

Digital Influence And Environmental Policy: Evaluating The Impact Of Influencer Marketing Campaigns On The Adoption Of Public Sustainability Policies

Igor De Jesus Lobato Pompeu Gammarano¹, Ronny Luis Sousa Oliveira²,
Daiana Ransan Martins³, Fabrício Noura Gomes⁴,
Rodivaldo Brito Do Espírito Santo⁵, Eduardo Toledo Martins⁶,
Hilmar Tadeu Chaves⁷, Ailton Ramos Corrêa Júnior⁸,
José Dos Santos Lucas Neto⁹, Everaldo Veloso Da Silva¹⁰,
Alessandra Meirelles Esteves¹¹, Kiânia Granhem Imbiriba¹²,
Eduardo Moraes Correa¹³, Sérgio Pery Da Silva¹⁴, Edna Torres Araujo¹⁵,
Antonio Carlos Sales Ferreira Junior¹⁶, Miralda Souza Martins Dos Prazeres¹⁷,
Ricardo Viana Pereira¹⁸, Márcia Cecília Rodrigues De Oliveira¹⁹

¹ph.D. And Master In Administration (Ppad-Unama) - Professor At The State University Of Pará - Uepa

²ph.D. Candidate In Administration And Master In Administration - University Of The Amazon (Ppad-Unama) - Professor At The Federal Rural University Of The Amazon - Ufra

³master In Administration (Pedro Leopoldo College) And Master In Education (Artistic Polytechnic University Of Paraguay - Upap)

⁴ph.D. And Master In Administration (Ppad-Unama) - Professor At The Federal Rural University Of The Amazon - Ufra

⁵ph.D, Student In Administration And Accounting (Fucape) And Master In Administration (Getulio Vargas Foundation- Fgv)- Professor At The Federal Rural University Of The Amazon – Ufra

⁶master In Administration (Pedro Leopoldo College) And Master In Education (Artistic Polytechnic University Of Paraguay – Upap)

⁷ph.D. In Administration (Ppad-Unama) And Master In Rural Development And Management Of Agri-Food Enterprises (Ifpa), Professor At The Federal University Of The Amazonas - Ufam

⁸ Master In Administration And Accounting (Fucape)- President Of The Regional Accounting Council Of Pará - Crc/Pa.

⁹master In Administration (Ppad-Unama)

¹⁰master In Public Management (Utad-Portugal) And Professor At The Federal Institute Of Pará - Ifpa

¹¹master In Administration (Ppad-Unama), Professor At University Of The Amazon - Unama

¹²ph.D. Candidate In Administration And Master In Administration - University Of The Amazon (Ppad-Unama) - Professor At The State University Of Pará - Uepa

¹³ph.D. Candidate In Administration And Master In Administration (Ppad-Unama), Professor At Senai

¹⁴master In Administration (Ppad-Unama), Professor At University Of The Amazon - Unama

¹⁵ph.D. And Master In Administration (Ppad-Unama) - Professor At The Federal Rural University Of The Amazon - Ufra

¹⁶ph.D. Candidate In Administration (Ppad-Unama) And Master In Administration And Accounting (Fucape)

¹⁷master Student In Administration (Ppad-Unama)

¹⁸master Student In Knowledge Management (Ppgc-Unama)

¹⁹ph.D. Candidate And Master In Administration (Ppad-Unama)

Abstract

This theoretical study explores the intersection between digital influencer marketing and public sustainability policies, investigating how virtual influencers can effectively collaborate with governments to drive environmental initiatives. The research is based on a theoretical analysis to evaluate and discuss the impact of influencer campaigns on political decisions and the implementation of sustainable policies. Focusing on critical areas such as waste reduction, energy conservation, and the promotion of clean transportation, this work identifies mechanisms through which influencers can shape public policy, raise public awareness, and facilitate sustainable behavioral change. In addition, the study proposes a framework for creating effective partnerships between influencers and government entities, ensuring that marketing campaigns are effective and

ethically responsible and aligned with the long-term goals of environmental sustainability. Through an integrated approach that combines theory and practice, the article offers perspectives for academics, policymakers, and marketing professionals, highlighting the potential of digital influencers as agents of change in environmental public policy contexts.

Keywords: Digital Influencers; Sustainability; Public Policies; Influence Marketing; Influence Campaigns.

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I. Introduction

The digital age has brought with it a massive expansion of social media platforms, transforming them into powerful channels of communication and influence (Goodwin et al., 2023; Judijanto et al., 2024; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). In the context of environmental sustainability, digital influence has the potential to play a crucial role in shaping public policy through influencers acting as mediators between the public and policymakers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2007; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023; Judijanto et al., 2024; Sinha et al., 2023; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). This article investigates how influencer marketing campaigns on digital platforms can affect the formulation and implementation of sustainability policies by public entities (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023). The research focuses particularly on how these influencers can collaborate with local and national governments to promote environmental initiatives such as waste reduction, energy conservation and encouraging the use of clean transportation.

The existing literature on influencer marketing is vast, but there is a significant gap in the study of its impact on public policies, especially those related to sustainability (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023; Judijanto et al., 2024; Sinha et al., 2023; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). Furthermore, while the literature on environmental communication and sustainability explores how the media can influence public perception and promote sustainable behaviors, little is known about the specific role of digital influencers in this process (Nisbet, 2009; Davies & Hobbs, 2020). This study seeks to fill these gaps by exploring how digital influencers can be strategically used to promote public sustainability policies.

The central research question of this article is: "How can influencer marketing campaigns influence the adoption of public sustainability policies by government entities?" To answer this question, the article aims to: (1) analyze the role of digital influencers in shaping public environmental policy; (2) develop a theoretical framework for the effective implementation of influencer marketing campaigns that promote sustainability; and (3) evaluate the impact of these campaigns on public awareness and behavior change towards sustainable practices.

This study contributes to the literature by integrating theories of influencer marketing with public policy and sustainability, offering a new model for understanding how digital influencer strategies can be aligned with environmental policy objectives (Bryman & Cramer, 2012; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023). The paper also sets out to develop best practices for partnerships between influencers and government entities, ensuring that influencer campaigns reach a wide audience and promote meaningful action and change towards sustainability (Hoffman & Novak, 2012).

In terms of structure, the article follows a traditional theoretical format, starting with this introduction which establishes the context and relevance of the study. This is followed by a literature review that highlights previous studies and identifies the theoretical gaps that the article seeks to fill. The theoretical discussion used to explore the research question and objectives is then detailed, followed by a contribution on the proposed framework, the results and their theoretical and practical implications. Finally, the article concludes with a reflection on the limitations of the current study and suggestions for future research in the field of influencer marketing and sustainability policies.

II. Literature Review: Digital Influencers And Sustainability

Influence Marketing

The emergence of digital influencers as a powerful force in contemporary marketing has attracted considerable attention from academics and practitioners alike. The influence of these individuals on consumer decisions and brand perceptions is widely recognized, but their role in promoting sustainable practices represents a relatively new and promising field of study (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). Kaplan and Haenlein (2007) define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, enabling the creation and exchange of user-generated content". It is in this environment that influencers operate, using platforms such as Instagram, Twitter and YouTube to shape opinions and behavior (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Sinha et al., 2023; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023).

The literature on influencer marketing reveals that, although initially focused on sectors such as

fashion and technology, its application has expanded to areas such as health, finance and, more recently, sustainability (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). Studies such as that by Freberg, Graham, McGaughey and Freberg (2011) show that influencers can significantly affect public awareness and engagement on specific topics, including sustainability. They argue that influencers have a unique ability to humanize and mediate complex environmental issues for their audiences, making them more accessible and understandable (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Sinha et al., 2023; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023).

In the context of sustainability, digital influencers are particularly valuable due to their ability to reach and engage young and globally dispersed audiences, which are essential to the environmental movement (Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). Nisbet (2009) highlights the importance of communicating effectively about climate change and sustainable practices, noting that the traditional media approach often fails to engage or persuade audiences to take meaningful action. Influencers, with their personal and direct communication styles, can overcome these barriers, promoting greater adoption of sustainable behaviors among their followers.

In addition, research into the perceived credibility of influencers indicates that they are often seen as trustworthy sources of information about products and practices (Hudders et al., 2021; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). This trust can be particularly influential when applied to the promotion of green products or environmentally responsible behavior. Influencers therefore have the potential to be catalysts in transforming attitudes into actions, encouraging greater environmental responsibility among their audiences (Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023).

The existing literature, however, is still in its infancy when it comes to the direct and measurable impact of digital influencers on sustainability public policy (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). There is a clear need for more empirical research that explores how these virtual influences can be formally integrated into public policy campaigns and which methods are most effective in ensuring that digital engagement translates into sustainable behavioral change and support for environmental policies (Bryman & Cramer, 2012; Rodríguez- Espíndola et al., 2022; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023).

Given the current context in which sustainability is increasingly becoming a global priority, digital influencers represent an untapped resource for affecting significant political change (Goodwin et al., 2023). Studies such as that by Carrington, Neville and Whitwell (2014) highlight that conscious consumption is not only restricted to individual choices, but also to the influence that these choices can have on corporate and public policies (Goodwin et al., 2023; Sinha et al., 2023). In this scenario, influencers have the potential not only to influence individual consumption, but also to instigate demand for sustainable policies (Gomes et al., 2022; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

The literature also suggests that for digital influencers to be effective in promoting sustainability on a political level, they must adopt an approach that is both informative and appealing (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). According to Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012), influencers' ability to create engaging content that educates while entertaining could be the key to raising awareness and motivating action among broad segments of the population. This is crucial, as sustainability often involves complex concepts that need to be communicated in a clear and impactful way.

Furthermore, the role of influencers in fostering a culture of sustainability can be amplified through strategic partnerships with non-governmental organizations, companies and government bodies (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). Suchman (1995) discusses the importance of "legitimacies" in the organizational context, suggesting that influencers who are seen as legitimate social actors can facilitate powerful alliances that promote public sustainability policies (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). Collaboration between influencers and these entities can help translate individual awareness into collective action, a key step in implementing lasting policy change (Udupa, 2024; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023).

Therefore, the issue of measuring the impact of influencers on public sustainability policies remains a challenge (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). Few studies have addressed rigorous methods to assess this influence in a quantitative or qualitative way. A more robust methodological approach would be essential to understand how influencers are changing the sustainability public policy landscape (Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). This involves content analysis, follower engagement and investigating how discussions generated on influencer channels are incorporated into political deliberations and concrete policy decisions (Goodwin et al., 2023; Vaidya & Karnawat, 2023). This article sets out to investigate these dynamics, providing a deeper understanding of the potential of digital influencers to shape the Environmental policy market and field (Udupa, 2024).

The Role Of Digital Media In Sustainability

Digital media have emerged as influential channels in fostering awareness and action around sustainability issues (Sinha et al., 2023). The role of these platforms transcends the simple sharing of information, influencing the way individuals and groups perceive and react to environmental issues (Sinha et

al., 2023). The ability of digital media to reach a wide and diverse audience makes them powerful tools for promoting sustainability, a concept widely discussed by authors such as Castells (2007), who notes the influence of mass communication in shaping modern societies.

In the context of sustainability, digital media can serve as platforms for educating the public, disseminating sustainable innovations and mobilizing society around environmental causes (Sinha et al., 2023). According to Rogers (2003), the diffusion of innovations is significantly facilitated by the media, which can accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices by increasing the visibility and understanding of such practices among the public. In addition, social networks in particular provide a space for dialogues and discussions that can influence both public perception and government policies related to sustainability (Kruse et. al., 2018; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

Lorenzoni, Nicholson-Cole and Whitmarsh (2007) point out that effective communication about climate change is crucial to engaging the public in a meaningful way. Digital media, with their ability to segment messages according to users' specific interests, offer a unique platform for personalizing sustainability communication. This personalization can increase the relevance of the message to individuals, potentially leading to greater engagement and action.

However, the influence of digital media is not universally positive. Researchers such as Boykoff and Boykoff (2004) argue that the way environmental issues are often presented in the media can lead to public confusion and apathy. The prevalence of misinformation and polarization on social media can also contribute to skepticism and inaction. It is therefore crucial that digital communication strategies are carefully planned and executed to ensure that information is accessible, accurate and motivating.

The discussion on the effectiveness of digital media in promoting sustainability must also consider the role of digital influencers, who can be seen as catalysts for change. As discussed by Waddock (2008), opinion leaders on digital platforms have the potential to shape social norms and promote the adoption of sustainable behaviors through their reach and influence (Judijanto et al., 2024). For example, when influencers adopt and promote sustainable practices, they can encourage their followers to do the same, creating a wave of positive environmental impact that transcends geographical boundaries (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020).

Digital media therefore play a complex role in promoting sustainability. They facilitate the dissemination of information and education, as well as acting as platforms for advocacy and action (Judijanto et al., 2024). However, the challenge lies in using these media effectively and ethically to promote genuine understanding and engagement around sustainability, avoiding the pitfalls of misinformation and superficiality. This article seeks to contribute to this discussion by proposing strategies to optimize the use of digital media for a more sustainable future (Judijanto et al., 2024).

Specific Gaps Related To The Impact Of Influencers On Environmental Public Policies.

While the literature on influencer marketing has grown exponentially, addressing a range of aspects from the persuasive power of influencers in purchasing decisions to their role in public health campaigns, research on the specific impact of influencers on environmental public policy remains surprisingly limited (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). This gap is remarkable given the significant potential of digital influencers to shape the political and public agenda, especially on issues as critical and global as environmental sustainability (Goodwin et al., 2023).

Researchers such as Watts and Dodds (2007) have demonstrated how complex social networks influence the dissemination of information and norms, but applying these theories to the context of environmental public policy requires a more specific analysis. The central question is how and to what extent influencers can effectively affect environmental policies, an aspect little explored in existing research. Environmental policies, by their nature, involve complex interactions between science, politics and public opinion, areas in which influencers could theoretically play a prominent role, as mediators between the public and policymakers (Pereira et. al., 2023; Goodwin et al., 2023; Judijanto et al., 2024; Sinha et al., 2023).

Studies on social influence, such as Granovetter's (1978), suggest that weak ties, often mediated by influencers in social networks, are crucial in the diffusion of new ideas and behaviors. However, applying these observations to the development and implementation of environmental public policies is still a developing area. Research needs to further explore how influencers' messages on sustainability are received and internalized by the public and how this, in turn, influences policymakers (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Sinha et al., 2023).

Additionally, there is a need for studies that assess the authenticity and depth of influencers' commitment to environmental causes. Hmielowski et. al., (2014) discuss the importance of source credibility in environmental communication, but the role of influencers as credible sources, particularly with regard to their ability to influence environmental policy, is less understood. It is vital that research addresses whether influencers are talking about sustainability and whether they are doing so in a way that promotes real and measurable policy action and change (Goodwin et al., 2023; Sinha et al., 2023).

Another crucial aspect that needs further exploration is the ability of influencers to catalyze collective

action for sustainability. (2024) and Castells (2007) suggest that power in social media is fundamentally linked to the ability to form networks and mobilize public opinion. However, little is known about how this capacity translates into effective political pressure that can lead to the adoption of more robust environmental public policies (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

While influencer marketing is global, most research has focused on specific contexts, predominantly in developed countries. A more global understanding that includes the dynamics of developing countries, where sustainability policies may have different dynamics and urgencies, is crucially needed (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

III. Grounded Theory: Integrating Influencer Marketing And Public Policy Theories

The Intersection Of Influencer Marketing And Policymaking

The integration of influence marketing with public policy theories represents an intriguing and essential frontier for understanding how political decisions can be influenced in an era dominated by digital media (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023). This theoretical framework requires a fusion of communication and social influence theories with public policy formulation principles, generating a new paradigm that explains the intersection between online influence and environmental policy decisions (Pereira et al., 2023).

The starting point for this analysis is Rogers' (2003) theory of the diffusion of innovations, which explains how new ideas and technologies spread through communities and societies. Digital influencers, in this context, act as "change agents" who accelerate the adoption of sustainable behaviors by influencing their extensive networks. Applying this theory to influencer marketing suggests that influencers can be crucial in spreading sustainable practices, promoting awareness and legitimizing these practices as desirable or necessary within their communities (Liau & Huang, 2021).

In addition, McCombs and Shaw's (1972) agenda-setting theory is particularly pertinent. This theory posits that the media informs people about what to think and what to think about. In the realm of public policy, digital influencers have the potential to shape the political agenda by highlighting sustainability issues, positioning them as urgent priorities for government action. In doing so, they can influence both public opinion and political priorities (Goodwin et al., 2023; Judijanto et al., 2024), a concept that Kingdon and Stano (1984) expand on in their "multiple streams theory", which explores how windows of opportunity for policy change are created by streams of problems, policies and politics.

Nye's (2004) concept of "soft power", which describes the ability to co-opt rather than coerce, is also relevant here. Influencers can exercise soft power by shaping public preferences through cultural and ideological resources. In the context of public policy, this translates into influencing how policies are perceived and accepted by the public (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023). Influencers, through their platforms, can reshape environmental narratives in a way that resonates with personal and cultural values, thus encouraging a policy response that is more aligned with sustainability (Liau & Huang, 2021; Goodwin et al., 2023).

Baumgartner and Jones' (2010) work on "punctuated equilibrium" in public policy offers an additional lens for understanding how influencers can cause rapid and significant changes in policy. They argue that politics is generally characterized by periods of stability, interrupted by brief periods of radical change. Influencers, with their vast reach and ability to quickly mobilize opinion, can be catalysts for these moments of rupture, especially in a context where environmental issues require rapid and effective responses (Judijanto et al., 2024).

By combining these theories, this article seeks to illustrate how influencer marketing can be integrated into the formulation of public policies to promote sustainability. Influencers are not just propagators of messages; they are opinion leaders and potential instigators of political change (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Judijanto et al., 2024). This theoretical approach contributes to the existing literature, exploring a field that is still understudied and providing a robust basis for future research into the effectiveness of digital influencers in promoting public sustainability policies (Ale, 2023; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

Given the complexity of public policy and the dynamic nature of influencer marketing, the integration of these theories offers a robust view of how policy changes can be initiated or accelerated by the action of digital influencers. The application of Gaventa's theory of "power resources" (1980), which analyzes how different forms of power affect political participation and policy change, is also relevant in this context (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). Influencers, by possessing information and connection power, have the ability to mobilize resources that can challenge or reinforce existing power structures, especially in environmental policy issues where decisions are often highly contested and politically charged (Goodwin et al., 2023; Goodwin et al., 2023).

Resource mobilization theory, as described by McCarthy and Zald (1977), can be applied to better understand how influencers can effectively rally public support and resources around sustainability causes. This

theory suggests that the success of social movements and political campaigns depends on the ability to accumulate and manage resources such as money, human labor, and public attention. Influencers, with their direct access to large audiences and their ability to engage followers, can serve as significant catalysts in mobilizing the resources needed to sustain prolonged environmental campaigns (Hornhardt, 2021).

In addition, Benford and Snow's (2000) framing theory is crucial to understanding how influencers shape the perception of environmental public policies. By framing sustainability issues in ways that resonate with personal values and cultural concerns, influencers can alter the way these issues are perceived by the public, increasing the likelihood of political engagement and action (Davies & Hobbs, 2020). For example, by emphasizing the urgency of climate change or highlighting stories of communities impacted by unsustainable environmental practices, influencers can amplify the demand for political reform (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

The interaction of these theories demonstrates that digital influencers have the potential to influence public opinion and change the very nature of how policies are formulated, debated and implemented (Judijanto et al., 2024). This theoretical approach also highlights the need for a deeper understanding of the strategies influencers use, the content they disseminate, and the political and cultural contexts in which they operate. Therefore, by exploring the integration of influencer marketing with public policy theories, this work fills a gap in the existing literature and provides an avenue for future research to explore the ability of influencers to effectively shape environmental policies in an increasingly digitized and interconnected era (Goodwin et al., 2023).

Influencers As Agents Of Change In Sustainability Policies.

Digital influencers, with their expansive reach and ability to engage diverse audiences, are emerging as potential agents of change in sustainability policies (Davies & Hobbs, 2020). This capacity for influence can be understood through various theoretical lenses that highlight the role of the media and public figures in shaping public policy and civic engagement (Davies & Hobbs, 2020). Influencers, through their platforms, have the potential to inform and catalyze meaningful action for sustainability (Hornhardt, 2021).

Firstly, influencers can play a crucial role in raising awareness about environmental issues, an essential point for initiating any political change (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). As Castells (2007) argues, the network society is a reality in which communication flows through interconnected networks, and influencers are strategically positioned to disseminate information quickly and on a large scale. They can use their platforms to explain complex issues related to the environment in ways that are both informative and attractive, potentially reaching a wider audience than traditional methods of environmental education.

In addition to educating, influencers have the ability to shape social norms, as suggested by Cialdini's theory of normative influence (2009). By adopting sustainable practices in their personal lives and actively promoting sustainability, they can establish new norms for their followers. This is not insignificant, because as Putnam (2000) noted, changing social norms can lead to a substantial change in public policy by altering what is considered acceptable or desirable behavior by society (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

Influencers can also exert direct pressure on policymakers through advocacy campaigns (Liao & Huang, 2021). Using their platforms to mobilize followers, they can organize campaigns that demand specific actions from governments, such as the implementation of stricter environmental protection laws. This mobilization capacity is crucial, and as Granovetter (1973) pointed out in his theory of weak ties, social networks with extensive and dispersed connections are particularly effective in disseminating information and mobilizing for collective action.

However, the effectiveness of influencers as agents of change depends on their credibility and the way they communicate their messages. Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) emphasize the importance of source credibility in persuasion, suggesting that influencers who are perceived as genuinely committed to sustainability are more likely to persuade their followers and influence policy decisions. Therefore, authenticity and transparency are key to maintaining trust and effectiveness in promoting sustainability policy change (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

In this way, influencers can play a role in bridging the gap between the public and policymakers, acting as mediators who translate public concerns into viable policy agendas (Davies & Hobbs, 2020). They have the unique ability to present popular demands in formats that are both accessible and attractive to policymakers, potentially accelerating the process of political change (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). As described by Kingdon and Stone (1984) in the windows of opportunity model, influencers can help synchronize the flow of problems, solutions and the political climate to create propitious moments for policy reforms (Goodwin et al., 2023).

IV. The Role Of Influencers In Shaping Public Sustainability Policies

The role of digital influencers in shaping sustainability public policy is an emerging area that combines elements of social communication, behavioral psychology and political theory (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023). These individuals, armed with powerful platforms and numerous followers, are positioning themselves as new players on the political scene, particularly on issues of environmental sustainability. They offer a unique and modern approach to influencing both public opinion and political decisions, integrating themselves into the dynamics of sustainability politics in previously unexplored ways (Berne-Manero & Marzo-Navarro, 2020; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Judijanto et al., 2024).

Influencers have the ability to amplify sustainability issues that might otherwise remain on the margins of mainstream political discussions. Agenda-setting theory, as explored by McCombs and Shaw (1972), explains how the media is able to influence the perceived importance of topics in public opinion. Influencers, by highlighting environmental issues, bring these issues into the public spotlight and can pressure politicians to act by placing these issues on political agendas (Goodwin et al., 2023; Judijanto et al., 2024).

In addition, influencers can play a vital role in educating the public about complex environmental issues. As Bandura (2001) suggests in his social learning theory, people learn within a social context, through observation, imitation and modeling. When influencers demonstrate sustainable practices or discuss the importance of environmental legislation, they inform and model behaviors that their followers can adopt, potentially bringing about large-scale behavioral change (Joshi, 2023).

The ability of influencers to generate mobilization is also significant. As Tarrow (1998) argues, social movements are powerful means of political change and influencers can be seen as catalysts for modern movements, especially with the use of hashtags and online campaigns that can quickly go viral (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023). This mobilization can result in substantial pressure on policymakers to create or amend legislation. Influencers therefore use their platforms to create awareness and incite action, leveraging their visibility and credibility to engage and activate audiences around environmental causes (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

However, effective influence on public policy requires these influencers' efforts to be sustained and focused (Goodwin et al., 2023). Putnam (2000) emphasizes the importance of persistent and reliable social networks for the formation of social capital, which is essential for lasting political change. Influencers therefore need to maintain a long-term commitment to sustainability issues, consistently integrating them into their communications to ensure that environmental issues remain on the political agenda (Joshi, 2023; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the interaction between influencers and policymakers is a complex dynamic that requires transparency, authenticity and an ongoing dialog. Influencers who engage in lobbying or partnering with politicians must do so in an ethical and transparent manner to maintain public trust and the effectiveness of their initiatives (Davies & Hobbs, 2020). Their approach to influencing policy must be informed and backed by solid data and research so that their recommendations and campaigns are taken seriously by decision-makers (Goodwin et al., 2023). In this way, influencers have the ability to shape public opinion, educate the public, mobilize action and directly influence policy, all of which contribute to promoting a more robust and effective environmental agenda (Kapoor et al., 2021; Judijanto et al., 2024).

While the potential to influence sustainability policy is vast, digital influencers also face significant challenges. The volatile nature of social platforms means that messages can be distorted or lose focus, and constant public scrutiny can undermine the credibility of influencers who do not engage with sufficient authenticity or depth on environmental issues (Kapoor et al., 2021; Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

Furthermore, influencers, when engaging in political debates, need to navigate a delicate balance between maintaining their follower base and advocating for political change (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023). As Suchman (1995) discusses, legitimacy is a crucial capital for social actors, and influencers must manage their legitimacy carefully when addressing political issues (Goodwin et al., 2023). They must ensure that their interventions are based on accurate information and backed up by a clear understanding of political processes and the implications of their actions.

In this context, the effectiveness of influencers as agents of change in sustainability policies also depends on their ability to collaborate with other stakeholders, including NGOs, companies and government organizations. These partnerships can broaden the reach and deepen the impact of their campaigns, as indicated by Burt (1992), who emphasizes the role of social networks in providing access to resources and information. By forming strategic alliances, influencers can strengthen their position as trusted intermediaries between the public and policymakers (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023).

Additionally, collaboration with experts and academics can help influencers strengthen the scientific foundation of their messages, a crucial aspect of influencing public policy effectively. Incorporating scientific and technical evidence into influencers' messages can help turn popular support into concrete policy actions, thus increasing the likelihood of implementing effective sustainable policies (Yildirim, 2021; Dekoninck &

Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023).

While influencers continue to shape the sustainability agenda, they also have the power to monitor and push for the implementation of policies after they have been adopted. They can keep sustainability issues visible to the public and to policymakers, ensuring that promises are kept and that policies are implemented effectively (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023). In this role, they act as catalysts for change as well as guardians of accountability, a role that reinforces the importance of long-term sustainability.

While the role of influencers in shaping sustainability public policy is full of potential, it also requires a strategic, informed and collaborative approach to be truly effective (Kappor et. al., 2021; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). By navigating these complexities, influencers can make a significant contribution to promoting a more sustainable future by ensuring that policies are formulated and implemented in a way that reflects the interests and needs of a rapidly evolving world (Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

V. Influencers As Molds For Specific Public Policies

In the contemporary context, digital influencers are taking on a prominent role in shaping public policies, especially those related to sustainability and the environment. This transformation is taking place because these new actors have the ability to influence individual behavior as well as political agendas through their platforms. The mobilization power that influencers hold can be instrumental in shaping public policy, as they are able to raise awareness, educate and mobilize large groups of people quickly (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023).

Influencers, with their vast networks and ability to generate meaningful discussions, have contributed to the elevation of environmental issues to political priority status (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Goodwin et al., 2023). A notable example of this influence can be seen in the way issues such as climate change have gained prominence. Celebrities and influencers such as Leonardo DiCaprio have used their platforms to openly discuss the need for climate action, impacting public opinion and, by extension, pressuring politicians to act (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Judijanto et al., 2024). According to DiCaprio (at the 2016 United Nations Climate Change Conference), it is crucial that world leaders recognize and respond to the urgency of the climate crisis, a message amplified by his platform.

This ability to influence the political agenda is also supported by the agenda-setting theory developed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which posits that the media is capable of influencing the issues that people consider important. Influencers use this ability to direct the attention of the public and policymakers to specific sustainability issues, often bringing to light information that may not be present in the traditional media (Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

In addition to raising environmental issues to public and political awareness, influencers also play an active role in defining how these issues are perceived (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023). They shape the narrative around sustainable policies, using strategies ranging from promoting conscious consumption practices to endorsing green technologies. For example, influencers such as Greta Thunberg have played a crucial role in mobilizing young people and influencing public policy, especially through movements such as Fridays for Future, which demonstrate the power of influencers to incite political and social action on a global scale (Sabherwal et. al., 2021; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

In addition, influencers' interaction with specific policies often involves a combination of direct advocacy and partnerships with non-governmental organizations. These collaborations allow influencers to work within strategic frameworks to impact policies in more formal and measurable ways. Through these partnerships, they can help formulate policy proposals, participate in awareness-raising campaigns and even influence legislation directly (Yildirim, 2021; Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

However, for this influence to be positive, it is essential that influencers maintain a high degree of accountability and transparency. As Suchman mentions, legitimacy is essential for maintaining the trust and respect of the public and policymakers. Influencers need to ensure that their influence is not only broad, but also grounded in accurate and ethical information, so that the public policies they influence are sustainable and beneficial in the long term (Liao & Huang, 2021).

Influencers are therefore shaping specific public policies by raising important issues, mobilizing the public and directly influencing political processes (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Goodwin et al., 2023). This new paradigm of digital influence offers significant opportunities for promoting sustainable policies, but also requires a careful approach to ensure that the impact is both positive and long-lasting (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022); Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

VI. Guidelines For Effective Sustainable Influence Campaigns

Proposal For A Framework For The Development And Implementation Of Influencer Campaigns That Promote Sustainability

Developing a framework for sustainable influence campaigns requires an integrated understanding of

marketing, social communication and sustainability. This framework should facilitate the creation and implementation of campaigns that not only reach a large number of people, but also promote lasting behavioral change and support sustainable public policies. The central challenge is to balance the effectiveness of the message with the authenticity and ethical commitment of the influencers (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

The first step in developing this framework is to establish clear and measurable objectives. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), planning any marketing campaign starts with defining objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). In the context of sustainability, these objectives should align not only with engagement or outreach goals, but also with specific environmental or social impact indicators, such as a reduction in the use of plastics or an increase in the adoption of recycling practices.

Next, the selection of influencers is crucial. The influencers chosen must have a proven track record of commitment to sustainability issues, ensuring that their influence is perceived as genuine. Freberg et al. (2011) suggest that authenticity is fundamental to the credibility of the message. Influencers who demonstrate a genuine commitment to sustainability can more effectively persuade their followers to adopt sustainable practices.

In addition, it is essential to incorporate principles of persuasive communication into the development of campaign messages. According to Petty and Cacioppo (2012), the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) suggests that messages can persuade through central routes (focused on logical arguments and substantive details) or peripheral routes (focused on superficial aspects such as the influencer's popularity). For sustainability issues, a combination of the two approaches is recommended to maximize impact, employing arguments based on scientific evidence alongside moving personal narratives and impactful visual accounts.

The implementation of the framework should also consider audience segmentation. Campaigns should be tailored to meet the specific characteristics of different audience segments, such as age, geographic location, and cultural values (Solomon, 2020; Davies & Hobbs, 2020). This ensures that messages are relevant and resonate with the values and concerns of different groups, increasing the campaign's effectiveness in motivating action (Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

Finally, it is essential to establish continuous evaluation mechanisms to measure the impact of campaigns. According to Kaplan and Norton (2007), the use of a balanced scorecard system, adapted to include environmental and social performance indicators, can help campaign organizers monitor progress towards objectives and adjust strategies as necessary. This not only maximizes the effectiveness of the campaign, but also helps to maintain transparency and accountability.

Therefore, developing a framework for sustainable influencer campaigns involves clearly defining objectives, carefully choosing authentic influencers, creating persuasive and well-adapted messages, and implementing robust evaluation systems. This framework not only contributes to the success of campaigns in terms of reach and impact, but also ensures that the actions promoted are sustainable and in line with the ethical principles of global sustainability (Liao & Huang, 2021).

It is also important to incorporate strategies for continuous engagement and community building. Sustained engagement doesn't end with a single campaign or message; it requires the creation of a community around sustainability causes. To do this, influencers can use their platforms to initiate and maintain dialogues, encouraging frequent and meaningful interactions between community members. Keeping audiences engaged through educational content, interactive challenges and partnerships with environmental organizations can cultivate a sense of belonging and collective commitment (Pereira, 2023; Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

Another critical component of the framework is transparency in communicating actions and results. As discussed by Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), consumers are increasingly interested in how companies and their brands are contributing to social good. Transparency about how influencer activities are making a real difference can help build trust and credibility for influencers and their associated brands. Regularly reporting on the progress of initiatives, the obstacles faced and the results achieved can reinforce authenticity and foster a long-term relationship with followers (Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

In addition, including an educational focus in campaigns can amplify their impact. Teaching the public about the importance of sustainability and how to implement sustainable practices in their own lives can turn awareness into effective action. Educational strategies can include online workshops, webinars, and the distribution of educational resources, which can be particularly effective in combining the influence of opinion leaders with practical and applicable information (Davies & Hobbs, 2020; Judijanto et al., 2024).

Interdisciplinary collaboration is also key. Integrating experts from different fields, such as environmental science, public policy and communication, can enrich campaigns by ensuring that they are based on solid data and reflect a deep understanding of the issues being addressed. This approach can help avoid superficiality and increase the depth and relevance of the messages conveyed (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

Finally, it is crucial to consider the adaptability of the framework. The digital environment and sustainability issues are constantly evolving, and strategies that work today may not be viable tomorrow. Therefore, the framework must be flexible, allowing for quick adjustments based on continuous feedback, new

scientific findings and changes in public policy or social norms. This adaptability will not only help keep campaigns relevant, but also ensure that they remain in line with best practices and the latest developments in sustainability (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

Together, these elements form a robust framework for sustainable influence campaigns, which aim to engage immediately and promote lasting change in attitudes and behaviors towards sustainability. Successful implementation of this framework can catalyze meaningful action and shape public policy in order to create a more sustainable future (Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

Detail Of Recommended Practices For Partnerships Between Influencers And Government Entities.

Establishing effective partnerships between digital influencers and government entities to promote sustainability initiatives is a practice that is gaining ground, given the growing influence of digital platforms on public and political opinion (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Judijanto et al., 2024). Such partnerships can be tremendously beneficial, but they require careful planning and the observance of best practices to ensure that they are ethical, effective and sustainable.

Firstly, it is crucial that both influencers and government entities establish clear and aligned objectives from the outset. This alignment of goals ensures that both sides are working towards common objectives, avoiding conflicts of interest and maximizing the impact of their joint actions. This practice of establishing clear and shared objectives is based on the principles of project management, as highlighted by the Project Management Institute (2000), where the clear definition of scope and objectives is vital to the success of any collaborative project.

The selection of appropriate influencers for these partnerships is also a critical aspect. The influencers chosen must have a wide reach and a solid reputation for genuine commitment to sustainability issues. This careful selection helps to ensure that the messages conveyed are received with credibility and respect, increasing the effectiveness of the campaign. Government entities should look for influencers who have consistently demonstrated an authentic and informed interest in environmental issues, rather than those who simply see sustainability as a passing trend.

Transparency in communications between influencers and government entities is another essential best practice. Both parties must commit to open and honest communication about their intentions, expectations and the progress of their initiatives. This transparency not only builds a foundation of mutual trust, but also allows both parties to adjust their strategies as necessary to achieve better results. Transparency is advocated in multiple areas of governance and management, as stated by Hood and Heald (2006), who highlight its importance in accountability and maintaining public trust.

In addition, it is recommended that partnerships include ongoing evaluation and adjustment plans. Establishing clear performance metrics and carrying out periodic evaluations can help ensure that campaigns are on track and effective. These evaluations allow adjustments to be made proactively, ensuring that influencing efforts are always optimized for maximum impact. This practice is supported by strategic management literature, which often emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation for the success of any strategy (Kaplan & Norton, 2007).

In this sense, it is essential that there is a commitment to ethics and social responsibility in all facets of the partnership. This means that all campaigns and initiatives must be planned and executed with consideration for the environmental impact and the social and cultural impact on the affected communities. Social responsibility is a key area that influencers and government entities should address together, as recommended by several scholars in the field of business ethics (Crane et. al., 2019).

By implementing these best practices, partnerships between influencers and government entities can become powerful tools in promoting public sustainability policies, achieving significant and lasting results to improve environmental quality and promote a more sustainable future (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022).

Practical Relevance Of Findings For Policymakers And Marketers

The effective integration of digital influencers into sustainability campaigns and public policymaking redefines marketing practices and provides valuable tools for policymakers (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). The findings of this study highlight the practical relevance that influencers can have in acting as bridges between audiences, brands and governments, emphasizing their potential to influence both individual behaviors and public policies.

For marketers, collaborating with influencers on sustainability initiatives presents an opportunity to realign their brands with the emerging values of environmental and social responsibility. As indicated by Kotler and Keller (2016), the era of responsible marketing requires brands to promote their products and demonstrate their commitment to social and environmental well-being. Influencers, with their robust platforms and direct engagement with consumers, can help brands communicate their sustainability efforts authentically and effectively, strengthening customer loyalty and brand perception. This is crucial in an era where consumers are

increasingly likely to support companies that reflect their ethical and environmental concerns.

For policymakers, the findings highlight the importance of considering digital influencers as important stakeholders in the development and implementation of sustainability policies. Influencers have the ability to shape public opinion and mobilize citizens in support of environmental initiatives, which are essential elements for the successful adoption of public policies (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022; Judijanto et al., 2024). As argued by Baumgartner and Jones (2010) in the theory of punctuated equilibrium, periods of significant political change are often precipitated by shifts in public perception. Influencers can play a crucial role in highlighting environmental issues and pushing for change, providing policymakers with a platform to effectively engage the public and gain support for new legislation.

Furthermore, collaboration between government entities and influencers can improve the implementation and effectiveness of policies by ensuring that sustainability messages reach a wider and more diverse audience. This strategy is in line with the recommendations of Hood and Heald (2006), who highlight the importance of transparency and clear communication in public governance. By integrating influencers who share sustainability values, governments can promote more effective communication of their policies, increasing public understanding and support (Davies & Hobbs, 2020).

The practical relevance of these findings is therefore twofold. First, they provide marketers with observations on how to leverage influencers to effectively communicate sustainability commitments, engage consumers and build a responsible brand image. Second, they offer policymakers a new perspective on how to use digital influencers to advance sustainability agendas, both in terms of policy formulation and implementation (Dekoninck & Schmuck, 2022). By recognizing and employing the power of influencers, both fields can respond more effectively to today's sustainability demands and foster meaningful, long-term change in society.

VII. Conclusions

This study investigated how digital influencers can shape public sustainability policies, using a theoretical and practical approach to assess their impact and effectiveness. The main findings reveal that digital influencers have significant potential to influence both public opinion and political decisions on sustainability issues. Through their platforms, these influencers are able to raise awareness, educate the public about sustainable practices and mobilize support for environmental policies.

The central research question - "How can influencer marketing campaigns influence the adoption of public sustainability policies by government entities?" - was answered comprehensively. Digital influencers, by acting as agents of change, demonstrate the ability to significantly affect the formulation and implementation of public policies by raising awareness and mobilizing their vast social networks.

This study contributes to the existing literature by integrating theories of influencer marketing with public policy and sustainability, offering a new model for understanding how digital influencer strategies can be aligned with environmental policy objectives. It highlights the importance of more ethical and sustainability-focused marketing, proposing a change in the way organizations and governments approach communication and the implementation of sustainable policies.

Based on the findings, some practical recommendations can be formulated for the effective implementation of these strategies. Firstly, it is crucial that government entities establish partnerships with influencers who demonstrate a genuine commitment to sustainability, to ensure that messages are authentic and resonate with the public. In addition, a collaborative approach that includes stakeholders from multiple sectors, such as companies, NGOs and academic institutions, should be encouraged in order to develop more comprehensive and impactful campaigns.

However, this study has limitations that need to be acknowledged. The main limitation is the lack of detailed empirical data on specific influencer campaigns and their direct impact on public policy, since the focus was more conceptual and theoretical. In addition, the diversity of influencers and the variation in communication strategies may also affect the generalizability of the results.

For future research, we recommend exploring specific case studies where digital influence has been decisive in changing environmental public policies. In addition, it would be productive to analyze the long-term impact of these influences, investigating how they sustain or alter policy practices over time. Further investigation into the role of specific digital platforms, such as Instagram or TikTok, could also provide insights into how different digital environments facilitate or limit the effectiveness of influencer marketing on sustainability issues.

In conclusion, this study highlights the growing importance of digital influencers in sustainability policies, opening up new avenues for collaborative and multidisciplinary approaches that can enrich both theory and practice in the field of sustainability and public policy.

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