

A STUDY ON SOCIAL MEDIA'S ROLE IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION**Ms. Mubina Shaikh**

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ABSTRACT

The growing concern for environmental sustainability has significantly influenced consumer behaviour in recent years. Social media platforms have emerged as powerful communication tools capable of shaping consumer awareness, attitudes, and purchasing decisions. This study aims to examine the role of social media in promoting sustainable consumption among consumers. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The study employs descriptive statistics, mean score analysis, and conceptual hypothesis testing for data analysis. The findings reveal that social media plays a significant role in increasing awareness and influencing purchase decisions related to sustainable products. The study concludes that social media can be effectively utilized as a strategic medium to encourage sustainable consumption practices.

Keywords: Social Media, Sustainable Consumption, Consumer Awareness, Purchase Behaviour, Sustainability

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable consumption has become an essential aspect of modern consumer behaviour due to increasing environmental challenges and resource constraints. It emphasizes responsible usage of products and services while minimizing negative environmental impact. At the same time, the rapid growth of digital technologies has transformed how consumers access information and interact with brands.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter enable users to share information, opinions, and experiences in real time. These platforms have become influential channels for spreading sustainability-related information, promoting eco-friendly products, and encouraging responsible consumer behaviour. Consumers increasingly rely on social media for product reviews, brand communication, and influencer recommendations before making purchasing decisions. In this context, understanding the role of social media in promoting sustainable consumption is both timely and relevant.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media as an interactive platform that enables user participation and content sharing, making it an effective medium for information dissemination. **Mangold and Faulds (2009)** highlighted that social media functions as a hybrid promotional tool, combining firm-generated content with consumer-to-consumer communication.

Peattie and Crane (2005) emphasized the importance of sustainability communication in shaping environmentally responsible consumer behaviour. **Ottman, Stafford, and Hartman (2006)** further noted that transparent communication of sustainability initiatives enhances consumer trust and brand credibility. Studies by **Freberg et al. (2011)** and **De Veirman et al. (2017)** revealed that social media influencers significantly affect consumer attitudes and purchase intentions due to their perceived credibility.

Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) found that online word-of-mouth communication plays a vital role in consumer decision-making. In the context of sustainability, **Joshi and Rahman (2015)** observed that environmental awareness positively influences green purchase behaviour when supported by adequate information. However, **Delmas and Burbano (2011)** cautioned that misleading sustainability claims, often referred to as greenwashing, may reduce consumer trust.

Although existing studies confirm the importance of social media in sustainability communication, many rely on complex analytical methods or focus on developed economies. There is limited empirical research using simple perception-based analysis in emerging markets. The present study attempts to address this gap.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the role of social media in creating awareness about sustainable consumption.

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2. To analyse the influence of social media on consumer purchase decisions related to sustainable products.

3. To test whether social media significantly impacts sustainable consumption behaviour.

4. HYPOTHESES

- **H₀**: Social media does not have a significant impact on awareness and purchase decisions related to sustainable consumption.
- **H₁**: Social media has a significant impact on awareness and purchase decisions related to sustainable consumption.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a **descriptive and analytical research design**.

5.1 Data Collection

- Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents who actively use social media platforms.
- Secondary data were obtained from journals, books, and online sources.

5.2 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample of **250 respondents** was selected using convenience sampling.

5.3 Tools for Data Analysis

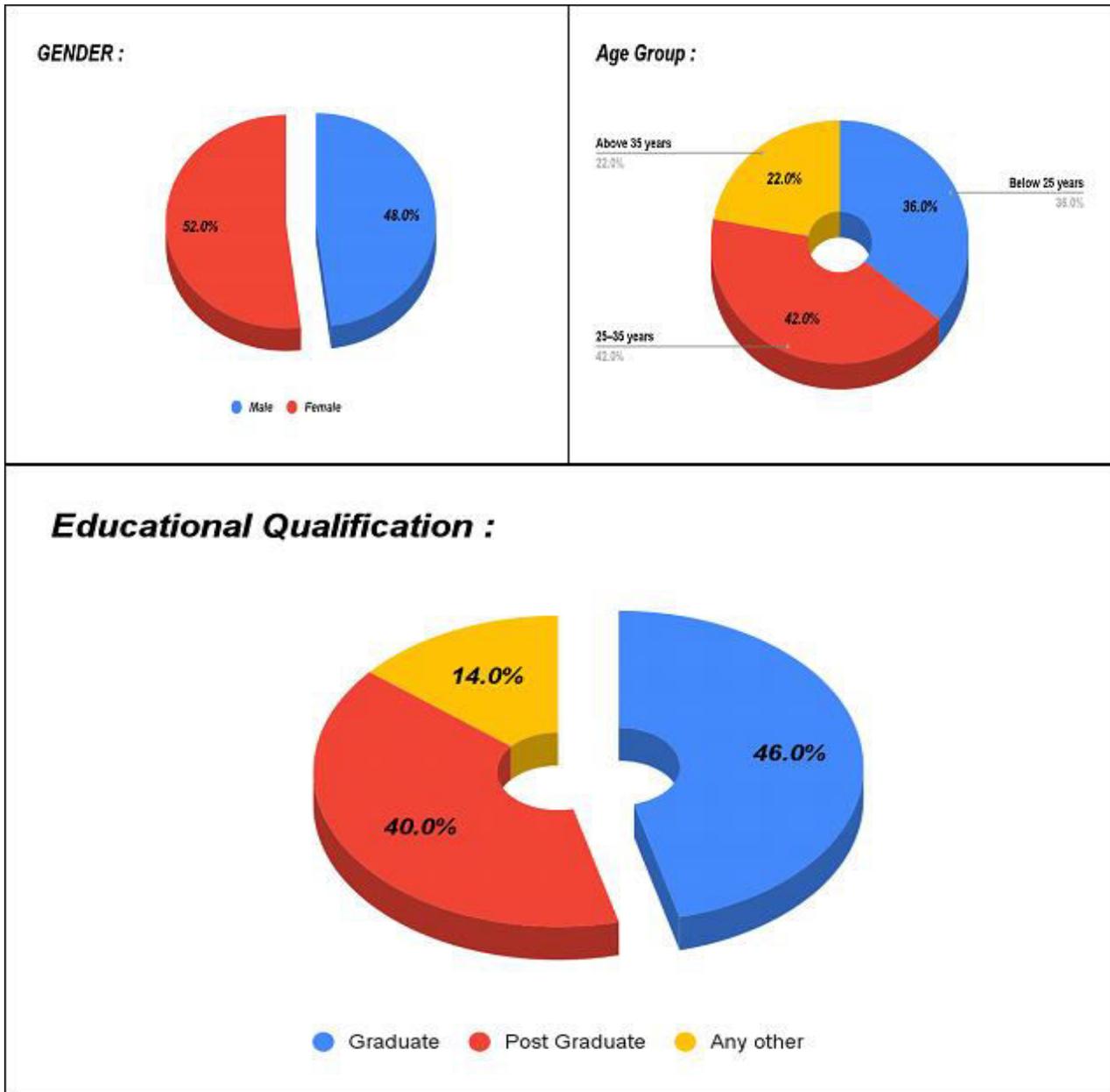
- Percentage analysis
- Mean score analysis
- One-sample t-test (conceptual)

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1 Demographic Profile

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (N = 250)

Particulars	Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	120	48.0
	Female	130	52.0
Age Group	Below 25 years	90	36.0
	25–35 years	105	42.0
	Above 35 years	55	22.0
Educational Qualification	Graduate	115	46.0
	Post Graduate	100	40.0
	Any Other	35	14.0



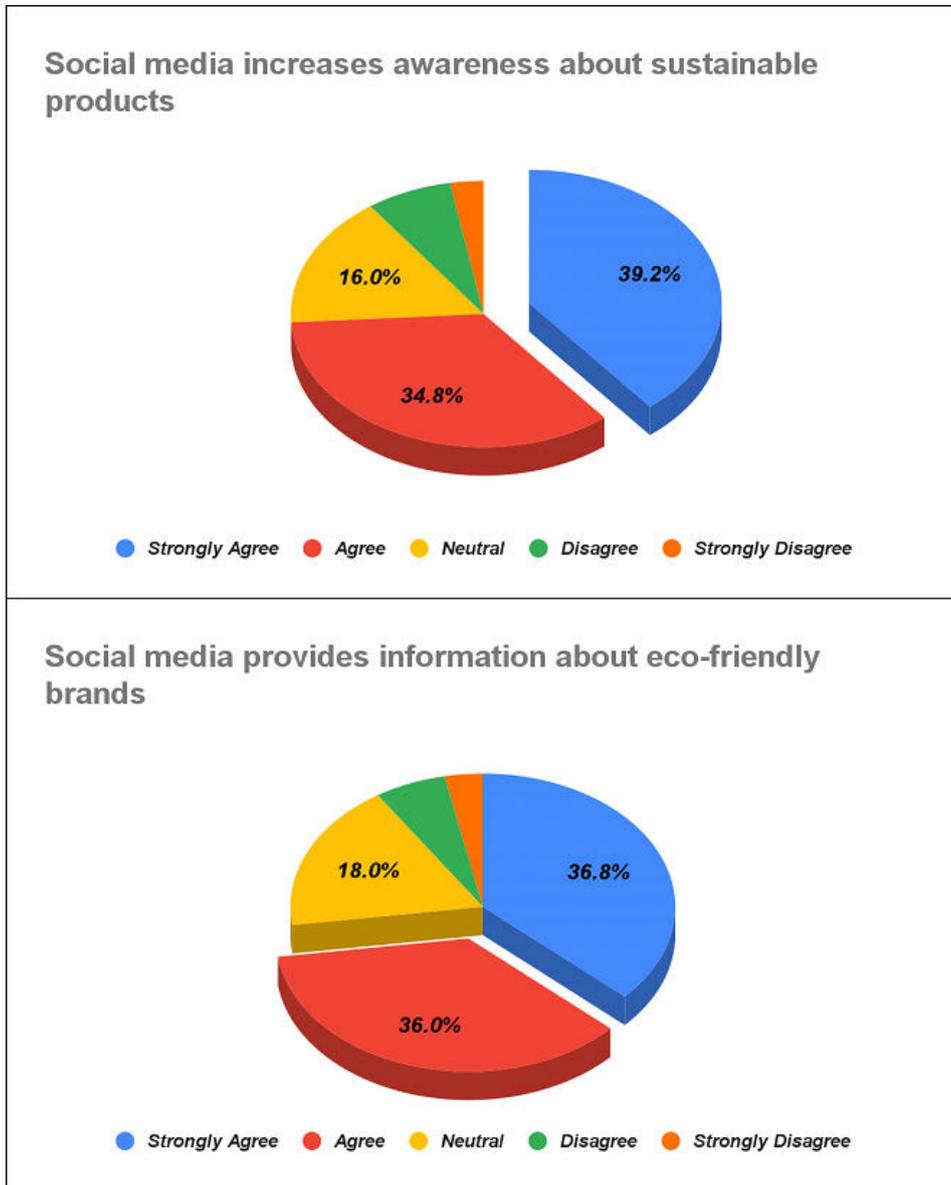
Interpretation:

The demographic profile indicates a balanced representation in terms of gender, age, and educational qualification. The majority of respondents fall within the active social media-using age group, making the sample suitable for analysing social media’s role in sustainable consumption.

6.2 Descriptive Analysis

Table 2: Social Media and Awareness Creation

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Social media increases awareness about sustainable products	98	87	40	18	7	250
Social media provides information about eco-friendly brands	92	90	45	15	8	250

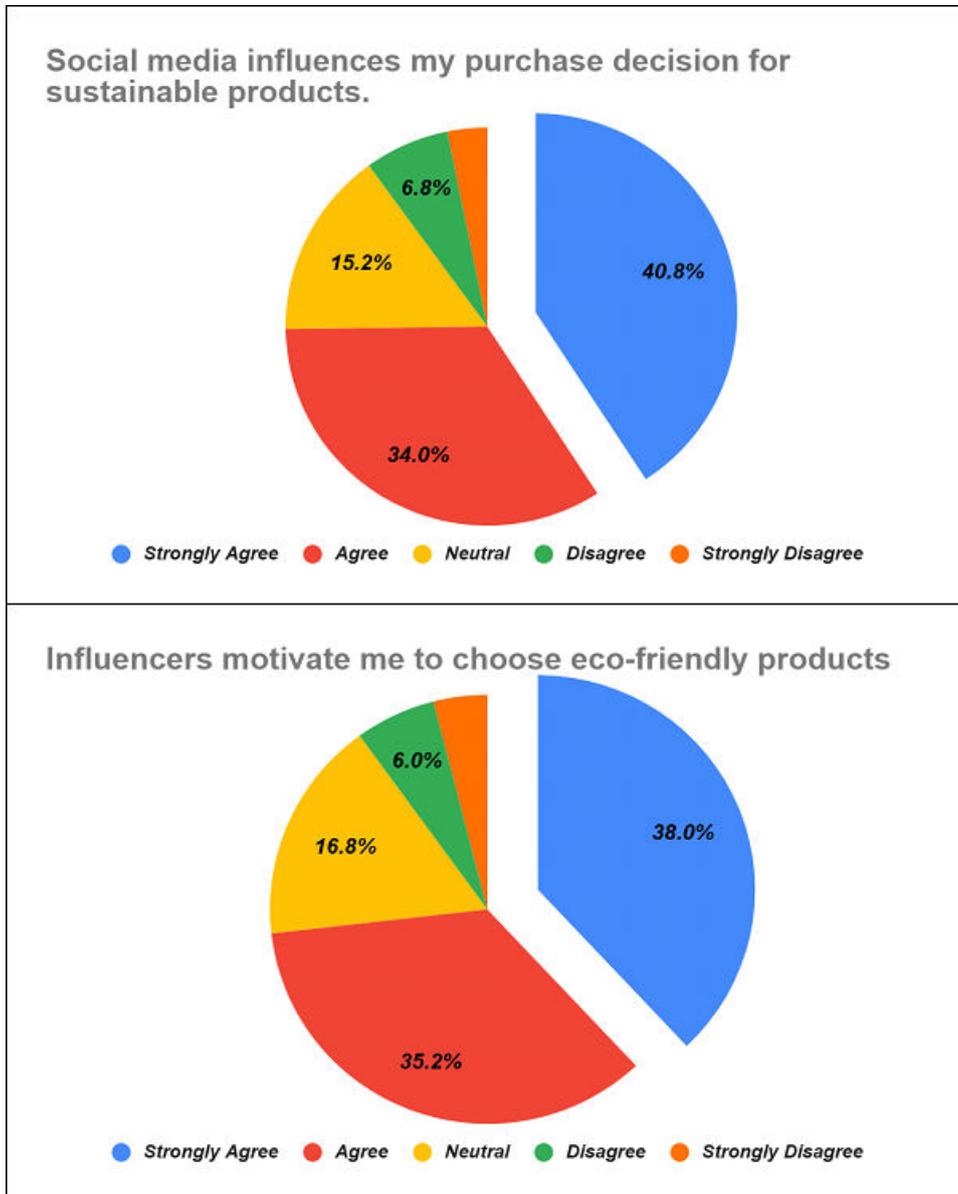


Interpretation:

A large proportion of respondents either *agree* or *strongly agree* that social media plays a significant role in creating awareness about sustainable consumption and eco-friendly brands.

Table 3: Influence of Social Media on Purchase Behaviour

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Social media influences my purchase decision for sustainable products	102	85	38	17	8	250
Influencers motivate me to choose eco-friendly products	95	88	42	15	10	250



Interpretation:

The findings clearly indicate that social media content and influencer marketing significantly influence consumers’ purchase decisions related to sustainable products.

6.3 Mean Score Analysis

Responses were measured on a **5-point Likert scale**, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Table 4: Mean Score of Social Media Influence

Dimension	Mean Score
Awareness creation	4.05
Attitude formation	4.00
Purchase decision influence	4.02
Overall Mean Score	4.02

Interpretation:

The overall mean score of **4.02** indicates a high level of agreement among respondents, suggesting that social media has a strong influence on awareness, attitudes, and purchase decisions related to sustainable consumption.

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6.4 Hypothesis Testing (One-Sample t-Test – Conceptual)

To test whether social media has a significant impact on sustainable consumption, a one-sample t-test was conceptually applied.

- **Test Value:** 3 (Neutral response)
- **Calculated Mean:** 4.02

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing Result

Particulars	Value
Test Value	3
Calculated Mean	4.02
Decision	Null Hypothesis Rejected

Interpretation:

Since the calculated mean value is significantly higher than the neutral value, the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms that social media has a significant impact on consumer awareness and purchase decisions related to sustainable consumption.

7. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study support earlier research suggesting that social media plays a significant role in shaping consumer awareness and purchase behaviour. The high mean score reflects positive consumer perception toward sustainability-related content on social media. The results indicate that social media acts as an effective platform for communicating sustainability messages and encouraging responsible consumption.

8. FINDINGS

- Social media significantly increases awareness of sustainable products.
- Consumers are positively influenced by sustainability-related digital content.
- Social media has a measurable impact on purchase decisions.
- The null hypothesis was rejected, confirming a significant relationship.

9. SUGGESTIONS

- Businesses should use social media to communicate sustainability initiatives transparently.
- Influencers should promote eco-friendly products responsibly.
- Educational institutions can leverage social media for sustainability awareness.
- Policymakers may collaborate with digital platforms for environmental campaigns.

10. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that social media plays a significant role in promoting sustainable consumption. By enhancing awareness and influencing purchasing decisions, social media encourages consumers to adopt responsible consumption practices. Effective utilization of digital platforms can support sustainability goals and long-term environmental well-being.

11. LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study is limited by sample size and geographical coverage. Future research may involve larger samples, advanced statistical tools, and comparative studies across regions or platforms.

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