

Investigating consumers' perception of green consumption– A netnography approach

Abstract: Although theoretical relationships and new constructs have been examined to explore and understand green consumption, little attention has been paid to exploring consumers' discussions of green consumption on social media platforms. This study adopts netnography as a novel qualitative approach to explore this phenomenon thoroughly on Facebook. The findings will further extend the knowledge of green consumption, its delineations and nature, and the drivers to it as well as providing managerial implications for marketers and policy makers to have a better understanding of consumers' green consumption from the point view of consumers.

Key words: Green consumption, consumer perception, netnography, social media, Facebook group

In the past decade, consciousness towards the environment has become a primary issue (De Moura et al., 2012). Climate change and resource crises have emerged as great challenges for all countries (Huang et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to adopt a more responsible lifestyle where the impact of consumerism on the environment can be reduced. Green consumption, an environmentally responsible behaviour characterised by advocating nature and protecting the ecology, has drawn enterprises and consumers' attention in recent years (Gonçalves, Lourenço and Silva, 2016; Semprebon et al., 2018). Nguyen et al. (2019, p.119)'s study suggests green consumption is regarded as 'purchasing and consumption behaviours by an individual which are related to environmental and resource problems and are motivated by not only a desire to satisfy an individual's needs but also a concern for the welfare of society in general (Antil, 1984).' Green consumption is an important approach to help to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Promoting green consumption is beneficial not only for sustainable industrial development but also for the efficiency of resource utilization (Zhao et al., 2020).

Although theoretical relationships and new constructs have been examined to explore and understand green consumption (Semprebon et al., 2018), little attention has been paid to exploring consumers' discussions of green consumption on social media platforms. Most studies on green consumption have been either quantitative, using surveys to collect data (Huang et al., 2021), or qualitative, using interviews (Young et al., 2010). Few studies in this area have used netnography as a novel qualitative approach to explore this phenomenon thoroughly on social media platforms. Social media websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have become extremely popular, and they usually provide abundant text-based posts and discussions as raw data for scholars. Through analysing these posts and discussions, scholars and marketers will be able to

identify the themes and trends and understand consumers' perception of green consumption. Therefore, the authors adopt this approach in this study. A public Facebook group was chosen for the authors to collect archived data (posts and comments). The netnography approach is valuable as in today's environment where digitalisation is even more relevant than before (Simmons, 2008; Heinonen and Medberg, 2018), and it is cost effective compared with fieldwork methods in ethnography and provides more insights into a naturally occurring community (Kozinets, 2002).

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to answer the following questions: what green consumption themes and trends are communicated by means of social media? What are the drivers behind green consumption?

This study contributes to the literature by shedding light on/ in providing insights about consumers' perception of green consumption communicated on social media and green consumption drivers using netnography as a novel qualitative method. The findings of the study will further extend the knowledge of green consumption, its delineations and nature, and the drivers to it as well as providing managerial implications for marketers and policy makers to have a better understanding of consumers' green consumption from the point view of consumers.

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