

**THE WAVE OF GREEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS
ON ECO-CONSCIOUS CONSUMER
(With Special Reference to Social Media Users in Chennai City)**

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, consumer behaviour has significantly shifted as more individuals prioritize sustainability and environmental consciousness in their purchase decisions. Many consumers are increasingly aware of the impact their purchasing decisions can have on the planet and are actively seeking eco-friendly alternatives. This shift in consumer behaviour is driven by various factors, including greater access to information, the influence of social media and the realization that individual actions can make a difference. The rise of eco-consciousness has brought a new wave of responsibility to the world of business. Eco-conscious consumers are transforming the business realm, demanding a fresh approach. One such approach to business firms is to embrace Influencer Marketing strategy. Companies that prioritize sustainability through Influencers on social media platforms have a unique opportunity to earn the trust, loyalty and support of this expanding market. In the wake of a constant pressing need for environmentally friendly behaviours, sustainable consumption practices and evolving societal, this research study throws light on Green Social Media Influencers (GSMI's) and their impact on consumer behaviour, particularly in the context of eco-conscious consumers. Recognizing the influential role of Green social media influencers in shaping attitudes and behaviours of the followers on social media platforms this study is an eye-opener to understand how influencers engage, communicate effectively the sustainability efforts and initiatives of brands with environmentally conscious consumers. The findings underscore the effectiveness of Green social media influencers in shaping followers' purchase intentions through personal attributes, content characteristics, green orientation and message appeal type. Further, this research study offers insights to marketers to devise effective strategies to promote sustainable consumption among eco-conscious consumers in collaboration with green social media influencers on social media platforms.

Key Words : *Eco-conscious consumers, green social media influencers, green attitude, eco-friendly products, purchase intention.*

1. Introduction :

The concept of environmental sustainability has gained momentum in recent times. With ever-increasing concerns about the environment, there is an urgent need to foster sustainable mindsets among people to move towards environmentally-friendly life-styles to solve environmental challenges. It is a well established fact that unhealthy life-style and

consumption pattern of the society at a large has a detrimental impact on environment. For a sustainable economy, promoting green habits among consumers becomes inevitable. This has led to the emergence of Eco-conscious consumers who prioritize environmental sustainability, ethical sourcing and minimal waste in their purchase decisions.

In recent years, with growing concern to protect our environment, social media platforms can be used as a good source to communicate and promote environmental consciousness among consumers. This led to the emergence of Firm-Generated Content (FGC) which refers to content such as voice messages, text updates and engaging videos that is created and shared by businesses themselves, across their own platform to promote eco-friendly behaviour among consumers. Firm-Generated Content (FGC) has in turn, contributed to the growth of User-Generated Content (UGC) which refers to any form of content such as reviews, testimonials, images, videos or posts, created by consumers rather than brands. User-Generated Content (UGC) also introduced a new dimension to social media marketing by giving customers a voice and allowing them to contribute to the brand narrative. The value of consumer-generated content began to rise significantly as individuals who consistently produced high-quality, engaging and trustworthy content had the power to shape public perception and influence purchasing decisions. This shift led to the evolution of Digital Influencers. Digital influencers are individuals who have built a dedicated following on digital platforms by sharing content that resonates with specific audience. These influencers through their strong on-line presence possess the ability to affect the opinions, behaviours and buying choices of their followers due to their perceived authenticity, expertise and relatability.

2. Statement of the Problem :

In today's digitally-driven world, utilizing social media platforms to cultivate eco-conscious communities and inspire tangible environmental action, Green Social Media Influencers (GSMI's) have emerged as pivotal figures in the global sustainability movement. Business firms have started to collaborate with such content creators to amplify their reach to promote green products. These influencers include environmental activists, sustainable lifestyle bloggers who disseminate environmentally-themed content, promote a sustainable lifestyle, recommend healthy living as well as promote sustainable brands and products for eco-conscious followers on social media. Through innovative content strategies they make complex environmental issues accessible and actionable for diverse audiences. Moreover, Green social media influencers also help companies to connect with niche groups effectively through communities with shared interest.

At this juncture, this research study makes an attempt to gain insights about the role Green social media influencers play in promoting eco-friendly /green products in today's environmentally conscious market from consumers perspective on social media platforms. The area chosen for this study is Chennai city, capital of Tamil Nadu, India. Chennai being a metropolitan city, it is likely to have a dynamic environment. With diverse population, cultural relevance, digital adoption, tech-savvy lifestyle, rising market trends and distinctive consumer preferences this study is significant. Further, the impact of Green Influencers on social media users in the study domain has the potential to uncover new trends, preferences and dynamics

specific to this metropolitan city. This study can be vital for marketers to optimize their influencer marketing efforts and effectively connect with the target audience in Chennai city.

3. Review of Literature :

Saima & Khan (2020) highlighted Digital Influencers' role in shaping consumer perceptions through social media, while Freberg et al., (2011) described them as independent third-party endorsers with persuasive influence across digital platforms. Lee et al. (2021) stated that there is limited knowledge about the impact of influencer marketing on green consumption behaviour of consumers. With environmental crisis is on the rise consumers interest for a sustainable economy is also increasing (Gurlek and Koseoglu, 2021). While eco-friendly practices are adopted by business firm to reach out to consumers with these initiatives green influencer marketing has become a vital strategy (Yesiloglu and Was, 2020). Green social media influencers help to build environmental awareness and promote eco-friendly lifestyles among their audiences (Pittman and Abell, 2021).

4. Research Gap :

To identify the research gap, a review of literature has been conducted on this related area. However, no previous research study has specifically investigated from the consumer /user perspective the relative influence of Green social media influencers /eco-influencers' product recommendation on social media platforms leading to purchase intention of followers. Many other factors such as social media usage pattern, motive to follow green social media influencers, digital content post and green attitude of social media users/followers has been identified for this study. In addition, the study also provides efficient strategies to marketers to enhance followers brand engagement and loyalty towards sustainable consumption based on influencers recommendations.

The following research questions have been identified for this study.

- a. What factors contribute to follow Green social media influencers in social media platforms by the consumers/users?
- b. Can consumers/users purchase intention for green products be influenced by Green social media influencers in the context of social media platforms?
- c. Do green attitude impact a consumer/user to generate an intention to purchase green products using social media platforms?

5. Objectives of the Study :

- i. to study the demographic profile of social media followers in the study domain ;
- ii. to understand the social media usage pattern and the factors responsible to follow Green social media influencers ;
- iii. to determine the influence of Green social media influencers on green attitude of social media followers for green/eco-friendly products ; and
- iv. to investigate the impact of Green social media influencers on green product purchase intention behavior of followers on social media platforms.

6. Hypothesis Formulation :

To understand the relationship between the variables to reach the goals following hypothesis has been formulated for this study.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the factors responsible for following digital content post of green social media influencers and green product purchase intention behaviour of the respondents.

H₀: There is no association between green attitude and the motive to follow green social media influencers of respondents.

7. Research Design :

This study has been conducted using both primary and secondary data. The primary data has been collected from a sample of 105 respondents who have environmental concern, who have social media account, follow at least one green influencer on social media platforms and make eco- friendly product choices and purchase decision based on recommendations of Green social media influencers. A well-structured questionnaire has been administered to the respondents to gather the data. A purposive sampling technique has been applied. The respondents belonging to different age group, gender, educational qualification and strata of the society from Chennai city, India, have been considered for the study. Secondary data has been collected from books, journals, periodicals and website. The simple percentage method and Chi Square Test has been applied for this paper.

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation :

Table - 1

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	61	58.00
Female	44	42.00
Total	105	100.00
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 25 Yrs	29	28.0
25-35 Yrs	36	34.3
35-45 Yrs	22	21.0
Above 45 Yrs	28	26.7
Total	105	100.00
Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage

SSLC / HSC	12	11.43
Graduate	33	31.43
Post Graduate	26	24.77
Professional	23	21.90
Others (Diploma Holder)	11	10.47
Total	105	100.00
Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Employed	55	52.39
Business	19	18.09
Student	26	24.77
Home Maker	3	2.85
Retired	2	1.90
Total	105	100.00
Monthly / Household Income	Frequency	Percentage
Under Rs.25,000	23	21.90
Rs.25,000 – Rs.50,000	44	41.90
Above Rs.50,000	38	36.20
Total	105	100.00
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	55	52.38
Unmarried	50	47.62
Total	105	100.00

Source : Primary Data

Interpretation : Table - 1 shows that 58 % of the respondents are males; 34.3% are between 25 years to 35 years; 31.43% are graduates; 52.39% are employed; while 41.9% have a monthly/ household income of Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000 and 52.38% are married according to this study.

Table – 2

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE PATTERN AND FACTORS RESPONSIBLE TO FOLLOW GREEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS OF RESPONDENTS

Period of usage of Social Media Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	17	16.19
1-5 yrs.	30	28.58
5 -10 yrs.	38	36.19
Above 10 yrs.	20	19.04
Total	105	100.00

Type of social media platform used to follow Green social media influencers	Frequency	Percentage
Face Book	25	23.80
You Tube	21	20.00
What's Up	20	19.05
Instagram	33	31.43
Others	6	5.72
Total	105	100.00

Checking post of Green social media influencers	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	42	40.00
Every Week	31	29.52
Every 15 days	22	20.96
Every month	10	9.52
Total	105	100.00

Time Spent on post Green social media influencers	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 Minutes	37	35.23
30 minutes to 1 Hr.	34	32.39
1-2 Hrs.	22	20.96
More than 2 Hrs.	12	11.42
Total	105	100.00

Motive to follow Green social media influencers	Frequency	Percentage
More Authentic	18	17.15
Acts as a source of inspiration	21	20.00
Helps in making improved product choice/decisions	37	35.23
Power of relatability	9	8.58
Captivates audience interest successfully	20	19.04
Total	105	100.00

Factors responsible to follow digital content post of Green social media influencers	Frequency	Percentage
Personal traits of Green social media influencers	39	37.14

Green orientation behavior of Green social media influencers	27	25.72
Green social media influencers content characteristics	21	20.00
Message appeal type (video/text/photos) posted by Green social media influencers	18	17.14
Total	105	100.00

Source : Primary Data

Interpretation : Table - 2 shows that 36.19% of the respondents have been using social media platforms between 5-10 years ; while 31.43% have been using Instagram social media platform to follow Green social media influencers; 40.00% of the respondents check the digital post of Green social media influencers daily ; 35.23% spend less than 30 minutes on the post of Green social media influencers; 35.23% of the respondents stated that the motive behind to follow Green social media influencers is that they help in making improved product choice/ decision and 37.14% of the respondents revealed that personal traits of Green social media influencers such as credibility, interactive quality and expertise factors are responsible to choose Green social media influencers according to this study.

Table - 3

IMPACT OF GREEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS ON GREEN ATTITUDE AND GREEN PRODUCT PURCHASE INTENTION BEHAVIOUR OF RESPONDENTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Green Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
I feel good when I behave in an environmentally friendly way by the impact of Green social media influencers	21	20.00
I feel positive to switch to eco-friendly products for ecological reasons through Green social media influencers	23	21.90
I am willing to pay higher prices for goods/services to protect the environment by the impact of Green social media influencers	25	23.80
My personal behavior can bring about a positive environmental change through Green social media influencers	36	34.28
TOTAL	105	100.00

Green Product Purchase Intention Behaviour	Frequency	Percentage
Actively search for green products endorsed by Green social media influencers	23	21.90

Likely to purchase green products based on the recommendations given by Green social media influencers I follow	28	26.67
Continue to follow green products recommended by Green social media influencers before making a purchase	13	12.38
Remain brand loyal to green products endorsed by Green social media influencers	18	17.15
Inclined to make repeat purchases in future as I value Green social media influencers opinion	15	14.28
More likely to recommend Green social media influencers whom I follow to others also	8	7.62
TOTAL	105	100.00

Source : Primary Data

Interpretation : The above Table -3 reveals the impact of Green social media influencers on green attitude and green product purchase intention behavior of respondents on social media platforms. 34.28% of the respondents revealed that their personal behavior can bring about a positive environmental change through the influential role played by Green social media influencers ; and 26.67% are likely to purchase green products based on the recommendations given by Green social media influencers on social media platforms according to this study.

CHI- SQUARE TEST

Null Hypothesis :

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the factors responsible for following digital content post of green social media influencers and green product purchase intention behaviour of the respondents.

Table – 4

ASSOCIATION OF FACTORS RESPONSIBLE TO FOLLOW DIGITAL CONTENT POST OF GREEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS AND GREEN PRODUCT PURCHASE INTENTION BEHAVIOUR OF RESPONDENTS

Chi-Square Test

Factors responsible for following digital content post of green social media influencers and green product purchase intention behaviour	Value	df	Asymptotic. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	217.958 ^a	15	.000
Likelihood Ratio	211.779	15	.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	92.928	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	105		

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation : The Pearson Chi-Square value of 217.958 with a **p-value of less than 0.001** (at the 1% level of significance) indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted, suggesting a statistically significant relationship between the factors responsible for following digital content posts of green social media influencers and green product purchase intention behaviour according to this study.

Null Hypothesis :

H₀: There is no association between green attitude and the motive to follow green social media influencers of respondents.

Table - 5

ASSOCIATION OF GREEN ATTITUDE AND THE MOTIVE TO FOLLOW GREEN SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS OF RESPONDENTS

Chi-Square Test

Green attitude and the motive to follow green social media influencers	Value	df	Asymptotic. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	220.054 ^a	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	206.120	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	86.599	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	105		

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation : The Pearson Chi-Square value of 220.054 with a **p-value of less than 0.001** (at the 1% level of significance) indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a statistically significant association between green attitude and the motive to follow green social media influencers.

9. Discussion of Results :

- Majority of the respondents are males who are more inclined to buy eco-friendly products; most of the respondents belong to the age group between 25 years to 35 years indicating that young adults are more eco-conscious; while graduates constitute a major element suggesting that educational qualification leads to more awareness about environmental issues; employed respondents who contribute a significant portion with a monthly/ household income of Rs.25,000 to Rs.50,000 reveal that green product adoption is influenced by income levels; and a majority of the respondents are married which exhibit that such consumers are often driven by a desire to protect future environment for their families according to this study.

- Further, the findings indicate that social media acts as a powerful driver to shape eco-friendly product purchase intention behaviour. Effective engagement, authentic content, social validation and influencer endorsement significantly improves consumer confidence and purchase intent.
- The findings of the study pinpoints that there is a significant relationship between the factors responsible for following digital content post of green social media influencers and green product purchase intention behaviour of the respondents. Also, there is an association between green attitude and the motive to follow green social media influencers. This exhibits that the personal behaviour of the respondents can bring about a positive environmental change through the influential role played by Green social media influencers; and a majority of the respondents are likely to purchase green products based on the recommendations given by Green social media influencers on social media platforms according to this study.

10. Managerial Implications :

Companies should strive to make sustainable choices more affordable and accessible to the followers on social media platforms and as they can set an example for how to be responsible stewards of the earth's resources. The effective marketing strategies empowering Green social media influencers to act as brand advocates and enhance brand engagement and loyalty among social media followers are discussed as follows.

- **Influencer Traits :** The study highlights that consumer's respond more positively to Green social media influencers who demonstrate genuine proficiency, expertise and authenticity. Therefore, eco-friendly brands should focus on partnering with such influencers who possess these qualities and genuinely practice sustainability rather than relying solely on metrics like follower count to build trust and drive meaningful consumer action.
- **User Engagement :** Emphasizing the need for active two-way interaction with Green social media influencers content, marketers should move beyond passive exposure and invest in strategies like Q&A sessions, polls, live tutorials and product demos to encourage meaningful participation and deepen consumer connection. Tailoring content according to different segments based on age, gender occupation can ensure consumer engagement which is the strongest predictor of purchase intention.
- **User-Centric Content :** Green social media influencers and brands should go beyond providing information by crafting holistic experiences that engage audiences meaningfully from first exposure to post-interaction. Well crafted content which not only informs but also delights followers through personalized recommendations, relatable testimonials and with immersive educational content strengthens purchase intent, enhance satisfaction, builds trust and loyalty.

- **Credible Content** : The quality, relevance and usefulness of the content sustains audience interest and fosters trust. Consumers who are increasingly skeptical of green washing, green social media influencers campaigns should focus on encouraging followers to adopt a sustainable life-style and the its impact on the environment rather than focusing on sales. Brands should build long-term partnerships with Green social media influencers based on mutual commitment to social and environmental issues. This can influence consumer decision-making process.
- **Transparency** : Business firms should prioritize transparency. Involving influencers in product development /creation of eco-friendly or compliance with advertising standards can generate authentic and trust-worthy content. Companies can also disclose their sustainable initiatives and practices such as eco-friendly packing, waste reduction or eco-certification, reinforce brand's commitment to social responsibility on social media platforms through influencers who in turn can empower eco-conscious audiences to make informed and confident purchase decision

In a nutshell, by employing these strategies brands can successfully align their image with sustainability building long-term loyalty among eco-conscious consumers based on the recommendations of Green social media influencers.

11. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDY :

Firstly, understanding human behavior is inherently complex and interpreting how Green social media influencers shape purchase intention on social media is further complicated by individual- user differences. Future research can examine how Green social media influencers can impact the actual purchase behavior of social media followers.

Secondly, the study is limited to purchased intention related specifically to eco-friendly products and does not extend to other product categories thereby limiting the generalizability of its findings. Future research can extend the Green social media influencers content in the context of service sector also.

Thirdly, a comparative study among Millennials, Generation Z and Generation X social media users will be meaningful to identify differences of individuals in determining the preference for maintaining a long-term relationship with Green social media influencers.

Further, geographically, the research focused only on social media users in Chennai City, which restricts the applicability of results to other regions or diverse populations. The opportunities for further research could be incorporated by using social media followers characteristics with different cultural backgrounds within other cities of our country as well as other countries across different social media platforms.

Finally, the study centers on immediate purchase intentions, without thoroughly examining long-term outcomes such as brand loyalty or post-purchase satisfaction. The repeat purchase

behavior, loyalty bond, satisfaction and word of mouth communication can be expanded to this study.

12. CONCLUSION :

The environmental responsibility is gaining increasing significance. Integrating sustainability is becoming an essential factor for long-term success in the business landscape. The findings of the study revealed that Green social media influencers personal traits such as expertise, credibility and interaction plays a central role in shaping social media user/follower purchase intention. Further, when content is authentic, helpful and experience-based the followers interest to buy eco- friendly/green products strengthens. It is also interesting to note that consumers value green social media influencers not for their popularity, but for their ability to offer credible guidance and relatable content according to this study. These insights underscore the shift from passive content consumption to interactive and relationship-based marketing in the digital space. By embracing this challenge, forward-thinking business firms stand to gain significant advantages, while paving the way for a better world for generations to come and also meeting the expectations of eco-conscious consumers successfully.

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