



# Role of Influencer Advertising in Promoting Sustainability

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**Abstract** – As the world becomes more focused on living sustainably, both brands and consumers are making choices that care about the environment and social responsibility. In this change, influencer marketing has become a strong tool in the digital world. It's not just about selling products anymore, but also about raising awareness and encouraging people to take action for sustainability. This study looks at how influencer marketing is changing across different industries, showing how online creators are playing a big role in shaping what people know, think, and do when it comes to being eco-friendly. The study uses a qualitative and exploratory method, gathering information from existing data, online resources, and interviews with sustainability influencers in areas like fashion, beauty, lifestyle, travel, home, and technology. The results show that being real, trustworthy, and open are key to effective communication about sustainability. Often, smaller influencers—like micro- and nano-influencers—are better at building trust and getting people involved.

**Keywords** – Influencer Marketing, Sustainability, Green Consumer Behavior, Social Influence, Source Credibility, Sustainable Branding, Environmental Marketing.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sustainability has become a vital need worldwide, making companies, customers, and government leaders rethink how things are made and used. Businesses are facing more pressure to adopt eco-friendly practices and clearly communicate these efforts, as the harmful impacts of unfairness, using up resources, and global warming become more clear (Kumar, & Christodouloupoulou, 2014). At the same time, social media influencers have become a major part of digital marketing. They use their wide audience, easy connection with people, and trusted reputation to influence what customers think and do (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017).

To gain trust with their audience and promote their brand, companies work with famous influencers. This form of marketing is known as influencer marketing. Influencers share information with their audience in a subtle way. They use blogs, social media posts, videos, and other online content to shape what people think. People generally see influencers as honest and dependable. Because of this, their fans trust their opinions and find them credible. When influencers recommend or talk about a product, it can boost sales and make the brand more recognizable. Followers trust influencers because they are seen as experts in their area, and they often make purchasing decisions based on what the influencers say. Businesses use influencers to advertise their products. Those who have a large following on social media are considered influencers or content creators. Many industries, such as technology, fashion, food, travel, and entertainment, are now using influencer marketing. Each social media platform also has influencers who focus on specific areas.

Influencer marketing used to mainly focus on lifestyle, fashion, and beauty, but now it's also emphasizing values, especially when it comes to social and environmental

topics. Influencers who focus on sustainability, often called eco-influencers or greenfluencers, are becoming more important in helping their followers learn about and adopt responsible ways of consuming (Lou, & Yuan, 2019). These influencers do more than just create content; they also act as leaders in thought, connecting brands with consumers who care about social issues. Influencer marketing works by using the reach and trust of individuals who have specific audiences and strong social influence. This type of marketing is not just about selling products anymore—it's also being used to support causes like climate action, ethical fashion, and living without waste (Lou, & Yuan, 2019). When influencers speak about sustainability in a genuine and values-driven way, their messages can strongly connect with followers, especially younger generations like millennials and Gen Z, who care more about values than looks (Hassinen, 2018).

Influencer marketing plays a complex role in pushing forward sustainability efforts. Some influencers genuinely support sustainable practices, but others might use sustainability as a way to market their brands rather than as a real commitment—this is called "greenwashing" (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). With consumers becoming more cautious about promotional content, this inconsistency raises questions about authenticity, trust, and the real impact of influencers. This issue is especially important now, as brands are facing greater doubts about greenwashing and the need for clear, honest communication. This chapter aims to explore how the role of influencer marketing is changing in relation to sustainability messaging. The study will look into how influencers can be helpful partners in promoting sustainability. Specifically, it will: (1) look at how effective influencer marketing is in changing consumer attitudes and actions related to sustainable choices; (2) examine how different traits of influencers affect how sustainability messages are received; and (3) consider the strategic



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benefits for brands that use influencers to spread messages about their sustainable efforts.

This study uses a qualitative and exploratory method to look into how influencer marketing affects the promotion of sustainability. Information was gathered from online websites aimed at social media users who follow influencers focused on sustainability on platforms like Instagram and YouTube. The research draws on secondary sources from various blogs and published journals. The study adds to current knowledge by providing a deeper look at the psychological and emotional factors that make influencer marketing effective in promoting sustainability. These findings are useful for marketers and those working towards sustainability who want to create communication strategies that feel genuine and trustworthy. Future studies could explore this topic further by comparing different cultures, using digital ethnography, or combining multiple research methods to better understand how influencers communicate sustainability messages.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Influencer marketing has changed from using famous celebrities to rely more on peer-to-peer communication through social media (Brown, & Hayes, 2008). Influencers are people who can influence what others buy because of their authority, knowledge, or connection with their audience (Freberg et al., 2011). Studies show that qualities like trustworthiness, expertise, and being genuine are important in shaping how consumers think and act (Ohanian, 1990; Lou, & Yuan, 2019). The growing role of micro-influencers has led to a focus on smaller, more engaged groups where sustainability messages can be better customized and trusted (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2020).

Sustainability marketing includes environmental and social responsibility in marketing efforts, aiming to support products and actions that help the planet (Peattie, & Belz, 2010).

Today's consumers are more aware of sustainability issues and have different levels of interest in eco-friendly choices (Niinimäki, 2020). However, there's still a gap between having positive attitudes about sustainability and actually making sustainable purchases (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2014). Good communication is key to closing this gap and encouraging people to take action.

Influencers help promote sustainability by sharing relatable stories and honest support that connects with their followers (Djafarova, & Fouts, 2022).

Those who are genuinely committed to sustainable practices are more likely to gain trust and encourage eco-friendly behavior (Glucksman, 2017). The platform and type of content also affect how effective a message is, with visual platforms like Instagram being especially good for showing sustainable lifestyles (De Veirman, Cauberghe, &

Hudders, 2017). Social media influencers, or just "influencers," are people who shape opinions through blogs, tweets, and other online channels (Freberg et al., 2011). Influencers are people who became popular on social media and have direct relationships with many followers (Belanche et al., 2021). This is different from traditional celebrities, who are known for their work in movies, sports, or music (Dhanesh, & Duthler, 2019). Influencers, as content creators, shape opinions and are viewed as trustworthy advisors.

As consumer choices have a big effect on sustainability results, such as lowering greenhouse gas emissions, attention has shifted to sustainable consumer behavior and eco-friendly habits (White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019). Sustainable consumer behavior refers to how people buy, use, and get rid of products in a way that reduces harm to the environment and society. It's considered a smart and responsible choice that helps protect the environment, even if it means spending more or making sacrifices (Zhang, & Hung, 2020). These behaviors affect many areas of life and help deal with problems like climate change and the shortage of resources (Essiz, & Mandrik, 2022). Marketing efforts that highlight sustainable consumption influence what people want to buy by showing the eco-friendly features that make sustainable products different from regular ones. In this study, the author will look at how influencers can help push for sustainability and create strategies that encourage people to make environmentally friendly and socially responsible choices. The study also looks at how different industries are using influencers to promote sustainability.

### Types of Influencers Promoting Sustainability

Sustainability influencers can be grouped based on the size of their audience, the specific area they focus on, and how they interact with their followers. Brands choose the type of influencer that best fits their campaign goals, as each type has its own way of spreading sustainability messages. Here are the main types of influencers who promote sustainable values and practices:

- 1. Mega Influencers (1 million or more followers)** – These influencers include celebrities, well-known public figures, and other social media personalities who have widespread fame. They use their large following to spread awareness about sustainability issues to a wide audience that spans different areas. Mega influencers often work with big projects and organizations like the United Nations environmental programs and global climate action campaigns. Celebrities who support zero-waste lifestyles, ethical fashion, and climate awareness can inspire millions of people to adopt eco-friendly habits (Li et al., 2024).
- 2. Macro Influencers (100,000 to 1 million followers)** – These influencers specialize in areas like sustainable travel, plant-based diets, water-saving technology, and eco-friendly fashion. While macro influencers are just as effective as mega influencers, they don't have the same global reach. They are respected and trusted in their specific fields (Lou & Yuan, 2023). Their opinions play an



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important role in shaping how people view sustainable practices and products in their niche (El-Shihy & Awaad, 2025). For instance, a macro influencer in ethical fashion can greatly influence the choices made by people looking for eco-friendly clothing (Giambastiani, Romito, & Vurro, 2025).

### **3. Micro Influencers (10,000 to 100,000 followers) –**

These influencers are seen as authentic and work in very specific areas. They might be waste-free living advocates, eco-bloggers, environmental educators, or local sustainability campaign leaders. Although their following is smaller compared to the other two types, their audience is highly engaged and loyal, making them valuable for grassroots efforts that need strong, trusted connections.

Working with micro-influencers is also usually more cost-effective for brands, allowing them to connect with many sustainability advocates at once (Vilkaite-Vaitone, 2024).

For example, Aditi became a sustainability activist after learning about the Rana Plaza factory collapse in Bangladesh. Since then, she has dedicated herself to promoting slow fashion and educating others about the dangers of fast fashion, ethical manufacturing, and more. Her visually appealing Instagram feed is enough to convince people of how beautiful and sustainable slow fashion can be.

**4. Nano Influencers (<10K followers) -** A nano-influencer has a rather smaller audience but is said to have a highly engaged audience. This audience consists, however, of family, friends, and other close-knit online groupings of people. Nano-influencers are predominant in championing sustainable efforts that are deeply localized and community-oriented, taking for instance supporting local eco-friendly businesses or promotion of local plastic-free initiatives. Such relationships provide huge leverage in connecting them to sustainability campaigns through consumers.

## **Industries Leveraging Influencer Marketing for Sustainability**

**1. Consumer packaged goods (CPG) Industry -** In the consumer packaged goods industry, influencer marketing is becoming more common to help promote sustainability by making eco-friendly choices, like refillable bottles, recyclable packaging, plant-based products, or less plastic use, feel easy and familiar. Since CPG products are bought often, influencers help shape habits by showing real-life examples of sustainable options, such as compostable food wrappers, concentrated detergents, or refill pods, and demonstrating how these choices save money and reduce waste. Influencers build trust by breaking down sustainability information in simple terms, helping consumers understand what companies claim about their environmental efforts (Wu, Lim, & Lim, 2025). Consumers respond better to sustainability messages when they are presented by influencers who frame them as small, achievable lifestyle changes instead of major sacrifices.

**2. Fashion & Apparel Industry -** In the fashion and apparel industry, influencer marketing plays a key role in promoting sustainability by challenging the usual fast fashion habits and promoting more thoughtful consumption. Fashion influencers are increasingly highlighting practices like thrift shopping, clothing rental, upcycling, and supporting brands that are transparent about their supply chains, making sustainable fashion look appealing instead of limiting. Studies show that social media creators have a strong influence on fashion purchasing decisions. When they present sustainability through personal stories, such as sharing outfit challenges with 30 different looks or styling second-hand clothes, audiences are more open to adopting eco-friendly habits (Kapoor, Balaji, & Jiang, 2023). By mixing creativity with honesty, influencers not only raise awareness but also drive real behavior changes, making second-hand shopping, capsule wardrobes, and slower fashion cycles seem normal, and promoting sustainability as both stylish and socially responsible.

**3. Beauty & Personal Care Industry -** In the beauty and personal care industry, influencer marketing can be very effective for promoting sustainability when campaigns are created with genuine creators, clear messages, and measurable results. The process starts with choosing influencers who align with sustainability values, especially micro-influencers, who naturally support eco-conscious lifestyles and connect with audiences looking for authenticity. Campaigns should provide clear sustainability proof, like life-cycle information, benefits of refill systems, or verified certifications, to help influencers educate rather than just promote. Content formats that work well include refill tutorials, "use it up" challenges, ingredient explanations, and demonstrations of take-back programs, as they connect daily routines with visible environmental benefits. To avoid misleading claims, communication must be clear, supported by evidence, and honest about trade-offs, while encouraging mindful consumption instead of pushing for more product sales. Key performance indicators (KPIs) go beyond likes and reach to include things like engagement on sustainability content, percentage of refills versus first-time buys, number of take-back or recycling claims, completion of sustainable beauty challenges, and traffic to brand sustainability pages.

**4. Cleaning & Household Products -** In the cleaning and household products industry, influencer marketing is becoming a strong way to promote sustainability by making eco-friendly options feel accessible and trustworthy. Unlike traditional ads, influencers create stories that show how biodegradable cleaners, refillable sprays, or DIY natural solutions easily fit into daily life, making sustainable practices seem both practical and desirable. Studies show that when influencers share real experiences and prove product effectiveness, consumers are more likely to try green cleaning solutions (Lim, Youn, & Eom, 2021). Research also finds that social media storytelling helps reduce doubts about "green" claims, especially when influencers provide evidence or comparisons instead of just



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vague sustainability labels (De Veirman et al., 2020). By focusing on small, manageable changes like reusing bottles or switching to concentrated detergents, these campaigns help reduce the idea that sustainability is expensive or inconvenient.

**5. Home & Furniture Industry** - In the home and furniture industry, influencer marketing is becoming more important for promoting sustainability by helping consumers focus on things like durability, ethical sourcing, and mindful buying rather than following fast, disposable trends. Lifestyle and interior influencers often share their own stories about choosing furniture made from reclaimed wood, upcycled decor, or textiles that are responsibly sourced. This makes sustainable choices look appealing and something that everyday people can relate to. Research shows that consumers are more likely to believe in sustainability efforts when they're shared through real-life stories from influencers rather than from companies themselves. Influencers are seen as friends who can share real experiences. For example, IKEA has worked with eco-conscious creators to highlight circular initiatives like furniture take-back programs and collections made from recycled materials. This makes sustainable practices seem normal and affordable (Nash, 2024). Studies also show that social media storytelling in this area can help reduce doubts by showing how eco-friendly furniture can be both stylish and long-lasting, helping to change the idea that sustainable products are less attractive or less practical (Lim, & Lee, 2023).

**6. Travel & Hospitality Industry** - In the travel and hospitality industry, influencer marketing is an important way to promote sustainability by making eco-friendly choices feel like exciting experiences, not sacrifices. Travel influencers often show practices like staying at eco-certified hotels, eating local and seasonal food, supporting community-based tourism, or choosing slower travel options like trains instead of short flights. This makes responsible travel look appealing and easy to do. Research shows that social media stories have a big influence on how people decide where to travel. When influencers share real experiences connected to local culture and environmental care, audiences are more likely to follow suit (Font, & McCabe, 2017). For instance, partnerships between eco-travel influencers and brands like Airbnb and Intrepid Travel have highlighted low-impact accommodations and itineraries that are better for the environment. This helps people see that sustainable travel can still be adventurous and comfortable. Studies also show that travelers are more open to sustainability ideas when those ideas are tied to personal well-being, real experiences, and deeper cultural connections rather than just general environmental messages (Gössling, & Higham, 2021).

**7. Tech & Electronics** - In the tech and electronics industry, influencer marketing is being used more to promote sustainability by encouraging thoughtful use, proper disposal, and the adoption of eco-friendly innovations. Tech influencers often talk about practices like

choosing energy-efficient devices, making products last longer through repairs and software updates, or responsibly recycling old electronics. This helps make sustainability feel practical and doable in an industry that is often associated with fast, frequent consumption (Sharma, & Singh, 2025). Research suggests that influencers can help reduce doubts about a company's sustainability claims by showing real evidence, like proving that used gadgets can work just as well as new ones. Brands like Apple and Samsung, for example, have partnered with tech reviewers and content creators to promote repair programs, trade-in systems, and commitments to being carbon neutral, making sustainable tech choices visible to a wider audience. Studies also show that digital storytelling is key to building trust in this sector, as people often rely on influencer reviews before buying expensive tech products (Lim, & Rasul, 2022).

### Content Strategies and Platforms

In the realm of sustainability promotion, the success of influencer marketing significantly hinges on the alignment of content strategies with the values of authenticity, transparency, and educational impact. Influencers aiming to advocate for environmental consciousness and sustainable practices often tailor their content to resonate deeply with their audience while inspiring behavioral change.

## III. CONTENT STRATEGIES

**a. Storytelling and Personal Narratives** - Sustainability influencers often use personal stories to make environmental issues more relatable. By sharing their own journeys toward a sustainable lifestyle, their choices, and daily habits, they create content that people can connect with and trust emotionally (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). Influencers like Neeti Mehra (@beejiving) share their personal sustainability journey, explaining their motivations, challenges, and small successes. These stories feel genuine and not forced, encouraging others to take the first step without feeling judged.

**b. Educational Content** - Sharing accurate, research-based information about sustainability helps people understand issues like fast fashion, carbon footprints, or living zero-waste.

This positions influencers as experts and supports people in making informed decisions (Lou, & Yuan, 2019). Instead of overwhelming followers with large amounts of data, influencers break down big topics into short videos, carousel posts, or infographics. These easy-to-digest pieces help people learn and share environmental knowledge more effectively.

**c. Product Demonstrations and Reviews** - Influencers help promote sustainable brands by reviewing and showing how to use eco-friendly products.

These campaigns often include details about where the products come from, how they are made, and their environmental impact, which builds trust (Schorn, Vinzenz, & Wirth, 2022). Sustainable influencers review products



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like bamboo toothbrushes, organic skincare, and ethical fashion brands. What makes them different is their honesty. They talk about the pros and cons, and whether a product is truly necessary, helping followers avoid buying too much in the name of being green.

**d. Value-based Advocacy and Call-to-Actions -**

Campaigns often involve broader advocacy efforts like supporting climate laws, organizing community clean-ups, or sharing petitions.

Sustainable influencers don't just post eco-tips; they stand behind causes they believe in, such as climate justice, ethical fashion, zero waste, or indigenous knowledge. Their values come through in everything they do, whether they're composting, shopping at thrift stores, or protesting single-use plastics. An influencer who cares about fair labor might say, "Fast fashion isn't just about pollution; it's about people."

**e. Transparency and Authenticity -** Being open about partnerships, product sources, and personal sustainability challenges helps keep content authentic.

Followers appreciate when influencers are honest about their journey and not pretending to have a perfect eco-lifestyle (Audrezet et al., 2020). Sustainable influencers rarely claim to be "zero-waste" or perfectly eco-friendly. Instead, they share their learning process, like missed compost days, failed DIY projects, or moments of uncertainty. This honesty builds trust and makes followers feel, "If they can try, I can too."

**Platform Selection and Utilization**

To some extent, the type of sustainability content produced is ideal for specific social media channels. Instagram is still one of the most popular platforms for community interaction, short videos, and beautiful images. On the other side, YouTube can dig deeper into sustainability topics through longer instructional videos, tutorials, and documentary-style ones. TikTok is perfect for challenges and quick tips because, as its name suggests, it contains short, entertaining, and trend-focused content. This is where most sustainability advocates and corporate social responsibility professionals go to share the latest on industry insights and thought leadership. Blogs and podcasts are intended to have more thorough discussions, expert interviews, and in-depth analyses of sustainability issues to reach audiences desiring more elaborative information.

Platform	Description	Relevance to Sustainability
Instagram	Visual storytelling, widespread eco-influencer presence, strong engagement via Reels and Stories	Showcasing sustainable fashion, lifestyle
YouTube	Long-form educational videos, vlogs, unboxing, product reviews	In-depth explorations, tutorials

TikTok	Short, viral content; trend-driven, highly shareable	Quick sustainable hacks, DIY content
Blogs	Detailed posts, search-engine visibility, evergreen educational content	Deep dives into sustainable topics
Facebook	Group/community building, live streaming, sharing campaigns	Community engagement, Q&A
Pinterest	Inspiration boards, visual-first format	Sustainable fashion, home ideas

**Measuring Effectiveness and Engagement**

To evaluate how well influencer marketing works, both numbers and qualitative assessments are needed. Numbers like reach, impressions, click-through rates, and conversion rates show how far a message spreads (De Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). But for campaigns focused on sustainability, it's not enough to just look at these numbers. You also need to check the quality of comments, the tone of conversations, and whether people are really thinking and talking about sustainability.

**1. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Sustainable Influencer Campaigns -**

These KPIs go beyond regular marketing measures to show how eco-conscious messages affect real life. At the awareness stage, KPIs include impressions, reach, and brand mentions, which show how widely sustainability messages are shared through influencers (Evans et al., 2017). For engagement, important KPIs are likes, comments, shares, saves, click-through rates, and participation in things like polls or quizzes, showing whether people are really connecting with sustainability stories (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Conversion KPIs look at real actions, like buying eco-friendly products, signing up for recycling programs, using discount codes for sustainable items, or doing challenges like refill or reuse initiatives. By combining these methods, brands can fully understand how effective their influencer campaigns are in raising awareness, getting people involved, and making a real environmental difference.

**- Engagement Metrics with Depth -** While likes, shares, and comments are still important, for sustainability campaigns it's more about the depth of engagement.

Looking at the quality of comments—like thoughtful discussions on sustainable practices rather than just emojis—and share rates can show if people are really connecting with the message.

**- Audience Sentiment and Perception -** Checking how people feel about a campaign, through sentiment analysis of comments, mentions, and online chatter, helps understand if the sustainability message is seen as genuine.

Positive feelings show credibility and connection, while negative feelings might suggest people feel the campaign is not real or trustworthy. Sentiment-based KPIs are



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increasingly used to check if a campaign stays true to ethical values.

- **Transparency and Disclosure Compliance** - Often overlooked, this KPI checks how clearly influencers share their brand partnerships and sustainability claims.

It's important to check if they follow advertising rules (like FTC or ASA guidelines) and if the audience recognizes or appreciates this honesty. Research shows that being transparent builds trust and long-term support.

- **Behavioral Change Indicators** - The real test for a sustainable campaign is its ability to change behavior.

KPIs here include tracking purchases of eco-friendly products, joining brand-led sustainability initiatives (like recycling programs), or adopting practices promoted by the influencer (like clothing rental or refill systems).

- **Conversion and ROI with Sustainability Context** - Conversion metrics should go beyond just sales.

For sustainable campaigns, returns on investment can include repeating purchases of eco-friendly products, signing up for sustainable service models (like refill packs or rentals), or donating to environmental causes promoted by influencers. For example, Patagonia's "Worn Wear" campaign uses participation in repair and reuse programs as a key success measure.

- **Community Growth and Advocacy** - Sustainability depends on building communities.

KPIs like the growth of eco-conscious follower groups, the number of user-generated posts about sustainable practices, and actions like signing petitions or supporting causes show the campaign's impact at a community level.

Environmental Impact Indicators - The most complete KPIs connect directly to environmental outcomes.

Brands are increasingly measuring things like estimated carbon savings, reduced use of single-use products, or how much waste is prevented because of influencer actions.

1. **Consumer engagement, awareness, and conversion metrics** - Measuring the effectiveness of influencer marketing in promoting sustainability requires looking beyond vanity metrics and focusing on how campaigns drive genuine awareness, engagement, and long-term behavior change. At the awareness level, key indicators include impressions, reach, and brand mentions, which capture how widely sustainability messages are being disseminated through influencers' platforms (Evans et al., 2017). Moving deeper, engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, saves, and click-through rates provide insight into whether audiences are not just seeing but actively interacting with sustainability content research shows that authentic storytelling and educational posts often achieve higher engagement than purely promotional ones (De Veirman, & Hudders, 2020). Finally, conversion metrics reflect whether influencer campaigns are driving tangible sustainable actions, measured through unique discount codes, affiliate links, or tracking purchases of eco-friendly products like refills, recycled goods, or carbon-neutral services. .

2. **Use of analytics and feedback mechanisms** - Brands increasingly rely on social media analytics to track metrics

such as reach, engagement rates, sentiment analysis, and content shares, which help gauge how well sustainability campaigns capture attention and encourage dialogue (Evans et al., 2017). Beyond surface-level metrics, behavioral analytics including clicks on eco-product links, participation in take-back programs, or sign-ups for green challenges offer insight into whether influencer content drives tangible sustainable behaviors. Feedback mechanisms, such as polls, surveys, comment analysis, and direct consumer responses, provide qualitative understanding of audience perceptions, trust, and motivations, helping brands refine messaging and ensure credibility. By combining quantitative data with real-time feedback, companies can continuously optimize campaigns, identify which influencers and content formats are most impactful, and demonstrate accountability in sustainability efforts. Ultimately, analytics and feedback transform influencer marketing from a one-way promotional tool into an interactive system that not only raises awareness but also measures and encourages authentic sustainable action.

3. **Return on Investment (ROI) in sustainability focused campaigns** - ROI can be assessed through a combination of financial and non-financial outcomes. Financially, brands may track incremental sales of eco-friendly products, uptake of refill or recycling programs, or participation in subscription-based sustainable services. Non-financially, ROI includes enhanced brand reputation, increased consumer trust, higher engagement rates on sustainability content, and measurable shifts in sustainable behaviors, such as more frequent recycling, reduced single-use product consumption, or adoption of energy-efficient practices. Campaigns led by authentic influencers who educate and demonstrate tangible environmental benefits often generate higher ROI because consumers perceive both credibility and practical value, leading to stronger brand-consumer relationships and repeated sustainable choices (De Veirman, & Hudders, 2020). Thus, evaluating ROI in sustainability campaigns requires a holistic lens that balances immediate sales with long-term social impact and consumer loyalty, capturing the full value of influencer-led initiatives.

**Influencer Marketing and Sustainable Consumer Behavior**  
Influencer marketing has a far-reaching role into making consumers be aware, form attitudes, have purchases and thus leave behind changes into their way of life that would have been permanent. Sustainability influencers are the ones connecting environmental knowledge with actions, really educating and motivating the audience through their contents and engagements.

□ **Creating Awareness** - Influencers excel at demythologizing and humanizing challenging and complex sustainability subjects because increasing consumer knowledge is the first step in guiding them toward sustainable behaviour. This is how content makers use easily comprehensible formats, such as YouTube explainers, TikTok videos, or Instagram reels, to encourage



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conversation on sustainable energy, ethical sourcing, slow fashion, and waste reduction. Such fundamental information is necessary to pique curiosity, which exposes and revolts consumers regarding the decisions they make on a daily basis.

□ **Framing Perceptions and Attitudes** - Customers' opinions of green products and practices start to shift as a result of their constant, gradual exposure to sustainability knowledge. The idea that environmentally sustainable solutions are invariably more costly or unfeasible can be dispelled by influencers (Muna, Mitariyani, & Telagawathi, 2025). For example, a food influencer who frequently shares inexpensive plant-based dishes might inform and comfort the public about sustainable eating.

□ **Instilling Intentions for Purchase** - Sustainability advocates that promote products or services that align with ecologically sustainable ideals have a substantial impact on consumers' purchasing decisions (Giambastiani, 2025). Most influencers build a strong enough relationship with their audience due to their perceived authenticity and dependability to encourage people to do things like look for green products or services that they otherwise might not have thought of. These products might include those that support eco-friendly styles that are influenced by eco-friendly fashion influencers, which would boost sales for those firms.

□ **Inspiring Changes in Behavior Adoption** - A sustainable lifestyle is usually determined by purchase behaviour, thus these variables will again compel followers to form enduring sustainability-related habits (Fauziah, & Marsasi, 2024). Some examples of such behaviours include adopting minimalist lifestyles, reducing the use of single-use plastics, utilizing reusable home items, and assisting local businesses that have less of an impact on the environment. Proactive community-minded influencers often endorse campaigns such as "Meatless Mondays" and "Plastic-Free July."

□ **Strengthening Social Proof and Norms** - Social proof is an additional tactic for encouraging individuals to embrace sustainable practices (Vilkaite-Vaitone, 2024). When these followers see their preferred manufacturers and coworkers implementing green practices, they are more likely to follow suit. The impact of collaborative effort accelerates changes in consumption patterns across demographic and group boundaries.

□ **Sustaining Long-term Behavior Change** - The most remarkable sustainability influencer is the one who will write a story about sustainable living that lasts a lifetime and isn't just a fleeting trend. By continuously sharing information about ethical consumption, waste reduction, and climate action, for example, they help their followers understand and apply these concepts to their daily decision-making, so promoting a cultural shift towards sustainability.

There are several challenges faced by the influencers in promoting sustainability comes with . A key concern is authenticity, as consumers often question whether influencers genuinely care about the sustainable values they endorse or if their support is driven mainly by financial incentives, which can weaken trust and engagement (De Veirman, & Hudders, 2020). Closely tied to this is the problem of greenwashing, where influencers may highlight eco-friendly practices while the partnering brands fail to meet those standards, creating skepticism and reducing credibility (Nyilasy, Gangadharbatla, & Paladino, 2014). Another difficulty is the measurement of impact, since sustainability campaigns aim not only at boosting sales but also at fostering awareness and long-term behavioral change, outcomes that are complex to track and quantify (Casaló, Flavián, & Ibáñez-Sánchez, 2018). In addition, audience diversity poses a challenge because perceptions of sustainability differ across cultures, demographics, and social groups, meaning a message that resonates with one audience may not connect with another (White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019). Finally, there is the matter of ethical responsibility, as influencers promoting sustainability are expected to live by those values themselves, and any inconsistency between their personal practices and their online messaging can lead to backlash and reduced effectiveness of their campaigns.

□ **Greenwashing Risks** - One of the major challenges in leveraging influencer marketing for sustainability is the risk of greenwashing, where brands exaggerate or falsely claim their eco-friendly practices to appeal to conscious consumers. Influencers, knowingly or unknowingly, may endorse such claims without verifying their authenticity, which can lead to a breach of consumer trust. Greenwashing undermines genuine sustainability efforts by misleading stakeholders and diluting the credibility of sustainable messaging (Lyon, & Montgomery, 2015). When audiences discover discrepancies between a brand's claims and its actual practices, it not only damages the brand but also affects the influencer's reputation, making authenticity a crucial concern. Influencers like Camille Charrière have begun shifting away from trend-focused promotions toward advocating for reuse, rental, and timeless wardrobe pieces a proactive stance against greenwashing.

□ **Transparency Need** - Transparency emerges as another pressing challenge in influencer-driven sustainability campaigns. Consumers today expect clarity in both the influencer's relationship with brands and the environmental claims being made. Transparent communication is vital for reducing skepticism and building long-term trust among consumers (Ertz, Karakas, & Sarigöllü, 2016). This includes clear disclosures of paid partnerships, substantiating sustainability claims with verifiable data, and demonstrating actual efforts rather than vague promises. Without transparency, even well-intentioned campaigns risk being perceived as manipulative marketing tactics rather than genuine advocacy for sustainability. Further,

#### IV. CHALLENGES



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advancements in NLP (natural language processing) aim to detect misleading sustainability claims by linking claims explicitly to actions, such as product recycling or carbon reduction efforts. Initiatives like the A3CG framework help parse corporate ESG language more accurately, enhancing transparency across industries.

□ **Measuring the Real Impact of Campaigns** - Measuring the actual impact of influencer-backed sustainability projects is still challenging. Though they provide surface-level information, likes, shares, and comments don't always reveal whether or not consumers are genuinely adopting sustainable practices. In addition to engagement metrics, sustainability marketing performance should be assessed using long-term behavioural changes and actual environmental outcomes (Agrawal, & Gupta, 2018). Developing reliable frameworks to track such effects such as changes in purchasing patterns, reduced waste, or increased awareness remains a persistent challenge for researchers, marketers, and influencers.

#### Ethical Considerations in Promoting Sustainability

There are ethical responsibilities associated with influencer marketing in sustainability since businesses and producers need to ensure that eco-friendly messaging is clear, credible, and does not mislead consumers. Steer clear of greenwashing. Sustainability claims should be supported by facts like certifications, product lifetime statistics, or confirmed environmental effect measurements rather than vague or overstated language (Delmas, & Burbano, 2011). Authenticity and openness are especially important because audiences are highly sensitive to perceived manipulation. Influencers ought to talk about the benefits and drawbacks of sustainable products and openly reveal any affiliations (De Veirman, & Hudders, 2020). Promoting deliberate consumption rather than excessive consumption in the name of sustainability is another problem, as this can contradict the campaign's declared environmental goals (Kapoor, Balaji, & Jiang, 2023). Furthermore, ethical ads respect social and cultural contexts, ensuring that sustainability-related messaging doesn't minimize regional traditions or exploit underprivileged groups. Finally, accountability tools like analytics, reporting, and feedback loops let marketers and influencers understand the real impact of their work and adjust their strategies to align with environmental outcomes. Incorporating these ethical values into influencer marketing can increase engagement while also fostering trust and long-term behavioural change in support of sustainability.

## V. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Influencer marketing has a strong and varied role in promoting sustainability awareness, changing how people think about the environment, and encouraging eco-friendly actions. In many industries and on different social media platforms, influencers who focus on sustainability—whether they have a huge following, a large audience, a smaller group, or just a few followers—are seen as trustworthy sources. They help simplify complex

environmental issues and show how people can make easy changes to their daily lives. One of the main takeaways from the study is that being genuine is the most important thing that makes someone influential. People connect with influencers who are truly committed to living sustainably, who are honest about their mistakes, and who are open about their work with brands. This honesty helps build trust, makes people less doubtful, and makes sustainability feel more reachable and less scary.

The research also shows that the way influencers create content and talk to their audience has a big effect on how much people engage.

Influencers who tell stories, share their own experiences, and show everyday life examples create stronger emotional bonds with their followers. These influencers also help people decide to act and take real steps in their lives. Many followers start using eco-friendly products, try plant-based meals, switch to refilling systems, or take part in challenges like "Plastic-Free July" because they see these actions being modeled by the influencers they follow. The study also found that when influencers are seen as credible, people are more likely to want to buy green products, especially when the influencers talk about how useful the products are, how much money they can save over time, or what real environmental benefits they offer.

Overall, the study shows that when influencer marketing is ethical and based on core values, it can help push sustainability forward as a cultural trend.

Influencers make environmental issues feel more personal, reduce the mental blocks people have when trying to change their habits, and create social standards that support eco-friendly living. Although there are still challenges when it comes to being genuine, being clear, and measuring impact, the study shows that using influencers to spread sustainability messages has a lot of potential to build communities of more aware, knowledgeable, and responsible consumers. When brands work closely with real, authentic creators, influencer marketing goes beyond just being a way to promote products and becomes a key way to encourage long-term sustainable behavior.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Influencer marketing has a big role to play in driving meaningful change, especially now when digital influence shapes not just what people buy, but also their beliefs and actions. Since people often turn to influencers for guidance on how to live their lives, this form of marketing has become a strong tool for promoting sustainability. People tend to trust influencers who come across as genuine, transparent, and truly committed to living sustainably. Smaller influencers, like micro- and nano-influencers, are especially effective because they build closer, more personal connections with their followers. Campaigns that share real stories, offer helpful eco-friendly tips, and reflect genuine values are more likely to resonate with audiences



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than those that feel too salesy or don't match the influencer's image. But audiences are really good at seeing through false claims, so trust and consistency are key to making an impact. Working with influencers helps companies make their sustainability efforts feel real and relatable, which is especially important for younger, socially aware consumers. Still, there are challenges to overcome, such as measuring the real effect of these campaigns, avoiding misleading ads, and keeping things honest. Overall, the research shows that when done well, influencer marketing can support group efforts to create a more sustainable future and encourage eco-friendly shopping habits.

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