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# The Influence of Social Media on Green Consumer Awareness: An Analysis Based on Consumer Interaction and Information Acquisition

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**Abstract:** This paper explores the concept of green consumption, the current status and trends of the market, as well as the crucial role of social media in spreading awareness of green consumption, shaping consumer attitudes, and influencing consumer choices. Green consumption is defined as a consumption pattern that considers environmental, social, and economic benefits, emphasizing consumers' choices of environmentally friendly products and services, as well as practices in lifecycle management and resource recycling. Social media, as a powerful tool for disseminating the concept of green consumption, with its global coverage, real-time interaction, and high user engagement, effectively promotes the popularization of green consumption awareness. Overall, social media plays an important role in promoting a culture of green consumption and facilitating the transition to sustainable consumption patterns.

**Keywords:** Green consumption, Consumer attitudes, Social media.

## 1. Introduction

Green consumption is an important support for achieving high-quality development and a necessity for building a better life while achieving dual carbon goals [1]. Against the backdrop of increasingly prominent global environmental issues, green consumption, as an important path to achieving sustainable economic and social development, is gradually becoming the focus of public attention. Social media has become an indispensable part of modern society, exerting a profound influence on people's consumption concepts and behaviors. With the rise of green consumption awareness, studying how social media influences people's views and choices of environmentally friendly products and services is of great theoretical and practical significance. This paper aims to reveal the profound impact of social media on promoting green consumption and constructing sustainable consumption patterns, providing theoretical references and practical insights for relevant policy formulation, corporate marketing strategies, and social education activities.

## 2. Concept of Green Consumption

### 2.1. Definition and Connotation of Green Consumption

The new concept of green consumption is guided by an ecological rational value system, embodying the concepts of consumption ecology, production ecology, and practical ecological ideas, and containing the value concept of the global community of life [2]. As a new consumption concept and practice, its core lies in advocating that consumer, in their daily shopping and service enjoyment processes, consider the impact on the environment, society, and economy, and choose products and services that are environmentally friendly, in line with sustainable development principles, and efficiently utilize resources. Environmentally friendly products such as solar water heaters, LED energy-saving lamps, and biodegradable plastic products are among the core aspects of green consumption, typically characterized by low carbon emissions, energy saving, water saving, non-toxicity, harmlessness, and degradability. This consumption model focuses on the quality and functionality of products themselves, as well as the environmental impact of their production processes and their contributions to sustainable development for future generations.

Within the connotation of green consumption, sustainable development implies that consumers, while meeting current needs, strive to achieve "intergenerational equity," considering the protection and utilization of future resources. For example, purchasing furniture with a long usage cycle, easy maintenance, and recyclable materials instead of disposable or short-lived fast-moving consumer goods. The connotation of green consumption also includes reusing waste as new resources, thereby reducing resource waste and environmental burdens. For instance, consumers participate in clothing recycling projects, allowing discarded clothing to be reused or regenerated. By purchasing environmentally friendly products and supporting sustainable development-oriented companies and brands, consumers can actively participate in the practice of green consumption, contributing to environmental protection and economic development.

### 2.2. Market Status and Trends

From food and beverages, personal care products to home goods, energy solutions, and more, a vibrant and comprehensive green consumption ecosystem has emerged, reflecting consumers' deep concern and pursuit of environmentally friendly and healthy lifestyles. The demand for eco-friendly products and services continues to grow, with consumers placing increasing emphasis on environmentally friendly, healthy, and safe products, driving the continuous growth of the green consumption market. The structure of the consumer market is gradually diversifying, with an increasing number of consumers considering the environmental attributes of products as important factors, even placing them on equal footing with price and performance during the shopping process. With the rise in environmental awareness and changes in consumer preferences, consumers'

expectations for green products are no longer limited to their environmental qualities but extend to personalized and customized needs, while also showcasing innovative design and unique value. The demand for green products also emphasizes personalization, customization, and innovation.

# 3. Social Media's Impact on the Dissemination of Green Consumption Awareness

## 3.1. The Influence of Social Media Platforms

With its global coverage and massive user base, social media provides an immensely vast stage for the dissemination of green consumption awareness. The extensive coverage and large number of users on social media platforms create ample space for the spread of green consumption awareness. People are beginning to pay attention to environmental protection and sustainability when making purchases, and green consumption is gradually becoming a choice for consumers, with social media emerging as an important platform for the dissemination of green consumption [3]. Major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, among others, have billions of users who rapidly spread the concept of green consumption through sharing, liking, commenting, and other means, creating a vast information dissemination network that reaches every corner of the globe. Whether it's the sharing of eco-friendly creative lifestyles on platforms like TikTok that appeal to young people or the in-depth discussions on green economics by professionals on LinkedIn, social media plays a positive role in shaping and spreading green consumption awareness.

Compared to traditional media, social media has significant advantages in terms of information dissemination speed, interactivity, and user engagement. A post about eco-friendly products or a video about green lifestyles can quickly attract user attention in a short period. A tweet or video about eco-friendly products can be retweeted and circulated by tens of thousands or even millions of users in a short time, sparking lively discussions and creating a powerful social influence.

The instant messaging feature of social media allows consumers to engage in real-time conversations with environmental organizations, brands, or industry experts, where they can ask questions, share experiences, or express opinions about green consumption-related issues. Many environmental organizations and advocates use social media platforms to promote environmental activities and information, such as discussion areas about green living in Facebook groups, hashtags like #ZeroWaste on Instagram, or environmental-themed live lectures on YouTube, attracting more attention and participation. Consumers can learn about these activities through social media and participate, thereby enhancing their sense of identification and participation in green consumption. Overall, social media, with its wide coverage, rapid information dissemination, and user interaction, enables environmental organizations to plan and promote various online and offline activities, such as environmental knowledge competitions, sharing of green product trials, and recruitment for environmental charity events, encouraging consumers to actively participate.

## 3.2. Characteristics of User Groups

During the research, it was also found that there is a certain relationship between green consumption awareness and factors such as gender, age, education level, and occupation [5]. Regarding age, for example, the Z generation and Millennials, these age groups have grown up in the digital age, with a generally high level of digital literacy and proficiency in using social media. They are adept at utilizing various functions of social media, such as following official accounts related to environmental protection, subscribing to push notifications on environmental themes, participating in topic discussions, and sharing green consumption information, efficiently receiving and disseminating information on green consumption. On the other hand, older age groups tend to prefer receiving structured and detailed textual information, such as from television, newspapers, magazines, or through trusted friends, and authoritative media channels. Therefore, their use of social media is less frequent, and their level of awareness of environmental issues is relatively lower.

In terms of gender, women show a higher level of interest in green consumption on social media, which is closely related to their general concern for the environment, health, and quality of life. Women typically care more about environmental and health issues, and their choice of green products tends to consider their environmental friendliness and safety. When selecting green products, they may scrutinize environmental certifications, raw material sources, production processes, packaging materials, and other factors more carefully. Female users on social media are more inclined to share and spread emotionally resonant, storytelling, and educational content. They may prefer to read and share firsthand experiences of green lifestyles, successful cases of environmental actions, household eco-tips, etc. In contrast, male users are relatively less involved in green consumption topics and may focus more on other content areas. This doesn't mean they completely ignore environmental issues; rather, their focus and interaction behavior on social media may concentrate more on areas like technology, sports, finance, entertainment, etc. Male users on social media may prefer data-driven, logically clear, problem-solving oriented content. They may be more interested in hardcore information such as green technology, environmental innovation, policy interpretation, etc., and may respond more positively to content that directly guides action and quantifies environmental benefits.

Additionally, individuals with a good education generally have a more acute awareness of environmental issues and usually possess higher environmental consciousness and rational consumption concepts. They have a deeper understanding and awareness of environmental protection and sustainable development, and in the process of consumer decision-making, they tend to conduct rational evaluations and assessments, which helps them distinguish authenticity from falsehood when facing various "green" claims in the market, making wiser choices. Therefore, users with higher education levels are more active in discussions and interactions related to green consumption, and they also show a higher level of interest in environmental products and services. They are willing to spend time and effort to find, compare, and purchase products that meet environmental standards, use renewable materials, have low energy consumption, simple packaging, or have certification labels. Simultaneously, they show a strong interest in services that offer environmental solutions (such as the sharing economy, circular economy models, carbon footprint offsetting services, etc.).

Many environmental products, due to their adoption of more advanced production processes, high-quality

environmental materials, and strict environmental certification standards, have relatively higher costs. However, middle to high-income consumers is willing to pay for the environmental benefits and potential long-term value they bring. Middle to high-income groups have more abundant economic resources, enabling them to afford the prices of green products that may be higher than traditional products and services. They have more economic capacity to purchase environmental products and enjoy environmental services, while also placing more emphasis on quality of life and a healthy environment. Therefore, among users who are interested in green consumption on social media, middle to high-income groups account for a large proportion, and their attitudes and behaviors towards green consumption are more positive. Their purchasing preferences drive companies to develop more green products, promote supply chain adjustments towards more environmentally friendly directions, and accelerate the development of the green industry. They may also be more willing to pay for environmental services, such as subscribing to organic food delivery, participating in green tourism projects, purchasing carbon offsetting services, etc., to comprehensively achieve a green transformation in their personal lives.

# 4. Social Media Interactions and Their Influence on Green Consumption Attitudes

## 4.1. Forms of Social Media Interactions

Green consumption content with a large number of likes, such as "10 Simple Steps to Achieve Home Energy Efficiency" or "Top 10 Most Innovative Green Products Globally," not only attracts more user attention but may also trigger recommendations from social media algorithms, further expanding its influence. When users see posts, images, videos, or articles related to green consumption, their liking behavior reflects affirmation of environmental concepts, green lifestyles, or eco-friendly products. Users may like an article that introduces how to make a zero-waste lunch or a picture showcasing a new biodegradable packaging design from an eco-friendly brand.

Comments are another important form of social media interaction. Users may comment, "I'm also trying to reduce single-use plastics, and this reusable silicone straw is really useful!" or ask questions like, "Is this brand's environmental statement trustworthy? Does it have certification from authoritative institutions?" Regarding green consumption topics, user comments often include opinions and suggestions on eco-friendly products, sustainable development, and more. These comments not only deepen other users' understanding of green consumption but also provide a platform for sharing experiences, acquiring new knowledge, and solving problems.

Sharing is the most influential form of interaction on social media. For example, a user might share an article exposing environmental pollution issues in a certain industry on their social media profile, urging everyone to pay attention and take action. By doing so, users not only expand the influence of green consumption awareness but also encourage more people to participate in discussions and attention to green consumption topics. Sharing a poster for a local environmental organization's waste sorting seminar and inviting friends to join reflects not only the user's own positive attitude towards green consumption but also stimulates environmental awareness among others in their social circle.

## 4.2. Shaping Green Consumption Attitudes through Social Media

Images, with their clear visual appeal, can quickly capture users' attention and vividly showcase the appearance, materials, design details, and usage scenarios of eco-friendly products. As a straightforward communication method, images are widely used on social media and play an important role in shaping consumers' attitudes and views towards eco-friendly products. For instance, a photo displaying a set of bamboo utensils can directly demonstrate its natural materials, minimalist design, and environmental advantages compared to traditional plastic utensils, giving consumers an instant intuitive understanding of the product's eco-friendly characteristics. Images of eco-friendly products often use specific photography techniques, color schemes, or iconography to highlight their environmental attributes, such as using eco-friendly materials, reducing packaging, promoting recyclability, etc. They may also utilize colors symbolizing environmentalism (like green, blue) and internationally recognized eco-labels (such as EU Ecolabel, ENERGY STAR logo) to reinforce the product's environmental credentials. Creative images of eco-friendly products can evoke emotional responses from consumers. For example, an artistic installation depicting revitalized discarded items can inspire appreciation for recycling and waste reduction, fostering a positive attitude towards similar eco-friendly products.

Videos, compared to images, can dynamically and three-dimensionally showcase the characteristics and usage processes of eco-friendly products, helping consumers fully understand the product's features, manufacturing processes, and environmental benefits. The use of videos on social media is also increasing and similarly plays a significant role in shaping consumers' attitudes and views towards eco-friendly products. For example, a video about a solar-powered charging backpack can demonstrate in detail how it absorbs sunlight through built-in solar panels and converts it into electricity to charge electronic devices, allowing consumers to visually experience the product's innovative environmental technology and practical value. Video demonstrations of eco-friendly products can vividly showcase their usage effects, environmental principles, and differences from traditional products, deepening consumers' awareness and understanding of eco-friendly products through visual and auditory stimulation. For instance, a short film narrating how a brand collaborates with the local community to create fashionable tote bags from discarded fishing nets not only showcases the product's unique aesthetics but also conveys the brand's commitment to marine conservation and the circular economy, resonating deeply with consumers in terms of both the product and its environmental ideology. Users on short video platforms can also use AR features to "try on" sportswear made from recycled plastic bottle fibers, experiencing firsthand its comfort and fashion appeal, thereby increasing acceptance of products made from recycled materials.

Apart from images and videos, eco-friendly product-related news published by authoritative media can objectively and comprehensively introduce information such as new product releases, industry trends, policies, scientific breakthroughs, etc., influencing consumers' attitudes towards green consumption. Lengthy feature articles or series reports can delve into the core technology and design concepts of eco-friendly products, revealing their specific contributions to

reducing environmental pollution, conserving resources, and promoting the circular economy, guiding consumers to understand the importance of green consumption from a macro perspective. Through reading this content, consumers learn about the advantages and characteristics of eco-friendly products, forming their cognitive understanding and attitudes towards these products. Furthermore, special articles and discussions on social media can also explore market conditions, development trends, etc., related to eco-friendly products. Users exchange viewpoints, question information, and share knowledge, leading to rich intellectual exchanges, such as participating in "plastic-free challenges," promoting second-hand trading, sharing energy-saving tips, etc. These highly interactive contents inspire consumers' enthusiasm for participation, further enhancing their identification with eco-friendly products and willingness to purchase. Consumers are becoming increasingly concerned that their current consumption practices may have a negative impact on the environment, thereby affecting their willingness to make green purchases.

# 5. Social Media Information Acquisition and Its Impact on Green Consumption Choices

## 5.1. Avenues of Information Acquisition

Official brand accounts typically release the latest information on green products, environmental policies, and activities. They share positive feedback and case stories from consumers or partners using green products. Consumers can thus stay informed about the newest options in eco-friendly products, keeping up with the green consumption trend. Through this information, consumers also gain insights into the brand's environmental philosophy, product features, and their impact on the environment. Especially during specific holidays or themed events related to green consumption, such as Earth Day or World Environment Day, promotions on green products can motivate consumers to try or upgrade to more eco-friendly products. This reduces the barrier to entry for green consumption, influencing their attitudes and choices towards green consumption.

On community forums, consumers can interact and exchange information with other users interested in green consumption. They share user experiences, product reviews, purchasing recommendations, and more. Discussions cover topics like identifying genuine green products, avoiding greenwashing, and making optimal choices within budget constraints, providing valuable practical experiences for other consumers. Community forums gather numerous users interested in green consumption from diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, enriching discussions and enabling consumers to evaluate green products and consumption behaviors from multiple perspectives. Participating in community forums dedicated to specific regions or themes (such as urban greening, organic farming, energy-saving renovations, etc.) allows consumers to access real feedback and opinions from other users, understanding the pros and cons of different green products.

Apart from the aforementioned methods, consumers can acquire information on green consumption through browsing dedicated pages and participating in promotional activities. Dedicated pages often showcase various information related to green consumption, including environmental knowledge dissemination, categorizing green products, industry trends, policy interpretations, expert opinions, user reviews, etc. These pages also list detailed information about various green products, including product names, images, key features, environmental certifications, prices, and more, facilitating horizontal comparisons for consumers. This integrated approach provides consumers with a convenient one-stop information platform, saving them time from searching across the internet and helping them systematically understand the overall landscape and latest developments in green consumption.

## 5.2. Authenticity and Credibility of Information on Social Media

On social media, green consumption information may be subject to false advertising. Some businesses or individuals, aiming to boost product sales, might exaggerate the environmental attributes of their products, overstating their performance in energy efficiency, emissions reduction, recycling, biodegradability, etc. For instance, they may claim that a product uses 100% renewable materials, while only some components are made from recycled resources, leading consumers to make misleading choices regarding eco-friendly products. Some businesses or individuals might exaggerate the advantages of green products, concealing their drawbacks or actual conditions, and promote them through social media. For example, they might claim that a product has extremely high energy efficiency but fail to provide authoritative test reports to confirm it. Some promotional language uses vague and general terms to describe the environmental characteristics of products, intentionally confusing consumers. For instance, using terms like "eco-friendly" or "green-certified" without specifying the specific environmental standards followed or the certifications obtained from authoritative institutions. Information dissemination on social media platforms is relatively free, and the review mechanisms may not be as strict as traditional media, making it easier for false or misleading information to spread. Consumers find it difficult to distinguish between true and false information in the vast sea of information. If consumers do not verify and discern adequately, they may be influenced by false advertising, leading to the selection of products that do not meet actual environmental standards, thus affecting the essence of green consumption.

Additionally, information on green consumption on social media may suffer from unclear or unreliable sources. Some information about green consumption may come from anonymous or non-authenticated users. The identities of these users are difficult to verify, and the information they provide lacks endorsement from personal or organizational credibility, reducing the credibility of the information. Some information may come from anonymous users, non-authoritative institutions, or unverified sources. These institutions may lack the necessary professional knowledge, technical support, and data backing. The environmental product recommendations, environmental knowledge dissemination, and other content they publish may have deviations or errors. Consumers find it challenging to judge the authenticity and credibility of this information, thus affecting their understanding and selection of green consumption information. Some rumors, gossip, or one-sided views about green consumption may be widely spread as facts, such as exaggeration or belittlement of the effectiveness of certain eco-friendly products, misinterpretation of environmental policies, etc. Some seemingly neutral green consumption information may be

influenced by commercial interests, such as embedded advertisements or promotional articles. However, they may actually serve the marketing purposes of specific brands, raising questions about their objectivity and impartiality. Many professional organizations or websites provide rigorously selected and professionally evaluated green consumption recommendations and product evaluations, such as Greenpeace, Good on You, etc. Consumers can refer to these professional resources to make more scientifically informed green consumption decisions.

# 6. Role of Social Media in Advocating Green Consumption

## 6.1. Authenticity and Credibility of Information on Social Media

Enterprises advertise green consumption-related content on social media platforms to reach a wider audience and increase awareness about eco-friendly products. Placing advertisements on social media platforms' eco-themed pages, channels, or hashtags such as Facebook's "Green Living" group or Instagram's "#sustainableliving" page helps in popularizing green consumption awareness. Leveraging the user data analytics capabilities of social media platforms, enterprises can accurately target users interested in green consumption based on their age, gender, location, interests, shopping behaviors, etc., and deliver tailored green consumption ads to them. Moreover, targeting different social media platforms and user groups allows companies to adopt diverse ad formats and content. They can use high-resolution, engaging images to showcase the appearance, functionality, and usage scenarios of eco-friendly products, effectively conveying the products' environmental value and aesthetic appeal. Alternatively, creating a short film depicting how a consumer significantly reduced household energy consumption and improved quality of life by using a certain energy-saving appliance can also be impactful. Introducing an interactive "Check Your Green Living Index" quiz where users answer questions about eco-friendly habits, and the system generates personalized environmental suggestions and matches with green product recommendations is another effective strategy.

## 6.2. Social Media Influence on Policies

As a channel for rapid information dissemination, social media platforms play a crucial role in promoting green consumption policies by timely publishing and updating various environmental information, research reports, and policy interpretations. Through information dissemination and public opinion guidance on social media platforms, successful green consumption cases, corporate green transformation stories, and individual or community environmental practices can be shared. The interactive nature of social media allows users to directly comment, ask questions, or share personal insights on environmental content, leading to lively discussions surrounding green consumption policies and enhancing awareness and understanding of environmental policies. For example, environmental organizations or public welfare institutions can use social media to publish environmental information, case analyses, and green consumption practices. Furthermore, the voices of renowned environmentalists, experts, scholars, industry leaders on social media, along with the active participation in various environmental-themed communities, can strongly guide public opinion, strengthen the social influence of green consumption policies, spark user discussions and reflections, thus promoting public attention and support for environmental policies.

# 7. Conclusion

Through a comprehensive analysis of the impact of social media on promoting green consumption, it is evident that green consumption, as a consumption model that considers environmental, social, and economic values, is experiencing vibrant growth in the market. Social media, as a powerful communication tool, plays an irreplaceable role in promoting awareness of green consumption, shaping consumer attitudes, influencing consumption choices and policy directions, and has an important role in promoting awareness of green consumption. However, it also faces challenges such as information asymmetry and authenticity issues, which require joint efforts from consumers and relevant institutions to address.

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