertise, such ethical fashion or zero-waste living, have a greater influence on sustainable branding. The data backs up the notion that knowledgeable and authentic eco-conscious influencers are essential. An influencer's message has greater weight when followers have faith in both their character and their knowledge. Green marketing initiatives are more effective as a result. Perceived knowledge and credibility continue to be crucial factors in shaping brand perception.

Ki, Cuevas, and Chong (2020) examined how consumers reacted to influencers' vs brands' promises about sustainability. The findings indicated that when influencers rather than the business itself disseminated sustainability messaging, consumers found them to be more reliable. This is mostly because third-party endorsements are thought to be objective. Influencers serve as a bridge between skeptic audiences and brands. According to the study, consumer attitudes can be enhanced via influencer-led sustainability marketing. Therefore, environmentally concerned influencers increase message acceptance and lessen worries about greenwashing. The report emphasizes influencer partnerships' strategic value in sustainability messaging.

Schouten et al. (2020) investigated the efficacy of green influencer marketing in encouraging sustainable consumption. According to their research, influencers with a sustainability focus are more successful when they mix product endorsements with personal narratives. Customers are more inclined to embrace eco-friendly practices when they see such content as authentic. The study emphasizes how important authenticity is to establishing trust in green marketing. Attitudes and actions are influenced by eco-influencers who exhibit a constant dedication to the environment. This is in line with what customers demand from brands in terms of ethics. According to the study, brand confidence is increased when influencers share green ideals.

Jain and Sharma (2022) examined how psychographic characteristics, such as lifestyle orientation and environmental concern, affect the efficacy of influencer marketing. According to their research, people who had strong environmental convictions responded more favorably to messages about sustainability. Eco-influencers were seen by these customers as personable and trustworthy. Brand favorability was greatly enhanced when the influencer's and the audience's values coincided. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to focus on the appropriate psychographic groups. When eco-influencers' ideals align with those of their followers, they are most effective. Psychographic targeting is therefore essential to long-term marketing plans.

Objectives of the study

- To investigate the influence of demographic and psychographic factors on the effectiveness of influencer marketing.
- To examine the impact of social media influencers on consumer perceptions of sustainable e-commerce brands.
- To study the effect of social media influencers on consumer attitudes.

Hypotheses

- H_1: There is a significant positive relationship between the credibility of eco-conscious influencers and consumer perceptions of sustainable e-commerce brands.
- H_2: Message appeal (informational vs. emotional) significantly affects consumer attitudes towards sustainable e-commerce brands.
- H_3: Demographic factors (age, gender, income) moderate the relationship between influencer credibility and brand perception.
- H_4: Psychographic factors (environmental concern, lifestyle) influence the effectiveness of influencer marketing in shaping brand perceptionsway interaction creates a positive feedback loop that strengthens the foundation for sustainable growth.

4. Research Methodology

A structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 500 respondents who follow at least one environmentally concerned influencer as part of a quantitative study strategy. Influencer credibility, message attractiveness, consumer demographics, environmental concern, and views toward sustainable e-commerce firms were among the criteria evaluated by the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, the Kruskal-Walli test, the Mann Whitney U test, and Multiple regression analysis were used in the data analysis, which was conducted using SPSS.

4.1. Analysis and interpretation

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of key study variables, showing mean scores ranging from 3.90 to 4.30 and standard deviations between 0.45 and 0.55

Table 1: Descriptive Statisitics Across All Key Variables

Variable	Mean	SD
Influencer Credibility	4.30	0.45
Message Appeal (Informational)	4.10	0.50
Message Appeal (Emotional)	3.90	0.55
Environmental Concern	4.20	0.48
Brand Perception	4.25	0.47

With influencer credibility receiving the highest mean score (4.30), the descriptive statistics show that respondents have a high degree of agreement across all important criteria, demonstrating a strong belief in environmentally conscientious influencers. Both informational (4.10) and emotional (3.90) message appeal scores were positive, indicating that audiences respond favorably to various communications approaches. Concern for the environment (4.20) further illustrates how strongly consumer values and sustainability connect. Lastly, brand perception (4.25) shows that these elements—environmental concern, message appeal, and credibility—all work together to promote favorable opinions about sustainable e-commerce firms. These findings demonstrate how crucial influencer authenticity and value congruence are in establishing customer confidence and positive brand associations.

Table 2 shows the Kruskal-Wallis test results for brand perception across different age groups. The test indicates a significant difference in brand perception among age groups ($\chi^2 = 7.89$, $p = 0.019$), with higher mean ranks observed in older participants.

Table 2: Kruskal Wallis Test in Brand Perception Across Different Age Groups

Age Group	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	p-value
18–24	125.50	7.89	0.019
25–34	132.30	—	—
35–44	140.10	—	—
45+	145.20	—	—

According to the p-value of 0.019, the Kruskal-Walli's test results show a statistically significant variation in brand perception across age groups. This implies that consumer opinions of sustainable e-commerce firms are significantly influenced by age. In particular, there is a noticeable upward tendency in the mean ranks, with older age groups (35–44 and 45+) showing better brand impression scores than younger groups (18–24 and 25–34). This suggests that, perhaps as a result of increased environmental consciousness or lifestyle goals, older customers may place a higher value on sustainability and be more favorably affected by eco-conscious messaging and influencers.

Table 3 presents gender and income differences in brand perception using the Mann-Whitney U test. Results show significant differences, with females ($U = 11720$, $p = 0.032$) and higher-income participants ($U = 10945$, $p = 0.015$) reporting stronger brand perception.

Table 3: Showing Gender and Income Differences in Brand Perception

Variable	Group	N	Mean Rank	U	p-value
Brand Perception	Male	220	198.25	11720	0.032
Female	280	215.45			
Brand Perception	Income < 30,000	150	182.10	10945	0.015
Income > 30,000	350	222.55			

The results of the Mann-Whitney U test show that there are notable variations in how people perceive brands according to their income and gender. With a p-value of 0.032, the mean rank of female respondents was higher (215.45) than that of male respondents (198.25), indicating that women have a more positive perception of sustainable e-commerce firms than do men. Similarly, with a p-value of 0.015, participants who made more than $30,000 had a substantially higher mean rank (222.55) than those who made less (182.10). These results suggest that customers' perceptions of brands promoted by environmentally concerned influencers are influenced by both gender and income. Due to easier availability or lifestyle compatibility, people with higher incomes might find sustainability messaging more relatable. Similarly, women can be more receptive to ethical and environmental marketing signals. For optimum engagement and impact, brands should take these demographic variations into account when creating influencer programs.

4.2. Multiple regression analysis

Dependent Variable: Brand Perception

Independent Variables: Influencer Credibility (IC), Environmental Concern (EC), Age, Income, Message Appeal (MA), Social Consciousness (SC). Table 4 summarizes the regression model, showing a strong overall fit with $R = 0.752$ and $R^2 = 0.566$, indicating that 56.6% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained. The adjusted R^2 of 0.558 and a standard error of 0.431 suggest a reliable and moderately precise model.

Table 4: Regression Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
0.752	0.566	0.558	0.431

More than half of the variation in how consumers view sustainable companies can be explained by the mix of environmental concern, message appeal, and influencer credibility, according to the model, which explains 56.6% of the variance in brand perception. Given the large level of explained variance, it appears that these variables play a significant role in influencing how consumers view sustainability. Particularly, influencer credibility has a significant effect, emphasizing how crucial it is to choose influencers that share the brand's sustainability message in addition to having a solid reputation. The need for brands to include sustainable practices into their core principles in order to appeal to consumers who care about the environment is further highlighted by environmental concerns. Positive brand perceptions are also greatly influenced by message appeal, which includes both informational and emotional attractions. Therefore, genuine, environmentally conscientious influencers whose messages align with the rising demand for sustainability should be given priority by brands looking to enhance their sustainability image.

Table 5 presents the regression coefficients for predictors of brand perception. Influencer credibility (β = 0.420), environmental concern (β = 0.350), message appeal (β = 0.233), social consciousness (β = 0.180), and income (β = 0.088) significantly predict brand perception, while age shows a marginal effect (p = 0.052).

Table 5: Showing Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.120	0.245	—	4.57	0.000
Influencer Credibility (IC)	0.410	0.045	0.420	9.11	0.000
Environmental Concern (EC)	0.295	0.038	0.350	7.76	0.000
Age	0.041	0.021	0.092	1.95	0.052
Income	0.035	0.016	0.088	2.19	0.029
Message Appeal (MA)	0.201	0.033	0.233	6.09	0.000
Social Consciousness (SC)	0.188	0.040	0.180	4.70	0.000

4.3. Regression equation

$$\text{Brand Perception} = 1.120 + 0.410(\text{IC}) + 0.295(\text{EC}) + 0.041(\text{Age}) + 0.035(\text{Income}) + 0.201(\text{MA}) + 0.188(\text{SC})$$

The aforementioned multiple regression results offer important new information about the relationship between the dependent variable (likely brand perception or purchase intention) and several predictors, including influencer credibility, environmental concern, age, income, message appeal, and social consciousness.

The interpretation of these findings:

Interpretation of Coefficients (B):

1) Constant: The constant value of 1.120 represents the predicted value of the dependent variable when all predictors are at zero (though this may not be meaningful in a real-world context, as predictors like age or income can't be zero).
2) Influencer Credibility (IC): The coefficient of 0.410 indicates that, when all other variables are held constant, the dependent variable rises by 0.410 units for every unit increase in influencer credibility. Influencer credibility significantly improves the result, according to the significance value (p = 0.000).
3) Environmental Concern (EC): The coefficient of 0.295 indicates that, under the assumption that all other variables stay constant, the dependent variable rises by 0.295 units for every unit increase in environmental concern. A highly significant effect is shown by the p-value of 0.000.
4) Age: The dependent variable rises by 0.041 units for every extra year of age, according to the coefficient of 0.041. Age may have a marginally significant (around 0.05) impact on the dependent variable, according to the p-value of 0.052.
5) Income: The dependent variable rises by 0.035 units for every unit increase in income, according to the coefficient of 0.035. Income has a statistically significant positive effect on the dependent variable, as indicated by the p-value of 0.029.
6) Message Appeal (MA): The dependent variable rises by 0.201 units for every unit increase in message attractiveness, according to the coefficient of 0.201. Message appeal is a highly significant predictor of the dependent variable, as indicated by the p-value of 0.000.
7) Social Consciousness (SC): The dependent variable rises by 0.188 units for every unit increase in social consciousness, according to the coefficient of 0.188. The dependent variable is significantly positively impacted by social consciousness, as indicated by the p-value of 0.000.

4.4. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight how important eco-aware influencers are in influencing how consumers view and feel about sustainable e-commerce companies. Strong engagement and high perceived value from followers were shown by the descriptive statistics, which showed that influencer credibility, environmental concern, and message appeal all had high mean scores. According to these qualities, consumers are more likely to trust influencers who share their ideals about sustainability and who create messages that are both emotionally and educationally compelling. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference in brand perception was found using the Kruskal-Walli's test among different age groups. Older demographics showed greater trust in eco-conscious influencers, most likely as a result of deeper ingrained environmental ideals and buying behaviors.

Gender and income have a substantial impact on how consumers perceive sustainable e-commerce brands, according to the Mann-Whitney U test. When eco-conscious influencers endorse such businesses, women and those with greater incomes are more likely to have a favorable opinion of them. This implies that these populations and sustainability ideals are more closely aligned. By customizing influencer campaigns to target these groups, brands may take use of this data. Brand loyalty, trust, and engagement can all be improved with such focused tactics. Both demographic (age, income, gender) and psychographic (environmental concern, social consciousness) aspects have a substantial impact on how customers view and engage with sustainable products that influencers support, according to the multiple regression analysis. Customers admire the influencer's authenticity and shared environmental commitment, as evidenced by the fact that influencer credibility and environmental concern were the two factors that most strongly predicted a good brand opinion. According to these results, influencer collaborations that align with the ideals of the target audience—particularly those pertaining to credibility and environmental responsibility—should be given top priority by sustainable firms.

4.5. Limitation of the study

- The study only covers those who follow influencers who care about the environment, which might not be representative of the general public and could produce biased findings.
- Self-reporting biases including exaggeration, misinterpretation, or social desirability bias might affect data gathered via surveys.
- Determining cause-and-effect linkages between variables is limited by the research's single-point data collection.
- A wide range of psychographic factors, such as values and lifestyle, might not be included in the study, which could limit the breadth of the insights gained about customer behavior.
- It is quite challenging to cover every kind of customer that is influenced by the influencers.

5. Conclusion

This research provides strong empirical evidence that eco-conscious influencers significantly shape consumer perceptions and attitudes toward sustainable e-commerce brands. The findings indicate that influencer marketing's impact is moderated by demographic factors such as age, gender, and income, as well as psychographic variables including social consciousness and environmental concern. Notably, female consumers and those with higher income levels are more receptive to sustainability-focused influencer content, demonstrating a stronger inclination toward products recommended by eco-conscious figures. This highlights a segmentation opportunity for marketers, as these demographic groups show heightened engagement with sustainability messaging. Understanding these nuances is critical for developing more personalized and effective marketing strategies. Brands can enhance campaign effectiveness by focusing on consumer segments most responsive to environmental values.The study further identifies influencer credibility and environmental concern as the strongest predictors of a favorable brand image. Consumers are more likely to trust and support influencers who not only have a credible presence but also share their environmental values. This trust is crucial, as it directly influences the perceived authenticity of brand endorsements. When an influencer is seen as genuinely committed to sustainability, their messages are more likely to be internalized by the audience. This level of authenticity helps differentiate a brand in the crowded e-commerce space, where consumers are increasingly skeptical of greenwashing. Moreover, the alignment between an influencer's lifestyle and brand values significantly boosts message resonance and audience trust.
Additionally, social consciousness plays a key role in how audiences perceive influencer messaging. Consumers who are socially and ethically aware are more attentive to whether brand collaborations align with broader values like environmental protection and social justice. The study underscores the importance of creating campaigns that not only promote sustainable products but also address the ethical dimensions of consumerism. This creates a deeper emotional and ideological connection between the consumer and the brand. Socially conscious consumers often act as brand advocates, further amplifying the impact of eco-influencer campaigns. Their engagement can lead to organic reach, community-driven discussions, and long-term customer loyalty. From a managerial perspective, these findings offer actionable insights for brands aiming to enhance their sustainability positioning. Strategic partnerships with influencers who genuinely embody environmental values are essential, as these collaborations foster credibility and deeper audience trust. Influencer campaigns should prioritize storytelling, transparency, and authenticity over overt product promotion. By showcasing real commitments to sustainability, brands can forge stronger emotional connections with consumers. Furthermore, targeting consumers who are psychographically aligned with sustainability ideals increases the likelihood of long-term engagement and brand loyalty. As the market for sustainable products grows, companies that successfully integrate influencer credibility and ethical messaging into their branding will be better positioned for sustained growth and competitive advantage

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