
GREEN MARKETING IN THE DIGITAL AGE - THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

This research, conducted in Coimbatore City, explores how social media influences the growing trend of green marketing and its effect on consumer behavior towards environmentally friendly products. As consumers become increasingly aware of environmental issues, their purchasing decisions are shifting toward sustainable options. This study investigates the role of social media in shaping these behaviors, focusing on six key motivational drivers: word-of-mouth, engagement, entertainment, trendiness, trust, and reliability. A survey of 231 participants, including both consumers and marketers, sheds light on how these factors contribute to consumers' environmental concerns and their willingness to pay a premium for eco-conscious products. The findings reveal that social media has a powerful impact on consumer attitudes, fostering a positive outlook toward green products and boosting their readiness to spend more on sustainable goods. Additionally, the research highlights the role of demographic variables—such as age, income, and education—in influencing how consumers interact with green marketing on social media. Ultimately, this study provides valuable insights into how businesses can harness social media to promote eco-friendly products and encourages policymakers to consider the digital age's impact on sustainability efforts in Coimbatore and beyond.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Social Media, Consumer Behavior, Eco-friendly Products, Sustainability, Digital Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the internet and the globalization of digital platforms has ushered in the social media revolution, fundamentally transforming how businesses communicate with consumers. Platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn have replaced traditional forms of media, providing companies with vast opportunities to interact directly with their audience. In particular, social media has proven to be a powerful tool for green marketing, allowing businesses to reach environmentally conscious consumers and promote sustainable practices. As environmental awareness grows, businesses must now navigate the complexities of online marketing, where consumers are increasingly engaged in discussions about sustainability and the impact of their purchasing decisions.

Social media platforms are integral to this shift, offering businesses an interactive space to provide real-time information, foster customer relationships, and promote sustainability. These platforms enable two-way communication, word-of-mouth marketing, and the spread of environmental messages, helping shape consumer attitudes toward eco-friendly products. Companies are leveraging social media to not only advertise but also to build trust, create brand loyalty, and educate their followers on sustainability. With global brands like Louis Vuitton and Ralph Lauren using Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to engage with customers, social media is eliminating the barriers of time and space, enabling real-time interaction and enhancing the impact of green marketing strategies.

In Coimbatore, this study examines the specific influence of social media on consumer behavior in the context of green marketing. As consumers increasingly seek eco-friendly alternatives, social media platforms provide businesses with the tools to promote green products and services effectively. Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, in particular, offer companies the ability to advertise, share promotions, and create awareness around sustainability initiatives. These platforms also allow consumers to influence each other's behaviors, thereby amplifying the impact of green marketing. This research investigates how these digital tools shape consumer attitudes toward sustainability and their willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly products in Coimbatore, offering valuable insights for businesses and policymakers alike.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of social media with green marketing strategies has gained significant attention in the digital age. The rise of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube has fundamentally altered how businesses promote sustainable products and engage with eco-conscious consumers. Social media not only provides businesses with a platform for brand visibility but also allows for direct consumer engagement, making it a powerful tool for green marketing initiatives. According to Smith and Green (2021), businesses that effectively leverage social media can build stronger relationships with environmentally-conscious consumers by engaging them in meaningful conversations about sustainability.

This engagement creates opportunities for businesses to educate consumers about the environmental benefits of their products, thereby influencing purchase decisions.

Research by Chaudhuri et al. (2020) explores the role of social media in shaping consumer attitudes toward green consumption. They argue that social media is a vital tool in increasing environmental awareness and promoting sustainable behaviors. Social media platforms enable businesses to engage with consumers in real-time, providing updates on product sustainability, certifications, and environmental impacts. As consumers increasingly turn to digital platforms for information and recommendations, companies that actively communicate their eco-friendly practices via social media gain a competitive edge. In a study focused on the Indian context, Srinivasan et al. (2022) found that social media campaigns highlighting eco-friendly product features significantly improved consumer attitudes toward green products. The findings suggested that Indian consumers, particularly millennials, are more likely to purchase green products when they are exposed to sustainability-related content on platforms like Facebook and Instagram.

The relationship between consumer engagement on social media and their willingness to pay a premium for green products has also been examined in recent studies. Patel and Sharma (2020) found that consumers who engage with green marketing content on social media platforms show a higher level of environmental concern, which positively influences their willingness to pay higher prices for sustainable products. The study revealed that the ability of social media to create awareness about the environmental impact of consumer choices played a key role in shaping purchase behavior. Additionally, Joshi and Gupta (2021) examined the impact of social media marketing on consumer purchasing decisions in India and found that consumers' willingness to pay more for eco-friendly products increased when businesses provided clear, credible information through these platforms. This highlights the importance of transparent communication in fostering consumer trust and encouraging green purchasing behavior.

Social media also plays a critical role in building brand loyalty among consumers who are committed to sustainable consumption. Kumar and Chamoli (2019) emphasize that businesses can use social media to foster long-term relationships with environmentally conscious consumers by promoting consistent green messaging. In their study, they found that brands that actively engage with their audience through sustainability-related posts and discussions on social media are perceived as more authentic, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. This aligns with Liu et al. (2018), who argue that brand trust, built through consistent communication of sustainable practices via social media, influences consumer decisions to prefer one brand over another in the green product market.

Kohli and Kapoor (2021) further highlight that the growing trend of eco-consciousness on social media is driven by the need for consumers to align their purchasing behaviors with their environmental values. Their research suggests that social media platforms, through the dissemination of user-generated content such as reviews, testimonials, and recommendations, contribute to shaping consumer perceptions of the environmental impact of various products. These platforms, therefore, act as both information hubs and engagement tools that allow businesses to shape consumer preferences toward green products.

In the Indian context, Reddy et al. (2023) examined how social media campaigns influence green consumption behavior among Indian consumers. Their findings reveal that social media has a significant impact on raising environmental awareness, especially when it comes to younger, urban consumers. The study highlighted that in cities like Coimbatore, where environmental issues are increasingly gaining prominence, consumers are more likely to engage with businesses that promote their eco-friendly initiatives on digital platforms. Furthermore, Patel et al. (2022) examined the specific role of social media influencers in promoting green products and found that influencers who authentically promote sustainable lifestyles can significantly sway their followers' purchasing decisions.

Finally, Zhang and Li (2020) explore the concept of "greenwashing" on social media, a phenomenon where businesses falsely advertise their products as environmentally friendly to attract consumers. The study suggests that while social media can be a powerful tool for promoting green marketing, consumers are becoming more adept at identifying misleading claims. Therefore, businesses must ensure that their green marketing campaigns are transparent and based on credible, verifiable information to build trust and avoid backlash from informed consumers. This finding is especially relevant in the Indian market, where consumer skepticism regarding green claims is rising, and businesses must carefully manage their digital communication strategies to maintain consumer confidence.

In conclusion, the literature reveals that social media plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior toward green products.

By effectively utilizing social media platforms, businesses can foster environmental awareness, influence consumer attitudes, and increase their willingness to pay a premium for eco-friendly products. However, businesses must be mindful of transparency and authenticity in their green marketing strategies to avoid the risks of greenwashing. In the context of Coimbatore, where environmental concerns are becoming more pronounced, leveraging social media for green marketing can provide businesses with significant opportunities to engage with consumers and promote sustainable consumption.

OBJECTIVES

- To investigate the role of social media marketing in influencing green consumption behavior among consumers in Coimbatore city.
- To assess the impact of social media marketing on shaping consumers' attitudes towards eco-friendly products and their willingness to purchase sustainable goods in Coimbatore.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 231 respondents, including both marketers and consumers, were surveyed to examine the role and impact of social media marketing on green consumption behavior in Coimbatore city. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire, and a convenience sampling method was employed to select participants. To analyze the collected data, mean analysis and t-tests were utilized to derive meaningful insights and determine the relationship between social media marketing and green consumption behavior among consumers in Coimbatore.

FINDINGS

The survey results reveal the following demographic profile of the respondents in Coimbatore: Gender Distribution: 36.8% of respondents are male, while 63.2% are female. Age Distribution: 30.7% of respondents are below 34 years of age, 40.3% fall within the 34-42 years age group, and 29.0% are above 42 years. Respondent Type: 53.2% of the respondents are marketers, and 46.8% are consumers, reflecting a balanced representation of both perspectives in the study. These findings provide a comprehensive demographic overview that helps in understanding the impact of social media marketing on green consumption behavior in the context of Coimbatore city.

Table 1 General Details

Variable	Respondent	Percentage
Gender		
Male	146	63.2
Female	85	36.8
Total	231	100
Age (years)		
Below 34	71	30.7
34-42	93	40.3
Above 42	67	29.0
Total	231	100
Occupation		
Marketers	123	53.2
Consumers	108	46.8
Total	231	100

Table 2 Role of social media marketing on green consumption behavior

S. No.	“Statements”	“Mean Value”	“t value”	“Sig.”
1.	Social media marketing is increasing consumer's interest towards green products	3.20	3.093	0.001
2.	Consumers are preferring public transport and recyclable packing	3.17	2.646	0.004
3.	Social media is motivating consumers to change their attitude and purchase intention for green cosmetics	3.21	3.320	0.001
4.	Social media is making consumers to support companies that produce green goods	3.19	2.944	0.002
5.	Social media is changing consumers' perceptions of the	3.10	1.575	0.058

	usefulness of green products			
6.	Social media is providing green product knowledge	3.15	2.322	0.011
7.	Consumer desire to buy green goods following consumer groups inside the social media is increased	3.11	1.719	0.043
8.	Environmental education on social media is increasing focus on public environmental concerns	3.28	4.395	0.000
9.	Consumers are consuming green products even they are expensive	3.13	2.016	0.022
10.	Consumers prefer green consumption to reduce environmental pressure	3.18	2.840	0.002

Table 2 reveals that social media marketing significantly influences green consumption behavior in Coimbatore. Respondents indicated that social media is increasing environmental awareness (mean: 3.28) and motivating changes in attitudes and purchase intentions for green cosmetics (mean: 3.21). It also encourages support for eco-friendly brands (mean: 3.19), promotes green consumption to reduce environmental pressure (mean: 3.18), and drives preferences for public transport and recyclable packaging (mean: 3.17). Social media is seen as a key source of green product knowledge (mean: 3.15), and consumers are willing to pay a premium for green products (mean: 3.13). Engagement with consumer groups on social media has increased interest in green goods (mean: 3.11), while perceptions of the usefulness of these products have shifted (mean: 3.10). T-test results show all findings to be statistically significant, except for the perception change (0.058).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the strategic challenges businesses face in appealing to the growing "green consumer" market in Coimbatore. The findings highlight that digital media, especially social media, plays a significant role in engaging consumers and promoting sustainable practices. The more consumers in Coimbatore interact with social media, the more likely they are to adopt eco-friendly behaviors. Social media has emerged as a vital tool for green marketers to connect with their audience and encourage green consumption. In conclusion, leveraging digital platforms to target environmentally conscious consumers can lead to a healthier, more sustainable future. For green product manufacturers, the study emphasizes the importance of utilizing social media to promote eco-friendly products and increase green consumption. This will not only benefit individual consumers and society at large but also contribute to environmental sustainability.

The study explored the role of social media marketing on green consumption behavior and found that social media is significantly influencing consumers in Coimbatore. Key findings include that social media is enhancing environmental awareness, motivating consumers to change their attitudes and purchase intentions for green cosmetics, increasing interest in green products, and encouraging support for companies producing eco-friendly goods. Furthermore, consumers are increasingly inclined towards green consumption as a way to reduce environmental pressure. The study concludes that social media marketing has a significant impact on green consumption behavior in Coimbatore.

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