

Social Media Influencer and Consumers' Pro-Environmental Behavior in Social Commerce Platform

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The rise of plastic waste in the world today is at a worrisome level. Therefore, leveraging the growth of social media influencers in social commerce platforms allows businesses and organizations to creatively and convincingly implement a feasible marketing strategy to combat this environmental issue. In particular, this study posits that social media influencers can play a vital role in motivating consumers to adopt pro-environmental behaviors to minimize the usage of plastic. Despite the emerging interest in the role of social media influencers in commercial purposes, the extant literature of social commerce is still lacking empirical evidences on social media influencers as motivators of pro-environmental behaviors or in advocating specific environmental issues. Hence to fill this gap, this study aims to shed light on the impact of environmental advocacy delivered by businesses allied with social media influencers in driving the behavioral intention of their audiences in social commerce platforms. Guided by the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), this study will unveil the role of influencer's storytelling, product-related signals in aesthetic appeals, and post commercial orientation on consumers' consumption intention of zero waste products in social commerce platform. In specific, this study explores the willingness of consumers to seek for more information about the betterment of the environment and their intention to purchase zero waste products to minimize plastic waste as dependent variables. Concurrently, the study will also uncover the mediation role of parasocial relationship (PSR) of social media influencers to address the overwhelming plastic waste issue. Data will be collected from at least 155 active social media users among the Malaysian youth using an online survey questionnaire. All measurement items used are adopted and adapted from prior established studies and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach will be utilized for data analysis. Theoretically, this study aims to expand the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) especially in extending its triadic reciprocal causation model that currently consists of personal, environmental, and behavioral components. In particular, this study will add theoretical value to the triadic reciprocal causation with the introduction of parasocial relationship (PSR), willingness to search for more information and purchase intention. Findings from this study shall also practically contribute to social media managers and digital content creators by giving them a thorough understanding of social commerce communication and engagement strategy that is suitable in motivating specific behavioral intention of a particular target segment such as pro-environmental behaviors among the youths.

Keywords: *Green Marketing, Sustainability Marketing, Pro-Environmental Behavior, Purchase Intention, Social Cognitive Theory, Social Commerce Platform, Social Media Influencer*