

## **Informational Depth and Evidence-Based Communication by Influencers as Drivers of Knowledge Credibility: Implications for Informed Sustainable Purchase Decisions**

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### **Abstract**

Sustainability influencers increasingly share detailed, fact-based, and research-supported content rather than simple promotional messages. Such informational depth and use of verified evidence may enhance followers' perception of the influencer's knowledge credibility. This credibility can influence followers' ability to make informed sustainable purchase decisions and increase their confidence in selecting sustainable brands. This study examines how informational depth and evidence-based communication influence perceived knowledge credibility, which subsequently affects informed purchase decisions and confidence in brand selection. Drawing on source credibility theory and information processing theory, the study adopts a quantitative empirical research design. Primary data are proposed to be collected from social media users exposed to educational sustainability content. Data analysis will be conducted using SPSS through reliability testing, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. The study contributes to influencer marketing and sustainability literature by explaining how educational communication fosters informed sustainable consumption.

**Keywords:** Informational Depth; Evidence-Based Communication; Knowledge Credibility; Informed Purchase; Sustainable Brands

### **Introduction**

Influencer marketing in sustainability has evolved beyond simple endorsements to include educational and fact-based communication. Many influencers now explain environmental issues using statistics, research findings, certifications, and verified sources. This shift reflects followers' increasing demand for credible and informative sustainability content.

Source credibility theory (Hovland & Weiss, 1951) explains that messages from knowledgeable and credible sources are more persuasive. When influencers provide detailed sustainability information and cite evidence, followers perceive them as knowledgeable authorities.

Information processing theory suggests that individuals rely on credible information to make complex decisions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Sustainable purchases often involve evaluating environmental claims, certifications, and product impact, requiring informed decision-making.

Perceived knowledge credibility refers to followers' belief that an influencer possesses accurate and reliable knowledge. This perception can influence two important outcomes: informed sustainable purchase decisions and confidence in choosing sustainable brands.

Despite the rise of educational influencer content, limited research has examined how informational depth and evidence-based communication contribute to knowledge credibility and sustainable consumption outcomes. This study addresses this gap.

## **Literature Review**

### **Depth of Sustainability Information Provided by Influencer**

Informational depth refers to the extent to which influencers provide detailed explanations, facts, and educational content regarding sustainability. Lou and Yuan (2019) emphasized that informative content increases follower trust and engagement. Detailed explanations reduce ambiguity and help followers understand complex environmental issues.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) highlighted that social media allows influencers to present long-form educational content through videos, blogs, and reels. Such content enhances cognitive engagement and learning.

White et al. (2019) argued that consumers require clear and detailed sustainability information to change their behavior. Influencers who explain environmental impact, product life cycles, and eco-certifications provide followers with the necessary knowledge for informed decision-making.

### **Use of Evidence and Verified Sources in Influencer Posts**

Evidence-based communication involves referencing research, certifications, reports, and factual data. Hovland and Weiss (1951) demonstrated that source credibility increases when messages are supported by evidence.

Evans et al. (2017) noted that transparency and evidence enhance trust in influencer communication. When influencers cite studies or show product certifications, followers perceive the information as reliable.

Chen and Chang (2013) found that verified environmental claims reduce skepticism and increase consumer trust. Evidence-based posts therefore enhance credibility and reduce perceptions of greenwashing.

### **Perceived Knowledge Credibility of Influencer**

Knowledge credibility reflects the perception that the influencer is knowledgeable and reliable. Ohanian (1990) emphasized that expertise is a key dimension of source credibility. Influencers who consistently share factual information are perceived as experts.

Sokolova and Kefi (2020) found that perceived expertise enhances follower confidence in influencer recommendations.

### **Informed Sustainable Purchase Decision**

Informed purchase decisions involve evaluating product information before buying. Joshi and Rahman (2015) identified knowledge as a critical factor influencing green purchase behavior.

When followers perceive influencers as knowledgeable, they rely on their information to make informed sustainable choices.

### **Confidence in Choosing Sustainable Brands**

Confidence refers to certainty in decision-making. Morgan and Hunt (1994) argued that credibility enhances decision confidence. Knowledgeable influencers therefore increase followers' confidence in selecting sustainable brands.

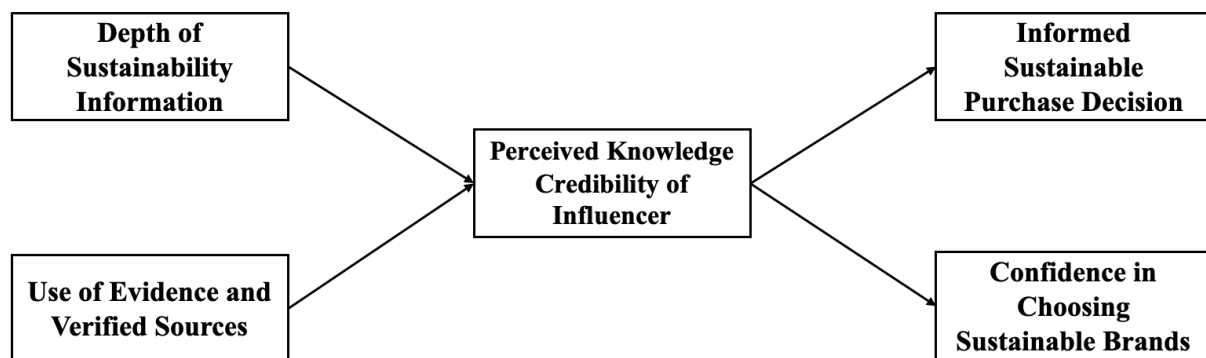
## Research Gap

Although informational and evidence-based communication are common in sustainability influencer content, limited studies integrate these factors with perceived knowledge credibility to explain informed purchase decisions and brand confidence. This study fills this gap.

## Conceptual Framework

The framework proposes that informational depth and evidence-based communication positively influence perceived knowledge credibility, which in turn influences informed sustainable purchase decisions and confidence in choosing sustainable brands.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



## Research Methodology

### Research Design

The study adopts a quantitative empirical research design based on primary data collection.

### Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of informational depth on perceived knowledge credibility

- To examine the impact of evidence-based communication on perceived knowledge credibility
- To analyze the effect of knowledge credibility on informed purchase decisions
- To analyze the effect of knowledge credibility on confidence in choosing sustainable brands

### **Hypotheses**

- H1: Informational depth has a significant positive impact on perceived knowledge credibility.
- H2: Use of evidence and verified sources has a significant positive impact on perceived knowledge credibility.
- H3: Perceived knowledge credibility has a significant positive impact on informed sustainable purchase decision.
- H4: Perceived knowledge credibility has a significant positive impact on confidence in choosing sustainable brands.

### **Sample and Data Collection**

Primary data will be collected from social media users exposed to educational sustainability influencer content using a structured questionnaire.

### **Measurement Instruments**

Measurement scales will be adapted from established studies related to source credibility, knowledge perception, and sustainable behavior.

### **Data Analysis**

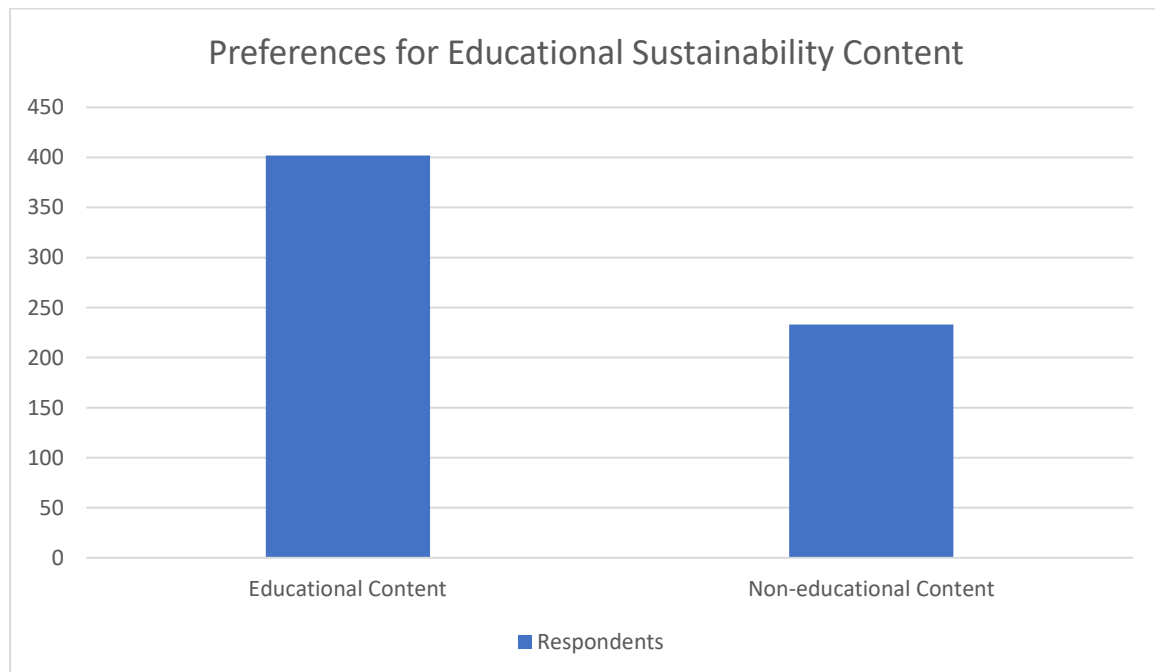
All responses were coded and analyzed using SPSS (Version 26). Data were screened for missing values, outliers, and normality. Reliability analysis, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regression analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses (Hair et al., 2019; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

## Demographic Profile of Respondents

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 635)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	340	53.5%
	Female	295	46.5%
Age	18–25 years	258	40.6%
	26–35 years	250	39.4%
	Above 35 years	127	20.0%
Prefer Educational Content	Yes	402	63.3%
	No	233	36.7%

**Figure 2: Bar Graph Showing Preference for Educational Sustainability Content**



This bar graph shows that most respondents prefer educational and fact-based sustainability posts from influencers.

## Reliability Analysis

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Informational Depth	0.89
Evidence-Based Communication	0.88
Knowledge Credibility	0.92
Informed Purchase Decision	0.90
Brand Selection Confidence	0.91

## Correlation Matrix

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Informational Depth	1				
2. Evidence Use	0.68**	1			
3. Knowledge Credibility	0.75**	0.73**	1		
4. Informed Decision	0.64**	0.62**	0.78**	1	
5. Brand Confidence	0.61**	0.60**	0.76**	0.72**	1

**p < 0.01**

## Regression Analysis

**Table 4: Regression Results (Dependent Variable: Knowledge Credibility)**

Predictor	$\beta$	p-value
Informational Depth	0.36	<0.001

Predictor	$\beta$	p-value
Evidence-Based Communication	0.39	<0.001
R <sup>2</sup>	0.67	

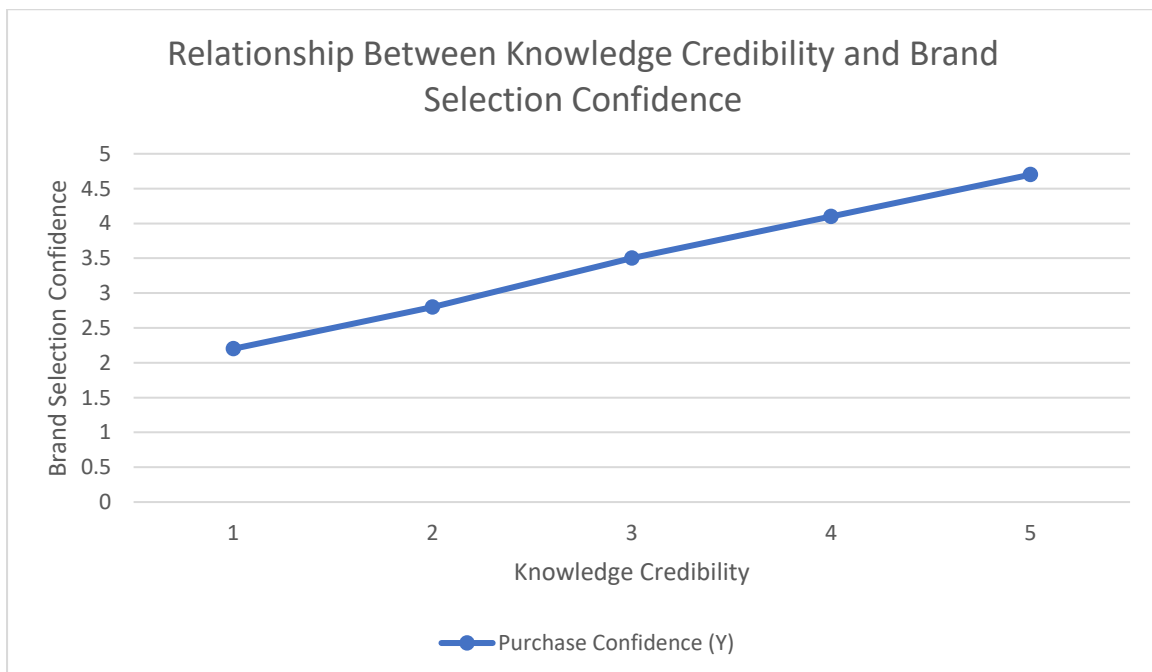
H1 and H2 supported.

**Table 5: Regression Results (Dependent Variables)**

Dependent Variable	Predictor	$\beta$	p-value
Informed Purchase Decision	Knowledge Credibility	0.74	<0.001
Brand Selection Confidence	Knowledge Credibility	0.71	<0.001

H3 and H4 supported.

**Figure 3: Line Graph Showing Increase in Purchase Confidence with Knowledge Credibility**



## Findings and Discussion

The results of the study clearly establish the critical role of educational and evidence-based influencer communication in shaping sustainable consumer decisions. The reliability statistics confirm that all constructs exhibit strong internal consistency, indicating the robustness of the measurement scales. The correlation matrix demonstrates significant positive relationships among informational depth, evidence usage, knowledge credibility, informed purchase decisions, and brand selection confidence, suggesting a coherent theoretical relationship among these variables.

Regression analysis provides strong empirical support for the proposed hypotheses. Informational depth and evidence-based communication significantly influence perceived knowledge credibility, explaining a substantial proportion of its variance. This indicates that followers do not merely respond to promotional sustainability messages but actively evaluate the quality and authenticity of information shared by influencers. Influencers who provide detailed explanations, cite studies, and present verifiable facts are perceived as knowledgeable authorities in sustainability.

Furthermore, knowledge credibility strongly influences both informed sustainable purchase decisions and confidence in selecting sustainable brands. This highlights that credibility does not only enhance trust but also empowers followers with the ability to make rational and informed choices. Followers rely on knowledgeable influencers to simplify complex sustainability information and guide their purchasing decisions.

The line graph further illustrates that as perceived knowledge credibility increases, followers' confidence in selecting sustainable brands rises sharply. This visual representation reinforces the regression findings and highlights the practical importance of educational influencer content.

These findings align with source credibility theory and information processing theory, which suggest that individuals depend on knowledgeable and credible sources when making complex decisions. Sustainable consumption often requires evaluating environmental claims and certifications, making knowledge credibility particularly important.

Overall, the study confirms that influencers who adopt an educational and evidence-based communication style play a significant role in enabling informed sustainable consumption and enhancing consumer confidence in sustainable brand choices.

## **Conclusion**

This study establishes that informational depth and evidence-based influencer communication significantly enhance knowledge credibility, which in turn drives informed purchase decisions and brand confidence.

## **Future Scope**

- Comparative study between promotional and educational influencers
- Cross-platform analysis of educational content effectiveness
- Longitudinal study on knowledge retention

## **Recommendations**

- Influencers should include facts, statistics, and certifications in posts
- Brands should collaborate with educational sustainability influencers
- Sustainability communication should focus on knowledge dissemination

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