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Social media influence and consciousness: A comprehensive review of health and environmental behaviour in the digital age

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media has reshaped how individuals perceive and act on health and environmental issues. This comprehensive review synthesizes theoretical perspectives (TAM, TRA/TPB, VBN) and empirical findings (2010-2025) to examine how platform characteristics perceived usefulness, informativeness, credibility, interactivity, and privacy shape attitudes and how health and environmental consciousness mediate the attitude-intention link. The review integrates evidence across contexts, highlights methodological and conceptual gaps, and proposes a unified research agenda emphasizing cross-platform longitudinal designs and culturally sensitive measures.

Keywords: Social media, health consciousness, environmental consciousness, TAM, TPB, VBN, attitude, behavioral intention

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has profoundly influenced the way individuals interact with information. Social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and YouTube, have emerged as dominant communication channels, not only for social interaction but also for the dissemination of vital information. These platforms are increasingly being utilized to promote awareness on pressing global issues, particularly in the domains of health and environmental sustainability.

Health-related concerns such as the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccine dissemination, mental health awareness, and disease prevention campaigns have relied heavily on social media for outreach. Simultaneously, environmental issues including climate change, pollution, and conservation efforts are widely discussed across social networks, often sparking global conversations. Social media's role in these areas is transformative; it enables rapid dissemination of information, mobilization of communities, and the empowerment of individuals to participate in meaningful discourse.

Despite the widespread usage of social media for advocacy and awareness, the mechanisms through which it influences users' awareness, attitudes, and behaviors are still underexplored, especially in non-Western contexts. Understanding these dynamics is essential to leveraging social media effectively for behavioral change related to health and environmental concerns

Technology Acceptance Model

The first theoretical work that underpins this study is the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) ^[15]. Researchers have extensively used it in explaining acceptance of web-based technologies and services. This is primarily due to its robustness and parsimoniousness (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000; Davis, 1989) ^[113, 15]; efficacy and power (Geffen & Straub, 2000) ^[23]. Ability to predict acceptance of technologies and identification of key adoption drivers (Horst *et al.*, 2007) ^[114]; and its potential for extension to include other external variables (Moon & Kim, 2011) ^[13]. Therefore, several researchers have applied the theory in varied contexts including; acceptance of information systems in organisations (Borrero, Yousafzai, Javed & Page, 2014) ^[115], social network service use (Kwon & Wen, 2010) ^[116], predicting user response to sponsored advertising on social media (Lin & Kim, 2011) ^[13], government

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agencies (Jones & Hubona), social media mindset of consumers (Mishra & Tyagi, 2013)^[25], and adoption and usage of social networking sites (Shin & Kim, 2008; Lee, 2016)^[13, 41]. Likewise, because social media advertising is an online marketing information system based on Web 2.0 technology (Cheng *et al.*), TAM is the most appropriate for studying consumer behavior in a social media context.

Theory of Reasoned Action

The Theory of Reasoned Action-TRA (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1986)^[2] sheds light on the influence of subjective norms in predicting consumer behaviour. Consistent with Davis's (1989)^[15] TAM, TRA theorises that an individual's behaviour is a direct outcome of intention. However, the point of contrast is that TRA considers intention to be directed by both attitudes towards the behaviour and subjective norms (SN). Moreover, subjective norms affect behavior directly. SN refers to the belief that performance or non-performance of behavior or motivation to behave is dictated by specific referents (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1986)^[82]. In simple terms, it denotes perceived pressure to comply with perceived views of significant others. For instance like on Facebook, the significant others include friends, group members, family, employers, and many others who may exert pressure to behave in a particular manner. Despite the relevance of Subjective Norms in technology adoption, TAM (Davis (1989)^[15] considered the only attitude because he shared an understanding with other researchers such as Farley, Lehmann, Ryan, Oliver, and Bearden (as cited in Ting *et al.*), that subjective norms have no significant effect on intention to behave. In his study on structural antecedents of attitude, Lutz *et al.* (1983) found that attitude plays a mediating role on intention to behave towards issues. Similarly, the TRA family of theories (TPB and TAM) suggests that intention to behave is a result of consumer's attitudes, which mediate the role of other predictors. Thus, attitude towards use of social media for health and environmental issues has been conceptualised as mediating the influence of antecedent factors on intention to behave.

Social Media

Social media allows individuals to interact, gain access to information faster and provide feedback. Social media has reached a larger audience and serves as a highly accessible and scalable interaction medium in various publishing forms, including websites. Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and others provide visibility, possibility of engagements, suggestions platform where participants can interactively voice out their views, experiences, solicit participation, donations and get quick feedback. (H. I. Duh.). Social media has proven to be a more effective technique for influencing attitudes and behaviours of individuals in marketing communications as compared to traditional communications. (Scholtz, 2016)^[92]. Individuals using social media to interact with one another by, for example, sharing testimonies and providing support for one another. Many organisations use social media to accomplish a variety of objectives from educating to fund-raising which creates awareness of the need for screening (detection), options for treatment and care. Social media enables the creation of communities that can link individuals and organizations around a common centre of interest. (Lapointe, 2014)^[40]. Social Media platform can be seen as a

great opportunity for both individuals and healthcare providers. (Yiannis, L., & Nicholas, 2015)^[110]. Social media have unlocked an entirely new reference group that are now influencing people's values, beliefs and behaviours even if they are conscious or not. Nowadays individuals are more concern about their health and social media emerging as aid in giving, sharing and influencing concern about health issues for example social media marketing influenced young people's positive perception about fitness. Social media marketing is positioned as an imperative and integral component of the social marketing communication strategy. Combining ideas from commercial marketing and the social sciences, social marketing has proven to be a useful tool for influencing and changing people's behaviour in a sustainable and cost-effective way. For example, the "Reduce Your Juice" campaign helped users dramatically reduce their energy bills in Queensland, Australia, by applying gamification (the playing of games) to learn new behaviours. When social marketing is combined with digital marketing practices, effective social good can be achieved. Importantly, those who advocate the use of digital technologies in mental health have recognised the benefits of using digital channels for consumer engagement. (Mehmet, 2020)^[52]. The main aim of Health campaigns is to raise awareness, raise funds for research and treatment for patients. (Prasetyo, N.Dong, den, & Djoerd, 2015)^[68]. There are number of social networking sites that offer Physicians and significant amount of doctors from the across the nation to share their expertise and the chance to connect with individual for awareness, knowledge sharing, networking and support. (Marco S.). Health professionals and family members, patients are using social media as platform for healthcare awareness and contribute to share updates on disease. (Himanshu Sareen.). Patients and their families are creating communities on social media and share their experiences and educate others having similar health conditions; information communicating is a key technique of creating awareness and prevention of diseases.

With the use of social media positive attitudes and motivations, healthcare service providers and governments can effectively include Millennials in their health care practices. (H. I. Duh.).

Social Issues and Their Communication via Social Media

Social media has emerged as a powerful communication channel for disseminating, discussing, and mobilizing action around a wide range of social issues, including public health, environmental sustainability, gender rights, education, and climate change. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have fundamentally altered the flow of information by enabling decentralized, user-generated content and real-time engagement (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010)^[34]. The interactive and participatory nature of social media allows individuals, organizations, and institutions to communicate social issues more directly and persuasively than traditional media. It also fosters the formation of digital communities around shared values, thereby amplifying the reach and emotional resonance of social issue campaigns.

In the context of health and environmental communication, social media enables not just the dissemination of factual information, but also the exchange of personal stories, emotional appeals, and community-driven narratives that enhance relatability and perceived relevance (Heldman A.

B., 2013)^[28]. For example, during public health crises (e.g., COVID-19), platforms like Twitter and Facebook played a critical role in promoting health awareness, clarifying misconceptions, and encouraging preventive behaviors (Cinelli, 2020)^[14]. Similarly, environmental organizations use social media to promote sustainable behavior by creating compelling visual content, infographics, and calls to action that influence users' environmental attitudes and behavioral intentions (Wilson & Saunders).

Reach, the potential of exposure to health communication, is an important aspect of the promotion of behaviour change campaigns. The consumption of information via digital channels is pervasive and for many, omnipresent. (McGloin, 2015)^[51] With the number of social media users steadily growing, social media present an opportunity to reach audiences who may prefer to receive health information through these channels. (Heldman A. B., 2013)^[28]. Through digital platforms, public health agencies can identify and engage with like-minded organizations to help expand consumer reach, amplify dissemination of key messages, and act as important advocates for each other and behavior change. (McGloin, 2015)^[51].

Health and Environmental Issues Communicated via Social Media

Social media enable users to create, share, comment upon or modify content and it is rapidly changing the way patients can contact their doctors and obtain health information about various health issues. Social media technologies serve as key health communication channels, designed to create conversations among audiences and the public touching on topics such as cancer prevention, treatments and research (Attai D. J., 2016)^[7]. Studies have targeted a wide range of health behaviors, including weight loss, physical activity, sexual health, smoking cessation, mental health, food safety, disease self-management, and tobacco chewing. Although rarely used as a health-change tool on its own, twitter has been successfully applied as a supplementary aid to increase success of online interventions by enhancing social engagement. Twitter boosted the spread information and strengthened social networks in an online quit smoking program and enhanced social support for weight loss and the '#PlankADay' exercise challenge. (Maher C. R., 2016). The use of social media in mental health promotion strategies is a relatively new phenomenon, but there is some evidence to support its value for engaging youth in learning about symptoms and help-seeking behaviors related to mental health problems (Livingston, 2014)^[43].

Environmental issues

The extensive and ever-evolving literature on environmental issues discussed on social media platforms has become a subject of growing academic interest in recent years, as researchers seek to understand the complex interplay between digital discourse, environmental awareness, and collective action. The literature also suggests that social media can be a powerful tool for promoting environmental awareness and encouraging participation in sustainability initiatives. (Kaur & Chahal) (Mallick & Bajpai) By enabling the rapid and wide-reaching dissemination of environmental information, social media platforms can reach a vast and diverse audience, thereby fostering a sense of collective responsibility and inspiring individual and community-level action.

The introduction recognizes the escalating environmental crisis caused by human activities, emphasizing that challenges like global warming, climate change, and pollution pose significant threats to the planet's well-being and human health. The study concludes that social media plays a vital role in enhancing environmental awareness by efficiently spreading information and educational materials, thus mobilizing a wider audience to engage with environmental concerns (Veethika, 2019)^[95].

Preferred Social Media Platforms for Health and Environmental Issues Communication and Behavior Change

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube are some of the most common social media platforms used all across the world. Social media is largely driven by Facebook due to the larger amount of individuals it reaches in comparison to YouTube, Twitter and Instagram in the U.S. Conversely, Twitter provides limited facilities for sending short messages and embedding images. (Scholtz, 2016)^[92]. Facebook has been the most popular social media platform for health behavior change research. Studies have targeted a wide range of health behaviors, including weight loss, physical activity, sexual health, smoking cessation, mental health, food safety, disease self-management, and tobacco chewing (Maher C. R., 2016)^[47]. Social media has enabled marketers to access and monitor consumer opinions on a continual instant basis by listening-in and participating in online conversations, and observing what people are discussing in blogs, forums and online communities (Duangruthai Voramontri, 2019)^[16]. Mostly patients use Twitter and Facebook to contact other patients, while professionals primarily use LinkedIn and Twitter to contact fellow professionals and for marketing purposes. Social media platforms have been shown to be effective tools to communicate and support interaction.

Research indicates that Instagram, Facebook, Twitter (now X), and YouTube are the most frequently used platforms for environmental communication, with each catering to different demographics and types of content. For instance, Instagram is preferred for visually-driven environmental campaigns and storytelling, especially among younger audiences (Campos-Domínguez *et al.*). YouTube, on the other hand, is favored for long-form educational content and documentary-style storytelling. Studies suggest that in-depth video content on environmental degradation, recycling practices, or sustainable living can significantly influence knowledge and behavioral intentions (Strydom & Fox). Furthermore, platform choice often aligns with specific behavior change strategies. For example, Facebook and Instagram are more effective for narrative persuasion and emotional appeals, whereas Twitter and LinkedIn cater better to informational support and policy advocacy (Antonioni *et al.*, 2021)^[42]. The choice of platform thus plays a crucial role in shaping both the reception and impact of environmental messages.

The Conceptual Framework

Antecedents related to social media use

Social media channels can serve as key health communication mediums, granting clinicians and the public a like unprecedented access to conversations touching on topics such as cancer prevention, healthy well-being, mental health treatments, and research. However, social media is a

powerful tool for conveying health-related information. (Attai D. J., 2016)^[7]. Similarly, a study exploring the effect of social media on individuals with HIV found that social media positively impact increasing informational and emotional support (Chen & Shi, 2023)^[53]. The study provided further evidence to suggest that consumers perceived health-related messages on social media in a profound and trusted manner, and health professionals believed that social media was more effective than traditional media mainly due to the loss of popularity of traditional media among target audiences. Indeed, strategies that encourage engagement and content creation on social media have the potential to embed behavioral change messages in the lives of consumers. (Shawky, 2019)^[84]. People use social media for several reasons, such as social connection, information, and entertainment (Kim *et al.*, 2011; Whiting & Williams, 2013)^[13, 102].

Perceived usefulness

Perceived Usefulness and Its Role in Attitude Formation

Perceived usefulness (PU) is one of the core constructs of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989), and it refers to “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance their performance.” In the context of social media, PU has been found to significantly influence users’ attitudes towards adopting platforms for issue-based engagement, including health and environmental concerns. When users perceive that social media provides timely, relevant, and credible information about health or environmental issues, they are more likely to view the platform positively and develop a favourable attitude toward its use (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000)^[113].

In the context of health issues, Zhou (2002)^[112] investigated users’ adoption of online health communities and found that perceived usefulness had a strong positive effect on attitude toward participation. Users who believed that the platform improved their knowledge or supported their decision-making were more likely to maintain a positive attitude and show behavioural commitment.

In environmental domains, Heo and Muralidharan found that when users considered online environmental content as useful for understanding sustainability or making better consumption decisions, their attitude towards eco-friendly digital campaigns was significantly enhanced. These attitudes then translated into stronger behavioural intentions to act pro-environmentally.

Informativeness

Informativeness refers to the extent to which users perceive social media content as helpful, valuable, and providing necessary information for decision-making. In the context of health and environmental communication, informativeness is a vital factor influencing users’ engagement and attitude formation. According to Ducoffe (1995)^[17], informativeness is one of the most significant predictors of advertising value and has a strong positive influence on user attitude. When applied to social media, this means users are more likely to develop a favourable attitude towards platforms that offer clear, detailed, and relevant information on health or environmental issues. Deghani *et al.* (2016)^[41] found that informativeness in social media advertising particularly on Facebook positively influenced users’ attitudes and intentions to act.

Privacy Concerns

Privacy concerns in the digital age have become a significant factor shaping users’ attitudes toward social media usage, particularly in the context of health and environmental discourse. These concerns stem from users’ desire to regulate how their personal information is collected, stored, and used by social media platforms and third-party advertisers (Castañeda & Montoro, 2007)^[10]. The core of these concerns lies in the lack of transparency and control over data practices. Many users are unaware of the extent to which their online behaviors such as browsing history, clicks, posts, and interactions are monitored and exploited for targeted marketing (Milne, 2000; Sackmann & Accorsi, 2006)^[71, 76].

In the context of health communication, privacy becomes even more sensitive. Health-related searches or participation in health forums can expose individuals to unwanted targeting, stigma, or discrimination, thereby deterring users from interacting with relevant content or communities (Bélanger & Crossler. A similar logic applies to environmentally conscious behaviors users concerned with surveillance may avoid joining or engaging in advocacy campaigns if they suspect tracking or profiling.

In summary, privacy concerns significantly impact users’ psychological comfort and their attitudes toward using social media as a medium for health or environmental advocacy. As social media continues to evolve as a tool for public engagement, addressing these concerns becomes crucial to foster participation in socially meaningful conversations.

Credibility

Credibility of an advertisement can be defined as “the extent to which the consumers perceive the claims about the brand/product advertised in the advertisement to be truthful and believable” (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989)^[46]. The medium used for delivery of the information signifies its credibility (Moore & Rodgers, 2005)^[56]. The advertisement’s credibility includes the source that is the company advertising and the content of the advertisement (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). The credibility of the information displayed increases its likelihood of being accepted. Previous literature has positively linked credibility and advertising value and attitude towards advertisements (Ducoffe, 1995^[17]; Brackett and Carr; Arora and Agarwal, 2019)^[38]. (Kumar, Arora, & Agarwal, 2020)^[38]

Credibility refers to the objective and subjective components of the believability of a source or message. Media and advertising credibility can be defined as the extent to which the consumer believes or trusts in the media or advertising claims (Moore & Rodgers, 2005)^[56]. Findings by Johnson and Kaye (2002)^[74] suggested that reliance on traditional sources; political trust and convenience were the best predictors of online media credibility. Moore and Rodgers (2005)^[56] found that the consumers did not feel comfortable about surfing the online advertisements and although as college students they fell into the demographic that shops online the most, they still did not find the internet advertising trustworthy. (Moore & Rodgers, 2005)^[56].

However, perceptions of credibility also differ across demographic and psychographic groups. In the areas of health and environmental communication on social media, how credible users think the information is greatly affects how they evaluate, accept, and respond to the messages they

encounter. Credible content not only fosters positive attitudes toward platforms but also boosts user engagement with issue-based campaigns and advocacy efforts.

Interactivity

Another major crucial factor on online and various digital media platforms like social media is the feature of 'interactivity'. It generally changes the dynamics of communication process and the manner in which information can be shared in the online segment among the different users (Sundar *et al.*, 2010) ^[31]. This technological advancement will play a great role in broadening the horizon of the consumer perception in information processing. Thereby this concept is gaining a predominant position in the recent researches.

In the environmental context, Porter and Donthu observed that platforms with higher levels of interactivity led to stronger engagement in sustainability campaigns, as users felt more agency in message co-creation and distribution. The interactive nature of social media enhances users' engagement and creates a participatory environment that fosters positive attitudes and increases the likelihood of behavioural action (Liu & Shrum; Leung).

Prior Knowledge about Issues

Based on previous research (e.g., Van Overschelde & Healy), it was predicted that participants who used prior knowledge to learn new facts about well-known individuals would demonstrate more learning than participants who learned facts about unfamiliar individuals. Based on previous studies of both mnemonic techniques (e.g., Roediger) and mediated learning, participants who associated the unfamiliar individuals with well-known individuals should also demonstrate more learning than participants who did not form such associations. However, mediated learning is thought to involve multiple processing steps. At encoding, mediated learning entails retrieving the mediator and associating new information with it; at retrieval, mediated learning entails retrieving the mediator and using it as a retrieval cue for the target concept. Additionally, consumers with a high level of environmental knowledge have a much better pro-environmental attitude and have a stronger intent to purchase green products for consumption (Huang *et al.*; Rokicka). (Mohd Suki, 2016) ^[55]. The consumer's knowledge of environmental problems and the existing alternatives and solutions is another factor which has sometimes proved to affect the consumer's behaviour. (Fraj-Andrés, 2007) ^[21]

Behavioural Outcomes

Social media access creates an advantage for organisations to use electronic word of mouth as a means of communication and to create brand value. The potential benefits of using social media platforms in public health protection against pandemic diseases include dissemination of public health interventions, enhanced public awareness, promotion of healthy behavior, improved health outcomes, and provision of health information to the community (Hani Al-Dmour, Salman, Abuhashesh, & Al-Dmour, 2020). The theoretical developments to understand and predict behavioural intentions have largely been promoted by the Theory of Reasoned Action, which builds upon the well-known Theory of Planned Behaviour. The supporters of this theory propose that the decision to perform a certain

behavior is dependent on the norms and attitudes towards the given behaviour. Social norms are predictors of behavioural intentions as they shape the perceptions of an individual to perform a certain behaviour. In particular, behavioural intentions can be altered by changing the normative beliefs towards a particular behaviour, making normative interventions an ideal path towards stimulating individuals to perform such a behaviour. Social norms can be descriptive or injunctive: While descriptive norms indicate perceptions of which behavior is typically prevalent, injunctive norms involve the perceptions of which behavior is typically approved or disapproved. Health-related issues being discussed and propagated on social media platforms have brought some behavioral changes among individuals. Health professionals' motives for health-related social media use were divided into Increasing knowledge, Efficiency, Doctor-patient communication, Marketing, and Communication with colleagues. (Marjolijn L. Antheunis, 2013) ^[49]. Progress towards solving environmental problems is likely to depend on ecologically conscious consumer behavior more than simple environmental concern. From a marketing perspective, the central issue is to understand the impact of environmental issue issue consciousness on environmentally conscious consumer behavior. There are in fact different aspects to understanding environmentally conscious consumer behaviour. First, an individual may display and engage in a number of environmental behaviours. Some individuals choose to engage in as many environmental behaviors as they have the opportunity to; others may choose to perform no environmental behaviors. Engagement in environmental behaviors may require some investment that may be observed initially in terms of time, money and/or physical and mental effort. For example, buying "green" products may cost more; recycling takes time; and in general, most environmental behaviors are at least perceived to be more expensive. Therefore, even those individuals who appear to have positive attitudes toward the environment or environmental behaviors may not always engage in specific environmental behaviors since they may be choosing a portfolio of behaviors based on perceived benefits and costs (Stanley and Lasonde).

Attitude and intention to behave

Attitude. Based on TRA model, attitude is another key factor that influences an individual's intention to engage in a behavior which refers to the individual's positive or negative evaluation of a specific behavior (Ajzen and Fishbein 1986) ^[2]. In this study, attitude refers to an individual's overall evaluation and perception of the behavior of sharing health information on social media. Specifically, attitudes reflect users' perceptions of whether the act of sharing health information is beneficial, interesting, or important, as well as the satisfaction they feel when engaging in such sharing (H.C. Lin *et al.*, 2011) ^[13]. Previous studies have shown that attitudes are effective predictors of behavioral intentions (Bae and Chang 2015; Kabir and Islam) ^[51]. In a similar fashion, attitudes play an important role in influencing individuals' information sharing intentions as well. Specifically, Kim *et al.* (2020) found that people's positive attitudes had a positive influence on their intention to share information. This result was supported in a study of WeChat users' intention to share

health information (X. Wu and Kuang, 2021) ^[108]. (Jia, 2024) ^[33]

The relationship between attitude and intention has been explored from different perspectives, with diverse findings. In relation to brands, for example, Wang A. (2009) ^[98] found that purchase intention was influenced by brand attitude. According to (Polonsky, 2018) ^[67] it is blood donation knowledge, a good predictor of attitude that impacts behavioural intention. In the non-alcoholic beverages industry, (Schivinski, 2015) ^[81] found that brand attitude was the strongest determinant of purchase intention. With social media being mass phenomena with a wide demographic appeal, particularly among Millennials (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) ^[34], it was good to find here that its communications influenced Millennials' blood donation awareness and perception.

Attitude toward Social Media Use and Intention to Behave towards Health issues and Environmental issues.

A significant body of literature grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1986) ^[2] establishes that attitude is a core antecedent of behavioral intention. In the context of environmental communication, positive attitudes toward social media platforms used for environmental messaging have been found to enhance individuals' intentions to engage in sustainable behaviors directly (Meng, 2023) ^[53]. Research on the impact of different types of social networking site use on green consumption found positive associations between active Social networking site use, self-awareness, and green consumption behavior. (Gong, 2023). This study highlights how perceptions of social media content relate to attitudes and intentions towards environmentally responsible practices.

In the health communication domain, studies affirm that a positive attitude toward using social media for health information is significantly associated with higher intentions to adopt health-promoting behaviors. found that users who perceived social media as a reliable source of health knowledge were more likely to intend to act on that information. Zhang *et al.* (2022) ^[119] extended this finding by showing that favorable attitudes toward health-related posts on platforms like WeChat and Facebook significantly predicted behavioral intentions such as healthy eating or preventive care. Moreover, Liu *et al.* confirmed that eHealth literacy and trust in online health influencers positively influenced both attitude and intention to change behavior.

Issue Issue Consciousness

Mediating Role of Health and Environmental Issue issue consciousness

Health and environmental issue issue consciousness are increasingly recognized as critical psychological constructs influencing individual behavior in the context of sustainability and personal well-being. Issue issue consciousness, in this regard, refers to the degree to which individuals are aware of, concerned about, and willing to take responsibility for issues pertaining to health and the environment (Sharma & Jha, 2017) ^[83]. Several studies suggest that while attitude toward social media use for accessing information on such issues forms the initial evaluative judgment, it is the internalization of these concerns manifested as issue issue consciousness that channels this attitude into intention to behave (Nguyen *et al.*; Yadav & Pathak). In essence, an individual may develop

a favorable attitude toward using social media platforms for health or environmental content due to perceived informativeness, credibility, or interactivity; however, such an attitude does not always directly result in intention to act. Issue issue consciousness acts as a motivational filter that transforms passive attitudes into active intentions. For example, health-conscious individuals are more likely to engage in preventive behaviors after being exposed to credible health campaigns on social media, and environmentally conscious users tend to adopt sustainable consumption patterns when inspired by digital content.

Empirical research has supported this mediating role. Yadav and demonstrated in the context of green product adoption that environmental concern significantly mediated the relationship between attitude and purchase intention. Similarly, in health communication, Ajzen *et al.* (1986) ^[2] argued that individual health issue issue consciousness shaped by personal values and knowledge serves as a critical mechanism through which attitudinal favorability leads to behavioral compliance

The role of issue issue consciousness both health and environmental as a mediator between attitudinal dispositions and intention to behave has garnered increasing empirical attention in recent digital behavior literature. Issue issue consciousness, in this context, signifies an individual's cognitive and affective awareness of the consequences of their actions on personal health and environmental sustainability, as well as their sense of moral responsibility to act accordingly.

Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived Behavioral Control Ajzen (1988; 1991) ^[2] originally introduced perceived behavioral control (PBC) as an additional determinant of intent. Perceived behavioral control is added to the TRA framework to reflect an individual's perceptions of control over performance of a focal behavior (Ajzen, 1991) ^[2]. Specifically, PBC specifies that the likelihood of successful behavioral performance will vary as a function of the perceived controllability toward performing a behavior.

The theory of planned behavior was derived from the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1986) ^[2], which assumed that most human social behavior is under volitional control and can be predicted from intentions alone. The construct of perceived behavioural control was added in an attempt to deal with situations in which people may lack complete volitional control over the behavior of interest. when perceived behavioral control is veridical, it provides valuable information about the actual control a person can exercise in the situation and can therefore be used as an additional direct predictor of behavior (Ajzen, I.,1986) ^[2] Perceived behavioral control is the person's belief as to how easy or difficult performance of the behavior is likely to be. According to the theory of planned behavior, among the beliefs that ultimately determine intention and action is a set that deals with the presence or absence of requisite resources and opportunities. The more resources and opportunities individuals think they possess, and the fewer obstacles or impediments they anticipate, the greater should be their perceived control over the behavior. As in the case of behavioral and normative beliefs, it is possible to separate out these control beliefs and treat them as partly independent determinants of behavior. Just as beliefs concerning consequences of the behavior are viewed as

determining attitudes, and normative beliefs are viewed as determining subjective norms, so beliefs about resources and opportunities may be viewed as underlying perceived behavioral control. These beliefs about behavioral control may be based in part on past experience with the behavior, but they will usually also be influenced by second-hand information about the behavior, by the experiences of acquaintances and friends, and by other factors that increase or reduce the perceived difficulty of performing the behavior in question. The construct of perceived behavioral control (PBC) has been a focal point in understanding human judgment and behavior, attracting extensive attention from researchers (Averill, Janis & Mann, Langer, Rothbaum, Weisz, & Snyder). Bandura and colleagues (Bandura, Adams, & Beyer, Bandura, Adams, Hardy, & Howells,) further articulated that an individual's confidence in their ability to execute a behaviour termed self-efficacy strongly influences behavioral outcomes. Building on these insights, Ajzen (1986) ^[2] incorporated PBC into the Theory of Planned Behavior to address scenarios where behaviors are not fully under volitional control. When PBC accurately reflects actual control ("veridical perceived behavioral control"), it contributes directly to behavior prediction, alongside intentions (Ajzen, 1991, 2002) ^[3]. PBC encompasses both internal factors, such as skills and self-confidence, and external constraints, including situational barriers (Ajzen, 2002) ^[2]. Empirical studies highlight that while external barriers like price and availability influence PBC (Magnusson, Arvola, Koivisto Hursti, Åberg, & Sjöden), internal consumer responses like anticipated pleasure or disappointment are also critical (Kidwell & Jewell, Grimmer & Miles).

Subjective norms

Subjective norms are described as the feelings of social pressure from others that are important to a person's performance in some way (Ajzen I. , 1991) ^[3] and they capture individuals' feelings from social pressure regarding certain behaviours. Various studies have noted that subjective norm is a significant variable that positively influences intentions to purchase organic food (Dean *et al.*), to visit green hotels and to participate in environmentally friendly consumption (Khare, 2015; Sun *et al.*, 2017; Javed *et al.*, 2019) ^[31]. In Kelman's theory perspective, normative influence is associated with compliance processes (Lee & Hong, 2016) ^[13]. Subjective norms refer to an individual's perception of social pressure to engage or not engage in a specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991) ^[3]. Rooted in the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), subjective norms represent external influences namely, the expectations of significant others such as family members, peers, or colleagues that affect one's behavioral intentions (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) ^[2]. In the context of health and environmental issues discussed on social media, subjective norms have been identified as an important determinant of intentions to engage with relevant content and behaviors. This is because individuals often look to social referent such as friends, celebrities, or online communities for cues about acceptable and valued actions (Sun & Wang, 2020) ^[90]. When these referents endorse health-conscious or environmentally responsible behavior, users are more likely to follow suit to maintain social harmony or improve social image (Peslak, Ceccucci, & Sendall, Lee & Hong, 2016) ^[13].

Attitude toward Social Media Use and Intention to Behave: with the Role of Issue consciousness and Perceived Behavioral Control

The relationship between attitude toward using social media and intention to behave in both health and environmental contexts is well-established in behavioral literature, particularly under the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) ^[3]. Attitude, defined as an individual's favorable or unfavorable evaluation of performing a behavior, plays a critical role in predicting the intention to engage in that behavior. In the digital era, individuals' attitudes toward using social media as a source of health or environmental information significantly shape their behavioral intentions to act upon such issues. In health-related contexts, users who perceive social media content as trustworthy and informative develop positive attitudes that directly influence their intentions to adopt healthy behaviors. For example, (Liu *et al.*) found that trust in online health information and eHealth literacy significantly influenced users' intentions to change behavior through a positive attitude toward digital health platforms. Similarly, Zhang *et al.* (2022) ^[119] reported that attitude toward the perceived effectiveness of social media campaigns during COVID-19 predicted individuals' intention to follow recommended public health behaviors. In environmental communication, similar findings prevail. Alamsyah *et al.* and Chen and Lin (2023) ^[53] highlighted that attitudes shaped by exposure to credible and persuasive environmental content on social media lead to higher intentions to engage in sustainable consumption and pro-environmental actions. Liobikienė and Poškus also emphasized that favorable attitudes toward environmental causes, often driven by social media campaigns, significantly predict individual intention to behave in environmentally responsible ways and Lin (2013) ^[11] found that individuals with higher levels of health issue issue consciousness are more likely to form strong intentions to engage in preventive or corrective health behaviors. In the environmental domain, environmental issue issue consciousness has been shown to be a powerful predictor of sustainable behavioral intention, independent of attitude or social norms (Yadav & Pathak).

Based on the literature provided above, the proposed model aims to examine how social media usage characteristics and psychosocial factors influence individuals' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward health and environmental issues. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) ^[3] and supplemented by elements from the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) ^[15], the framework combines technological, social, and psychological factors to explain the behavioral dynamics of social media users. Hence, based on the theoretical inputs and empirical arguments discussed above, the conceptualized research model has been schematically summarized and presented in Figure 2.1. The framework explains that consumer behavior intention to behave towards issues is an outcome of consumers' interface with social media and Subjective norms. Moreover, the Attitude toward the use of social media is influenced by Perceived Usefulness, Privacy Concerns, Informativeness, Credibility, and Interactivity. Issue issue consciousness mediates the effect of attitudes towards the use of social media and intention to behave. The framework predicts the effects of prior knowledge of issues on attitudes toward the use of

social media. The framework predicts the effects of perceived behavioral control and subjective norms on

intention to behave towards issues.

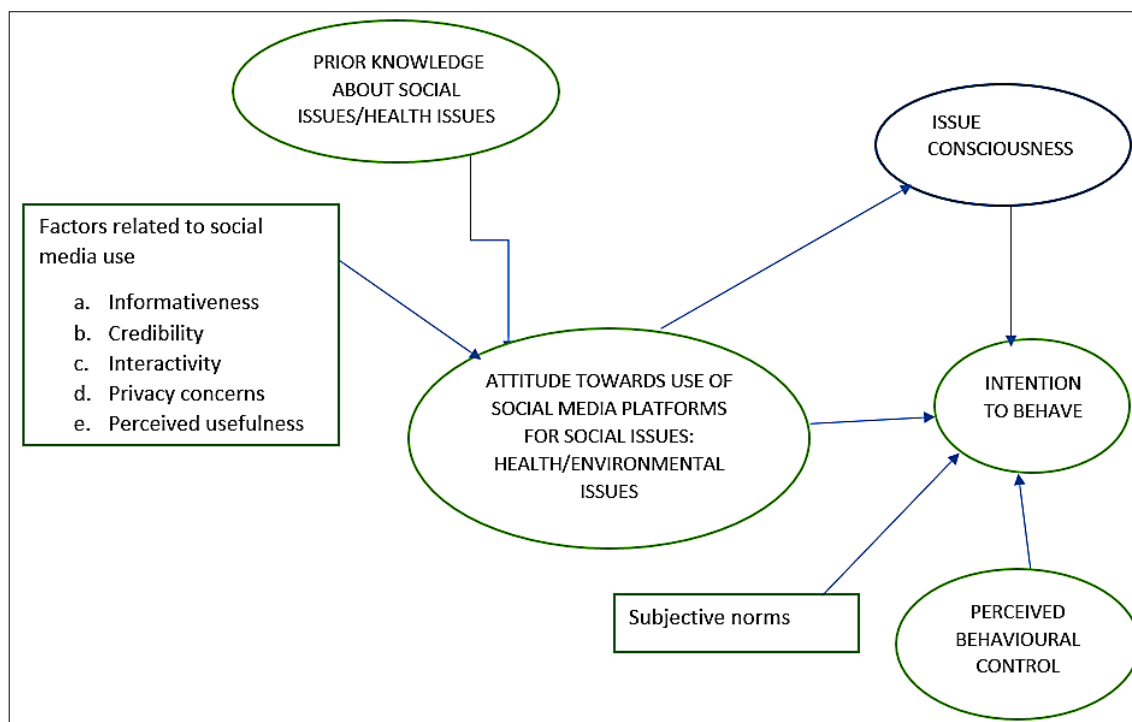


Fig 2.1: Proposed model

The proposed model seeks to examine the influence of social media usage characteristics and psychosocial factors on individuals' attitudes and behavioral intentions toward health and environmental issues. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) [3] and supplemented by elements from the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989), the framework integrates technological, social, and psychological antecedents to explain the behavioral dynamics of social media users.

At the heart of the model lies attitude toward the use of social media marketing for health and environmental issues, which is conceptualized as a central mediator between key antecedents and intention to behave. The model includes five functional characteristics of social media: perceived usefulness, informativeness, credibility, interactivity, and privacy concerns as primary antecedents influencing user attitude. These constructs are drawn from prior research in digital marketing and health/environmental communication and are hypothesized to affect users' attitudes positively. In addition to platform-related attributes, the model incorporates social influence factors such as subjective norms and prior knowledge about health/environmental issues, both of which are posited to shape attitudes toward social media usage. The rationale is that individuals are more likely to form favourable attitudes when influenced by their social circles and when they possess relevant contextual knowledge.

In summary, the model posits a multidimensional and integrative pathway, wherein social media characteristics, social influences, and personal issue issue consciousness jointly contribute to attitude formation, which in turn, along with perceived behavioral control, drives the intention to behave responsibly toward health and environmental concerns.

Although prior studies have extensively investigated the role of social media in influencing user behavior, a notable gap exists in understanding how internal psychological constructs such as health and environmental issue issue consciousness mediate the effect of social media attitudes on behavioral intentions. Furthermore, perceived behavioral control particularly in digital contexts remains underexplored, and the dual focus on both health and environmental issues via social media is rare in the Indian academic landscape. This study addresses these gaps by proposing an integrated model that considers both cognitive and contextual variables.

Conclusions

Social media is an increasingly popular and accessible way to gather and share health-related and environment-related information. It can be concluded that an individual can be influential, active, and socially connected on social media. They can thus be receptive and interactive on social media, building positive attitudes and a willingness to participate in health and environmental issues. Whilst some users will not be comfortable relying on virtual sources for information, others may prefer them, particularly in cases involving chronic or highly personal health issues or environmental concerns. While social media communications about issues did not directly influence attitudes, they indirectly did so by creating awareness, which was a significant driver of perceptions, motivations, and attitudes towards issues. When a truly successful health intervention goes viral, its impact could surprise us all. Our findings suggest that the use of social media platforms can positively influence awareness of public health behavioural changes and public protection against health issues. Social media platforms can be used as valuable tools to increase public health awareness through the dissemination of brief messages to targeted

populations. (Arora, 2019)^[38]. Meng *et al.* (2023)^[53] found that exposure to environmental information on social media platforms like WeChat and Facebook fosters positive attitudes towards environmental protection and enhances behavioral intentions related to climate action, recycling, and energy conservation. These findings align with broader literature emphasizing that environmental awareness shaped and sustained via social media forms the necessary foundation for translating attitude into action (Zhang *et al.*, 2022)^[112].

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