



Literature review on the role of green influencers in building environmental awareness among young people

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ABSTRACT

Background: Environmental awareness and behavior in society help to raise global environmental issues. Innovative communication strategies on the environment are rapidly developing in the era of social media. The role of influencers as digital agents of change helps communication to raise awareness of environmental issues. **Methods:** This study applies a literature review and meta-analysis of 10 international journal articles to examine the influence of eco-green influencers on environmental awareness, systematically collecting, coding, and comparing findings to identify patterns, evidence, and research gaps within the social sciences context. **Findings:** The results of the review show that the credibility, authenticity, and social appeal of influencers are the main factors in shaping environmental messages. The use of gain message frames, visual storytelling, and green word of mouth has been proven to increase the audience's awareness and actions. In addition, cross-generational collaboration and online community involvement strengthen the image of green destinations and encourage an environmentally conscious lifestyle among modern societies. **Conclusion:** The review shows that social media and influencers strongly influence pro-environmental awareness and behavior—especially among Millennials and Generation Z—through credible and positively framed messaging, though their impact varies across cultural contexts. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** This study synthesizes influencer research to show how credibility and positive framing within social media ecosystems drive pro-environmental awareness among Millennials and Generation Z, contributing to critical debates on platform culture and digital environmental activism.

KEYWORDS: digital communication; environmental awareness; social media influencers.

1. Introduction

Environmental sustainability has become a global issue affecting almost all countries, including Indonesia. Population growth, combined with industrialization and consumerism, has contributed to various environmental challenges. The increasing population has led to environmental phenomena such as rising waste generation and pollution levels. These issues affect water, air, and land quality, causing environmental degradation. One example is global warming, which is influenced by various factors, including illegal deforestation, air pollution in industrialized countries, and the greenhouse effect. In response to these environmental threats, public interest and awareness play a crucial role in influencing decision-making processes related to environmental preservation. The use of technology enables the development of online communities, representing an innovative approach to social engagement and participation in environmental awareness initiatives.

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Environmental sustainability issues have also encouraged younger generations to engage in campaigns through social media. Environmental awareness has increased in developed countries alongside consumers' preferences for environmentally friendly products and services (Naderi & Steenburg, 2018).

Social media plays a significant role in promoting environmental sustainability, particularly among Generation Z, who actively use digital platforms that influence their environmental awareness and lifestyle choices (William & Hodges, 2020). Studies indicate that Generation Z's concern for environmental issues has generated positive impacts (Fromm & Read, 2018; Seemiller et al., 2019). People increasingly seek information through engaging visual content. Social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook have enabled social media influencers to engage audiences and enhance their followers' awareness of various issues. These influencers create persuasive content and promote particular lifestyles through their online activities.

Influencers are often regarded as role models because they promote values and lifestyles through their content (Casaló et al., 2018; Puteri, 2018). They engage followers with compelling content related to environmental awareness, including climate change and biodiversity conservation, which can influence audience perceptions and behaviors. As a result, influencers contribute to shaping pro-environmental behavior. The term "green influencers" refers to young social media users, particularly members of Generation Z and Millennials, who create content promoting environmentally friendly lifestyles. Environmental content on social media extends beyond expressions of environmental concern and includes the promotion of eco-friendly products, recycled products, and criticism of mass-produced products that contribute to environmental pollution. According to a survey conducted by the IDN Research Institute in 2022, 66% of Generation Z respondents were willing to spend more money on sustainable products, while 70% felt responsible for addressing the climate crisis (Dianawati, 2022).

The influencer phenomenon has affected public support and individual attitudes through videos, blogs, and social media posts (Glucksman, 2017). For example, Instagram influencer @Zatashah encourages environmentally responsible consumption among her followers. With approximately 72,000 followers, she promotes campaigns such as "sayno2plastic" and "zero food wastage." Research on eco-green influencers suggests that social media plays an important role in disseminating environmental issues among younger generations. Several studies have examined the influence of eco-green influencers. One study by Awang et al. (2021) found that influencers' attractiveness and credibility significantly influence social media followers. However, the study was limited to a sample of university students in Malaysia and did not examine factors such as authenticity, engagement, or content type in greater depth.

A second study by Jalali et al. (2021), developed a conceptual model explaining how influencer activities on Instagram affect consumer behavior. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the study demonstrated a relationship between eco-green influencers and followers' intentions to engage in green consumption. Nevertheless, the study focused exclusively on Instagram and did not compare other social media platforms.

A third study by Suryaputra et al. (2024) investigated the influence of social media, influencers, and value co-creation on sustainable lifestyles among Indonesian Generation Z. The findings revealed that social media positively affects environmental awareness and environmentally responsible behavior. Value co-creation, or collaboration among users, was found to play an important role in strengthening commitment to environmental sustainability. Interestingly, the study also found that influencers did not have a significant direct effect on young people's environmental attitudes. The research employed a quantitative approach to better understand Generation Z's motivations.

The findings of these studies indicate that influencers play a significant role in digital environmental communication. The three studies suggest that changes in pro-environmental attitudes and behaviors depend not only on the message itself but also on who delivers the message (Awang et al., 2021). Furthermore, social media contributes to shaping attitudes because visual content such as videos and photographs is effective in

eliciting emotions and empathy. Finally, Indonesian Generation Z is highly active on social media and responsive to environmental messages delivered by influencers (Suryaputra, et al., 2024).

Based on the previous studies, this research employs a literature review approach to examine and analyze research findings concerning the role of social media influencers in fostering environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior within society. Accordingly, the research question is, how do previous studies explain the relationship between eco-green influencer activities and environmental awareness, particularly among young people? the objective of this study is to analyze research findings related to the influence of eco-green influencers in building environmental awareness and promoting pro-environmental behavior through social media. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the development of digital environmental communication research, particularly regarding the role of influencers in encouraging environmental awareness and identifying communication strategies that are effective for younger generations.

2. Methods

A literature review approach was employed in this study to examine the theoretical foundations, the influence of eco-green influencers on environmental awareness, and the findings of previous research. The research method used was a literature review, which provides a comprehensive overview of diverse research areas. Literature reviews are conducted to identify research findings, provide evidence, and determine areas that require further investigation. Library research was carried out by collecting secondary data from various sources related to the research topic, including abstracts, research findings, review indexes, and academic journals. The analysis focused on determining whether communication strategies employed by influencers affect environmental awareness and concern among audiences.

The types of analysis conducted in this study were literature review and meta-analysis. Meta-analysis is a statistical method that combines findings from multiple studies, compares results, and identifies patterns and relationships that emerge across research on similar topics (Davis et al., 2014). Through meta-analysis, primary studies are abstracted and coded, allowing research findings to be transformed into comparable metrics. Literature reviews and meta-analyses are widely used in the social sciences to synthesize existing knowledge and generate broader insights. The data for this study were obtained from ten international journal articles discussing eco-green influencers and their impact on audiences. The analysis was conducted through a systematic review of the literature, mapping and synthesizing the findings and discussions presented in these ten studies.

3. Results and Discussion

Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and YouTube influence culture and contribute to the expansion of environmental issues within public discourse. These platforms allow users to follow channels that align with their interests. Consequently, individuals who are concerned about environmental issues can connect with large communities around the world, providing accessible entry points to environmental topics. Social media platforms offer significant advantages for producing authentic content related to environmental issues through the creativity of influencers. Influencers can provide knowledge and information about environmental topics, enabling younger generations to share content and videos that are simple, engaging, honest, and creative. Instagram, in particular, emphasizes the aesthetic and artistic qualities of images and videos. This creates opportunities for environmental activists to present environmental issues in innovative and visually appealing ways, thereby increasing public interest and awareness. In contrast, TikTok and YouTube Shorts focus on the production of short-form video content. These platforms are designed to distribute visual content and capture viewers' attention within a

very short period of time. As a result, short videos can effectively communicate complex environmental topics through concise and easily digestible content. Based on the research background, research questions, and literature review methodology, the following section presents the research findings obtained from a comparative analysis of ten journal articles examining the influence of environmentally conscious influencers on audience attitudes and behaviors.

In the interaction between society and the environment, innovative strategies are needed to communicate topics such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and other environmental issues to the public. Through Social Media Influencers (SMIs), who gain large numbers of followers and achieve a certain level of credibility, influence is generated through interactions with their followers. SMIs are known as opinion leaders who influence people's attitudes, behaviors, and decisions. According to Freberg et al., SMIs are third parties who aim to influence and shape viewpoints through social media. In the field of marketing, SMIs have a major influence on customer relationships. Marketers can identify SMIs through engaging social media content that reaches authentic target audiences.

The journal entitled "Micro Influencers, Mega Impact: How TikTok Influencers Shape Sustainable Travel Choices" explains that the research findings support Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Richard Wohl, 2021; Park, 1956). The findings reveal that micro-influencers build stronger parasocial relationships because they are more relatable and accessible to audiences than mega-influencers. The findings also strengthen the segmentation framework proposed by Campbell & Ferrell (2020), which identifies micro-influencers as being more effective for marketing campaigns due to their high levels of engagement. The study further develops Source Credibility Theory (Giffin, 1967), which emphasizes trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness in shaping consumers' perceptions of influencers.

This study offers significant theoretical contributions to the fields of influencer marketing, sustainable tourism, and consumer behaviour in general. By examining how micro- and mega- influencer on TikTok influencer sustainable destination choices, with eco-consciousness as a moderating variable, this research expands current understanding of the dynamics shaping consumer decision-making in sustainability-focused campaigns. Our findings advance the literature on influencer marketing by supporting Parasocial Interaction Theory (Horton & Richard Wohl, 2021 ; Park, 1956), which posits that micro-influencer foster stronger parasocial bonds due to their relatability and approachability compared to mega- influencer.

This study explores the complex dynamics between social media use, the role of social media influencers (SMIs), and the adoption of a sustainable green lifestyle. Based on the results of analyses across various geographic and demographic contexts, it was found that social media is not merely an entertainment platform, but a crucial tool for raising environmental awareness and driving tangible behavioral change.

3.1 The influence of influencer attributes on environmental awareness

One of the key findings is that influencer attributes play a vital role in shaping followers' perceptions. Authenticity and attitudinal homophily (shared values) were consistently found to be the strongest predictors of followers' environmental concern across different generations. This suggests that audiences are more likely to adopt sustainability messages from figures perceived as honest and whose values align with their own. Interestingly, an influencer's physical attractiveness was found to have limited influence. This attribute was significant only in influencing environmental concern among Generation Z, but not among older generations. This indicates that while visual appeal may be important for first impressions or lifestyle products like fashion, long-term commitment to environmental issues is driven more by the credibility and expertise of the content than by physical appearance alone.

Study by Nazir & Wani (2024) examined how two social media influencer attributes — source credibility and source attractiveness — affect millennials' attitudes and, through

attitude, their pro-environmental intentions, using the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. Drawing on survey data from 300 millennials in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia, and analyzed via PLS-SEM, all three direct hypotheses were supported: source credibility had a significant effect on attitude ($\beta=0.251$), source attractiveness had a weaker but reported-significant effect on attitude ($\beta=0.155$), and attitude had a strong effect on pro-environmental intention ($\beta=0.696$). The model explained about 52% of the variance in attitude and 48% in intention.

The study further confirmed that attitude mediates both relationships — credibility→attitude→intention ($\beta=0.196$) and attractiveness→attitude→intention ($\beta=0.178$) — positioning attitude as the central "organism" mechanism linking influencer attributes to behavioral intention. The practical implication the authors draw is that influencer credibility (trustworthiness and expertise) is a more powerful driver of pro-environmental attitudes than physical attractiveness, and that attitude is the key lever non-profit and environmental campaigns should target when using influencer marketing (Nazir & Wani, 2024).

3.2 *The mediating role of value co-creation and environmental concern*

Research findings indicate that the relationship between social media exposure and the adoption of a green lifestyle is not always direct, but is significantly mediated by value co-creation. Through active interactions such as sharing ideas, discussing, and collaborating on sustainability content, social media users build a sense of community and shared purpose that strengthens their commitment to green practices.

Additionally, environmental concern acts as a key mediator between influencer attributes and perceptions of green destinations or intentions to consume green products. Users exposed to authentic content from influencers experience increased concern about environmental issues, which in turn drives them to choose eco-friendly products or destinations.

Yousaf (2021) examined how green practices and green dynamic capabilities drive green innovation in Pakistani SMEs, and whether green value co-creation mediates those relationships, using the Theory of Planned Behavior as its frame. Survey data were drawn from top-level managers (CEOs, senior managers) at SMEs across eight Pakistani cities, with 370 usable responses from 457 distributed questionnaires, analyzed via covariance-based SEM in AMOS. All seven hypotheses were reported as supported such as, green practices ($\beta=0.56$) and green dynamic capabilities ($\beta=0.42$) both predicted green innovation; both also predicted green value co-creation ($\beta=0.38$ and $\beta=0.34$); green value co-creation predicted green innovation ($\beta=0.35$); and green value co-creation significantly mediated both the practices→innovation path (Sobel $Z=4.13$) and the capabilities→innovation path (Sobel $Z=3.47$).

The SMEs can strengthen green innovation by building green practices and green dynamic capabilities, and that this works partly through co-creating environmental value with increasingly eco-conscious customers — positioning green value co-creation as the mechanism that converts internal capability into accepted, customer-facing innovation. The stated contribution is theoretical (extending TPB and the green-innovation literature to jointly model these antecedents) and practical (telling SME managers to signal green practices and invest in green dynamic capabilities to attract customer loyalty) (Yousaf, 2021).

3.3 *The effectiveness of micro-influencers vs. mega-influencers*

Within the short-form video platform ecosystem like TikTok, micro-influencers have proven more effective than mega-influencers in promoting sustainable travel options, particularly among consumers who already possess a high level of eco-consciousness. This is supported by Parasocial Interaction Theory, which posits that micro-influencers can build closer, more genuine, and trustworthy relationships with niche audiences. The relatability

offered by micro-influencers triggers a stronger sense of self-identification among the audience.

The study demonstrates that mega-influencers are more effective than micro-influencers in increasing brand awareness because their extensive follower base and broad visibility enable brands to reach larger and more diverse audiences quickly and efficiently. In contrast, although micro-influencers are perceived as more authentic, credible, and capable of generating stronger engagement within niche communities, their smaller audience size limits their ability to create widespread brand recognition. Therefore, while micro-influencers are valuable for fostering personalized interactions and long-term customer relationships, mega-influencers remain the more effective option for brands whose primary objective is to maximize brand awareness and achieve rapid market exposure.

The study by Conde & Casais (2023) reveals that the persuasive power of social media influencers is determined not only by the size of their audience but also by the quality of the emotional connections they establish with followers. Mega-influencers benefit from greater perceived popularity and opinion leadership due to their large follower base, making them highly effective in generating broad influence and visibility. However, micro-influencers develop stronger parasocial relationships characterized by trust, intimacy, and authenticity, which significantly enhance followers' willingness to adopt their recommendations. The findings further demonstrate that when strong parasocial relationships exist, the importance of follower count and perceived opinion leadership diminishes, suggesting that emotional bonds can compensate for a smaller audience size. Consequently, while larger influencers possess advantages in reach and perceived authority, micro-influencers can achieve comparable persuasive effectiveness through deeper and more meaningful relationships with their audiences, highlighting the critical role of trust and engagement in influencer marketing strategies.

3.4 *Intergenerational dynamics and local context*

This study also highlights behavioral differences across generations. Although Generation Z is often regarded as the most environmentally conscious "digital natives," the use of social media for green promotion is also beginning to extend to older generations, such as Baby Boomers, who have higher purchasing power. However, in Indonesia, it was found that the moderating influence of influencers on the relationship between social media engagement and value co-creation among Generation Z is sometimes minimal. This suggests that personal environmental values and educational campaigns may have a greater impact than simply following influencers' recommendations within specific cultural contexts.

Based on a specific study of Generation Z in Indonesia, the influence of influencers is considered minimal in promoting a sustainable lifestyle for the following main reasons: Dominance of Personal Values: Research indicates that an individual's environmental values and personal beliefs have a far stronger influence on driving sustainable behavior than external influence from influencers.

Generation Z tends to be driven more by their own internal principles than simply following the recommendations of figures on social media. Lack of Evidence for a Moderating Effect: The results of the regression analysis in the study failed to support the hypothesis that influencers can strengthen the relationship between social media exposure and value co-creation activities. In other words, the presence of influencers does not significantly increase their followers' enthusiasm for collaborating or sharing ideas related to green living on digital platforms.

Overall, this study found little effects of exhibiting activism and message-sidedness on the assessment of the greenfluencer and behavioural intentions but there were differences between study 1 and study 2. When first looking at the student sample, a hypothesis-confirming effect of activism was found, and trustworthiness and authenticity were higher in the condition exhibiting public-sphere activism but there were no direct effects on persuasive outcomes. In the second study, we found no effects for exhibited activism on any

dependent variable, meaning that it did not make the greenfluencer more credible, or authentic if her public-sphere activism was exhibited. Therefore, “being green” seemed to be sufficient for the assessment of the greenfluencer’s regarding trustworthiness, expertise and authenticity in the general sample.

The research findings reveal that social media is an important instrument for promoting environmental awareness related to lifestyle habits among Generation Z. Active engagement on social media influences behaviors such as sharing ideas, resources, and teamwork, which are crucial for maintaining sustainable lifestyles. Social media engagement contributes to lifestyle adoption through the exchange of values and behaviors that shape such lifestyles. Promoting sustainable lifestyles through social media, especially among Generation Z in Indonesia, requires consideration of factors such as maintaining credibility, supporting sustainable initiatives, and ensuring that influencers prioritize transparency and authenticity in their advocacy. These factors help prevent the spread of misleading information and reduce distrust. The protection of privacy and data security is also highly important.

The findings from the journal “Profiling Environmental Leaders Among Social Influencers: Perspectives of Social Followers” indicate that effective influencers possess five criteria: credibility, generosity, trust-building ability, responsibility, and influence. Using a qualitative case study approach, interviewed participants believed that social influencers demonstrate leadership qualities both offline and online. The results show that influencers can reach and persuade diverse audiences on social media to participate in environmental conservation efforts.

The use of Word of Mouth (WOM) is widely recognized as a powerful communication tool, including among social media influencers. Influencers use WOM strategies to enhance their credibility, leading followers to assume that social media influencers possess experience and knowledge regarding environmental issues or products. A study by Mijar & Manaf (2021) showed that Malaysian influencers frequently update their social media content on relevant environmental issues to build credibility. This finding indicates that social presence and relevant content are important factors considered by influencers when attempting to influence followers and encourage pro-environmental actions.

Different findings were identified in the study “Greenfluencing Through the Power of Emotions? Impact of Message Frames and Emotionally Matching Background Music on the Effectiveness of Influencers’ Environmental Communication.” This study explains that, in addition to message content, message design can generate stronger emotional experiences. For example, the use of emotional nature imagery has been proven to strengthen emotional responses (Hartmann & Apaolaza Ibáñez, 2010). Another important factor that has received less attention is background music, which is a significant feature of Instagram Reels. The study explains that background music can generate positive emotions.

This study examined various message frames and persuasive strategies in the context of Instagram Reels. The Reels feature on Instagram presents short audiovisual content accompanied by background music. The researchers created an Instagram Reel featuring a male influencer discussing environmental pollution caused by plastic waste. The Reel was not only displayed to followers but was also randomly recommended based on user data. The Reel used only selected instrumental music clips to examine their emotional effects on audiences. No study found a moderating effect of music on the relationship between message framing and emotions. These results appear surprising given that the effects of congruent music have been demonstrated in other audiovisual contexts such as documentaries (Herget & Albrecht, 2022), films (e.g., Boltz, 2001; Bullerjahn & Güldenring, 1994; Cohen, 2013), and traditional advertising (e.g., Anisimova, 2014; Hahn & Hwang, 1999; Herget et al., 2022). The findings from previous studies highlight the role of influencers in encouraging pro-environmental behavior within society. Several studies indicate that social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as a space for value co-creation that shapes green lifestyles and increases environmental awareness (Li et al., 2024). Research on greenfluencers reveals that appropriate message delivery strategies

using gain frames are more effective than messages based on threats or loss frames (Olbermann et al., 2024).

Value co-creation on social media is a process in which service or content providers (such as influencers) and users jointly create value through active interaction. In the digital ecosystem, users are no longer merely passive recipients of information; instead, they act as partners in value creation by contributing their own meaning, context, and personal experiences to share with others. Based on available sources, several studies have found that social norms do not have a significant influence on encouraging the adoption of a sustainable lifestyle for the following main reasons. Table 2 present main reasons for the insignificant influence of social norms on sustainable lifestyle adoption.

Table 2. Main reasons for the insignificant influence of social norms on sustainable lifestyle adoption

No	Main findings	Reasons for the insignificant effect of social norms
1	Dominance of Personal Values and Beliefs	Personal environmental values and individual beliefs have a far stronger influence on driving sustainable behavior than simply following societal pressure or norms. People tend to adopt a green lifestyle because of their own internal convictions, not due to social coercion.
2	Effectiveness of Education and Awareness Campaigns	Educational interventions and awareness campaigns have proven to be more effective in fostering sustainable behavior than relying solely on social norms. Knowledge gained through these channels helps individuals understand the reasons behind green practices, which is more likely to trigger permanent behavioral change.
3	Lack of Evidence for Moderating Effects	In certain research models, it was found that social norms (both on social media and in daily life) do not strengthen the relationship between value co-creation and the adoption of a green lifestyle. This suggests that social interaction alone is not sufficient to ensure a transition toward pro-environmental behavior if it is not accompanied by individual autonomous motivation.
4	The Passive Nature of Motivation	Although peer pressure is sometimes considered a passive motivator, research findings indicate that it is often not strong enough to influence a person's intentions or provide the autonomy needed to make tangible lifestyle changes.
5	Limitations of Routine Influence	Factors such as routine and past experiences can limit the influence of social norms on actual behavior, where old habits are often more dominant than new norms that are being attempted.

Influencers can also be considered an alternative group known as micro-celebrities. Micro-celebrities encourage people to purchase new brands, adopt new lifestyles, and display their behaviors on social media platforms (Chae, 2018). Based on the ten journals reviewed, individuals who care about environmental issues use various social media platforms to disseminate information and exert pressure on policymakers. Through social media, people can access diverse stories about climate change occurring around the world.

Research conducted by Radzi et al. (2022) and Okuah et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of credibility and trust in building social influence. The characteristics possessed by influencers motivate followers to participate in pro-environmental activities (Dekoninck & Heleen, 2022). Research by Abate et al. (2025) demonstrates that influencers shape green destination images across generations. Meanwhile, the study by Jalali & Khalid (2018) explains that visually appealing content created by Instagram influencers increases environmental awareness among their followers.

Research conducted by Suryaputra et al. (2024) found that value co-creation is a key factor in promoting the adoption of green lifestyles and environmental awareness among Generation Z in Indonesia. Using a survey of 263 Generation Z respondents, the researchers emphasized that active engagement and collaboration between influencers and audiences are effective methods. Influencers possess strong attributes that encourage active audience participation on social media.

Value Co-Creation Mechanisms Social media is not merely a passive information channel. Through active interaction (sharing ideas, comments, and collaborations), a

process of value co-creation occurs between influencers and their followers. This interactive process is crucial because it strengthens the community's commitment to a green lifestyle and mediates the relationship between social media engagement and the adoption of sustainable behaviors. **Cross-Generational Perspective** Although each generation has unique characteristics (for example, Baby Boomers who are beginning to actively use social media and Gen Z, who are digital natives), awareness of climate change has bridged these differences. Generally, all generations respond positively to authentic sustainability messages, although the effectiveness of certain attributes (such as physical appeal or shared values) may vary across different age groups.

Other studies explain that cross-generational collaboration and digital communities enhance the image of environmentally friendly destinations while encouraging political and social participation. Additional findings indicate that social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok are effective channels for environmental campaigns. Micro-influencers have closer and more authentic relationships with their followers on social media. However, not all social variables show significant effects. Research conducted in China found that the influence of social norms and influencers on environmental awareness remains limited. This suggests that cultural factors and contextual conditions need to be taken into consideration.

4. Conclusions

The conclusion based on the ten journals is that social media and influencers play a major role in shaping environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior in society. These findings indicate that Millennials and Generation Z are influenced by the dissemination of information through social media. Social media not only provides information but also shapes values, lifestyles, and sustainable social identities.

Several factors determine the effectiveness of environmental messages, including influencer credibility, authenticity, and social attractiveness. These characteristics enable influencers to build trust and demonstrate concern for environmental issues, which has the potential to motivate followers on social media. The forms of communication used by influencers include green word of mouth, engaging visual content, and positive narratives (gain frames). These communication strategies increase environmental awareness intentions and positive environmental actions more effectively than threat-based messages (loss frames).

The Advantages of Micro-Influencers vs. Mega-Influencers On platforms like TikTok, micro-influencers are often more effective at promoting sustainable travel options than mega-influencers. This is because micro-influencers tend to have a closer, more relatable connection (easier to relate to real life) and are considered more credible by audiences with high environmental awareness.

Based on these studies, environmental communication strategies in the current digital era should combine several forms of communication, including influencer credibility, positive emotional content, and digital communities, to strengthen messages and encourage public behavior. Based on previous research, influencers have become modern opinion leaders who shape public values and behavior. Social media serves as a strategic tool for education and for promoting environmental awareness.

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Author Contribution

The author was solely responsible for the conceptualization, data collection, analysis, and writing of the manuscript.

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During the preparation of this work, the author(s) used Grammarly to assist in improving grammar, clarity, and academic tone of the manuscript. After using this tool, the author(s) reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Table 1. Literature review

Author(s)	Research Problem	Research Question	Research Method	Research Findings	Conclusion
Radzi et al. (2018)	The role of social media influencers in shaping pro-environmental behavior among millennials remains insufficiently understood.	What are the characteristics of environmental leaders among social media influencers from the perspective of their followers?	Case study involving five university students through interviews and thematic analysis.	Influencers who promote environmental awareness are characterized by credibility, generosity, responsibility in content creation, and strong influence that fosters trust among followers.	Social media influencers provide credibility for audiences and act as leaders who encourage followers to engage in pro-environmental behavior.
Okuah et al. (2019)	The techniques used by social media influencers to influence public environmental awareness have not been clearly identified.	What characteristics and techniques of social media influencers are effective in increasing public environmental awareness?	Grounded theory analysis of 36 articles using ATLAS software with open, axial, and selective coding.	Engagement, authenticity, trust, and credibility were identified as key factors influencing environmental awareness behavior.	Influencers act as agents of environmental change through communication strategies based on trust, credibility, and authenticity.
Dekoninck & Heleen (2022)	Limited research exists on the impact of environmental influencers on followers' political participation and pro-environmental behavior.	Does following environmental influencers increase pro-environmental behavioral intentions and political participation both online and offline?	Two-wave panel study conducted during the Austrian national election involving 564 respondents.	Following environmental influencers increases environmental behavior and political participation in both online and offline contexts.	Influencers serve as digital opinion leaders capable of mobilizing environmental and socio-political participation among followers.
Abate et al. (2025)	Research remains limited regarding how influencers shape green destination images across generations.	How do influencers affect green destination image, and what is the mediating role of environmental concern across generations?	Quantitative study using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM-MGA) and Artificial Neural Network (ANN) involving 626	Social attractiveness and attitudinal similarity influence environmental concern, contributing to positive green destination images across generations.	Cross-generational influencer collaboration effectively strengthens environmentally friendly destination images and sustainable tourism.

Bou Aragonés et al. (2025)	Consumer behavior is increasingly influenced by social media, but limited research examines how different types of influencers affect sustainable tourism decisions on TikTok.	How do influencers shape sustainable travel choices, and does environmental awareness moderate this influence?	respondents from four generations. Between-subject experimental study involving 220 participants. TikTok platform examined.	Micro-influencers are more effective than mega-influencers in promoting sustainable tourism, particularly among environmentally conscious consumers.	The study provides insights into TikTok influencer marketing strategies for sustainable tourism promotion.
Li et al. (2024)	No comprehensive model explains how social media can facilitate value co-creation to promote sustainable green lifestyles.	What roles do social media, influencers, and social norms play in encouraging sustainable lifestyles through value co-creation?	Quantitative online survey of 289 respondents in China using regression analysis.	Social media contact positively influences sustainable lifestyles and environmental awareness. Value co-creation mediates this relationship. Influencers and social norms are not significant predictors.	Social media effectively promotes environmental awareness through value co-creation, while the direct influence of influencers remains limited.
Olbermann et al. (2024)	The most effective message types and emotional elements in environmental communication remain unclear.	How do message framing and background music affect emotions, issue seriousness perceptions, and pro-environmental behavioral intentions?	Two online experiments (2×2 between-subjects design) involving 447 participants.	Loss-framed messages increase negative emotions and reduce green behavioral intentions. Positive emotions strengthen self-efficacy and environmental intentions. Background music showed no significant effects.	Positively framed environmental messages are more effective than loss-framed messages.
Awang et al. (2021)	Changes in advertising preferences have increased the use of influencers as credible and attractive promotional sources for environmentally friendly lifestyles.	How do social media influencers affect environmental attitudes and pro-environmental intentions, particularly among millennials?	Quantitative study using purposive convenience sampling involving 300 respondents. Analysis conducted with IBM SPSS 25 and	Influencer attractiveness and credibility positively affect audience attitudes, which subsequently influence pro-environmental intentions.	Audience attitudes mediate the relationship between influencer characteristics and environmental intentions, reinforcing the role of

			SmartPLS 3.0.		influencers in environmen tal campaigns. Instagram influencers shape environmen tal awareness and consumptio n behavior through content and audience interaction.
Jalali & Khalid (2021)	Environmental problems continue to increase due to consumption behavior, requiring factors that encourage greener consumer choices.	How do green influencer activities on Instagram affect followers' consumptio n intentions?	Literature review focusing on green influencer activities.	Green influencer activities influence environmental awareness through credibility and green word-of- mouth communication.	
Suryaputra et al. (2024)	Research on environmental awareness among Indonesian Generation Z remains limited despite their potential role in promoting sustainable lifestyles.	How do social media engagement, influencers, and creator collaboratio n affect sustainable lifestyle adoption among Indonesian Generation Z?	Quantitative survey involving 263 respondents recruited through LINE, WhatsApp Groups, and Instagram.	Social media significantly increases environmental awareness. Influencers disseminate sustainability information, while creators encourage community engagement and environmental commitment.	Social media, influencers, and community collaboratio n are strategic tools for promoting environmen tal awareness in Indonesia.