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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### ANALYZING THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION CHANNELS ON CONSUMER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DAIRY PRACTICES IN THANE

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#### Abstract

**Purpose:** This research aims to investigate consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane, employing a sample of 250 participants through convenient sampling. The study focuses on understanding the predictive relationships between social media usage, exposure to information channels, and consumer knowledge.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The research utilizes a structured Likert-scale survey encompassing demographic information, consumer knowledge assessments, and insights into social media usage and information exposure. Linear regression analysis is applied to examine the statistical significance and strength of the identified relationships.

**Findings:** The findings reveal a significant impact of social media usage and exposure to information channels on consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices. Specific patterns and preferences emerge, contributing to a nuanced understanding of consumer perceptions in Thane.

**Practical Implications:** The study's results hold practical implications for communication strategies aimed at enhancing consumer awareness of sustainable dairy practices. Recommendations include targeted communication campaigns, diversified content creation, collaboration with influencers, continuous education programs, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

**Originality/Value:** This research contributes to the field by exploring the interplay between social media, information exposure, and consumer knowledge in the context of sustainable dairy practices. The methodology combines convenience sampling and Likert-scale surveys to efficiently gather and analyze data, providing valuable insights for sustainable practices promotion.

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#### Introduction:-

Sustainable dairy practices are becoming increasingly important in today's world due to the negative impact of conventional dairy farming on the environment and animal welfare. Consumers play a crucial role in promoting sustainable dairy practices by making informed choices about the products they purchase. However, consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices is often limited, which can hinder the adoption of sustainable practices

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by dairy farmers. This study aims to analyze the effect of social media and information channels on consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.

**Significance:**

The significance of this study lies in its potential to identify effective communication channels for promoting sustainable dairy practices among consumers in Thane. By understanding the impact of social media and information channels on consumer knowledge, dairy farmers and policymakers can develop targeted communication strategies to promote sustainable dairy practices. This study can also contribute to the existing literature on sustainable agriculture and consumer behavior.

**Scope:**

This study will focus on consumers in Thane, a city in Maharashtra, India. The study will analyze the effect of social media usage and exposure to information channels on consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices. The study will use a quantitative research design and will collect data through a survey questionnaire.

**Research Question:**

To what extent can social media usage and exposure to information channels significantly predict consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane?

**Objectives of the Study:-**

1. To determine the extent to which social media usage and exposure to information channels can significantly predict consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.
2. To provide recommendations for effective communication strategies using social media and information channels to enhance consumer knowledge and promote sustainable dairy practices in the region.

**Hypothesis of the Study:**

H0: There is no significant relationship between social media usage and exposure to information channels and consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.

**Review of Literature:-**

Consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices varies across different regions and demographics. Naspetti (2021) found that consumers in European Union countries were more accepting of sustainable dairy practices such as 'prolonged maternal feeding' compared to 'alternative protein source'. However, Schiano (2020) noted that consumers in general were more likely to seek sustainability-related information when purchasing dairy products, with those who bought both dairy and plant-based alternatives placing a higher importance on sustainability. This suggests a growing awareness and interest in sustainable dairy practices. However, Samoggia (2016) found that consumers tend to underestimate the price of healthy dairy products, indicating a potential lack of knowledge about the costs associated with sustainable practices. This is further supported by Gao (2016), who found that Chinese consumers have a limited understanding of sustainable food production, including sustainable dairy practices.

The use of social media and information channels significantly influences consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices. Studies have shown that social media marketing, particularly influencer marketing and engaging content, can enhance consumer engagement in sustainable consumption (Bryła, 2022). However, the impact of social media on sustainable consumption is complex, with both positive and negative effects on consumer behavior and awareness (Simeone, 2020). This is further complicated by the influence of sustainability-related information on social media, which can significantly affect consumers' intention to purchase sustainable products (Saeed, 2019). Therefore, while social media and information channels can play a crucial role in shaping consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices, their influence is multifaceted and requires careful consideration.

Research on social media usage, particularly in the context of sustainability-related content, has revealed several key findings. Scott (2017) and Ulusu (2010) both emphasize the importance of considering engagement and usage types, respectively, in understanding social media use. Paek (2013) further underscores the role of engagement, showing its mediating effect on the relationship between social media use and behavioral outcomes. Verdugo (2021) extends this discussion to the domain of sustainability, finding that higher frequency of social media use is associated with greater valuation of environmental sustainability and social welfare, but also with less perceived importance of

sustainability in entrepreneurship. These studies collectively highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of social media usage, and its potential impact on sustainability-related attitudes and behaviors.

Exposure to information channels, such as educational DVDs and mass media, can significantly impact dairy farmers' knowledge and adoption of sustainable practices (Bhatt, 2006; Meena, 2014; Vidya, 2010). However, the effectiveness of these channels in influencing consumer behavior towards sustainable dairy products is less clear, with some studies suggesting minimal impact (Bellotti, 2016). Further research is needed to explore the potential of these information channels in promoting sustainable dairy practices among consumers.

## Research Methodology:-

### Sample Selection:

The research employed a sample of 250 participants to investigate consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane. Convenience sampling was utilized for participant selection, aiming for accessibility and practicality in gathering responses.

### Survey Instrument:

The primary data collection instrument was a structured survey designed to assess consumer knowledge and perceptions regarding sustainable dairy practices. The survey utilized a Likert scale, providing participants with a range of responses to gauge their agreement or disagreement with statements related to sustainable dairy practices. This scale, ranging from "Completely Disagree" to "Completely Agree," allowed for nuanced insights into participants' attitudes and beliefs.

### Variables and Measures:

The survey encompassed multiple sections, including demographics, consumer knowledge, social media usage, and exposure to information channels. Demographic variables included gender and age categories, providing a comprehensive overview of the study participants. Consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices was measured using Likert-scale statements covering familiarity, confidence, identification of key features, information-seeking behavior, and awareness of environmental, social, and economic benefits.

### Data Analysis:

Quantitative data collected through the Likert-scale responses were subjected to statistical analysis using appropriate tools. The study employed linear regression analysis to examine the predictive relationship between social media usage, exposure to information channels, and consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices. Model fit measures, omnibus ANOVA tests, and model coefficients were utilized to assess the strength and significance of the relationships.

### Limitations:

Convenience sampling may introduce selection bias, limiting the generalizability of findings to the broader population. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for response bias. The study focused on Thane, and findings may not be universally applicable to other regions.

## Result & Findings:-

<b>Table 1: Gender &amp; Age</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Female	151	60.4 %
Male	99	39.6 %
<b>Age</b>	<b>Counts</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Under 30	30	12.0 %
31-40	111	44.4 %
41-50	82	32.8 %
Above 50	27	10.8 %

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the distribution of participants based on their gender and age in the study. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents are female, constituting 60.4% of the total sample, while

males make up the remaining 39.6%. This gender distribution suggests a slightly higher representation of females in the study population.

Regarding age, the participants are categorized into four groups. The largest age group is individuals aged between 31 and 40, representing 44.4% of the total respondents. The next significant group includes participants aged 41 to 50, accounting for 32.8% of the sample. Those under 30 constitute 12.0%, and individuals above 50 make up 10.8% of the total respondents.

<b>Table 2:- Consumer Knowledge about Sustainable Dairy Practices.</b>						<b>Mean</b>
	<b>Completely Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Disagree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Somewhat Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	
<b>I am familiar with the concept of sustainable dairy practices.</b>	3.6 %	3.2 %	10.0 %	42.0 %	41.2 %	4.14
<b>I feel confident in my knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.</b>	4.0 %	4.0 %	11.2 %	37.6 %	43.2 %	4.12
	<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>	
<b>I can identify key features of sustainable dairy farming methods.</b>	3.2 %	3.2 %	14.8 %	46.0 %	32.8 %	4.02
<b>I actively seek out information about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.</b>	3.2 %	4.4 %	21.6 %	41.2 %	29.6 %	3.9
	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Very Little</b>	<b>Somewhat</b>	<b>Much</b>	<b>Very Much</b>	
<b>I understand the environmental benefits of sustainable dairy practices.</b>	4.4 %	3.6 %	14.4 %	36.4 %	41.2 %	4.06
<b>I am aware of the potential social and economic benefits of sustainable dairy practices in Thane.</b>	4.0 %	4.0 %	14.0 %	44.4 %	33.6 %	4
<b>I can differentiate between sustainable and non-sustainable dairy products based on labels or information.</b>	4.8 %	2.4 %	25.2 %	35.2 %	32.4 %	3.88

Table 2 provides a detailed insight into consumers' knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane across various dimensions. The mean values represent the average responses on a scale, shedding light on the overall perception and familiarity of participants with sustainable dairy practices.

In terms of familiarity, a significant proportion of respondents, 42.0%, somewhat agree, and 41.2% strongly agree that they are familiar with the concept of sustainable dairy practices. This indicates a relatively high level of awareness among the participants. Similarly, when it comes to confidence in knowledge, 43.2% strongly agree, and

37.6% somewhat agree that they feel confident in their understanding of sustainable dairy practices in Thane. These results suggest a generally positive perception of one's knowledge in this domain.

Participants' ability to identify key features of sustainable dairy farming methods is reflected in the responses to the statement "I can identify key features of sustainable dairy farming methods." The majority, 46.0%, often agree, indicating a considerable level of proficiency in recognizing sustainable practices. Additionally, participants' proactive information-seeking behavior is evident, with 41.2% often agreeing that they actively seek out information about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.

Understanding the environmental benefits of sustainable dairy practices is affirmed by the responses to the statement "I understand the environmental benefits of sustainable dairy practices." A substantial 36.4% often agree, and 41.2% always agree, signifying a noteworthy acknowledgment of the positive environmental impact associated with sustainable practices.

Furthermore, participants express awareness of the potential social and economic benefits of sustainable dairy practices in Thane, as indicated by 44.4% often agreeing. Differentiating between sustainable and non-sustainable dairy products based on labels or information is a skill possessed by a significant proportion of respondents, with 35.2% often agreeing.

Overall, Table 2 portrays a positive and informed stance among participants regarding sustainable dairy practices in Thane. The high percentages in agreement categories suggest a commendable level of knowledge and awareness, setting a promising foundation for further exploration and promotion of sustainable practices in the region.

Frequency of Use	Never	1-2 times per month	Weekly	A few times per week	Daily	Mean
<b>How often do you use Facebook?</b>	4.0 %	2.8 %	13.2 %	37.6 %	42.4 %	4.12
<b>How often do you use Instagram?</b>	3.2 %	3.6 %	15.2 %	40.8 %	37.2 %	4.05
<b>How often do you use Twitter?</b>	4.8 %	3.6 %	12.0 %	46.4 %	33.2 %	4
<b>How often do you visit other social media platforms related to news or information (e.g., Reddit, LinkedIn)?</b>	1.6 %	6.0 %	16.0 %	37.2 %	39.2 %	4.06
<b>Time Spent</b>	Never	1-30 minutes	30 minutes - 1 hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours	
	2.4 %	4.8 %	12.8 %	38.0 %	42.0 %	4.12
<b>Engagement with Sustainability-related Content</b>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	
<b>I follow accounts/pages on social media that promote sustainable dairy practices.</b>	1.6 %	4.8 %	14.0 %	34.8 %	44.8 %	4.16
<b>I actively seek out information about sustainable dairy practices on social media.</b>	1.6 %	4.0 %	14.4 %	40.0 %	40.0 %	4.13
<b>I engage with (like, share, comment) content about sustainable dairy practices on social media.</b>	1.6 %	6.4 %	14.8 %	39.6 %	37.6 %	4.05

Table 3 delves into the social media usage patterns and engagement with sustainability-related content among the participants. The mean values provide an average assessment, offering insights into the frequency of social media use, time spent, and the level of engagement with content promoting sustainable dairy practices.

In terms of the frequency of social media use, participants predominantly engage with platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other news or information-related social media channels. The results indicate that a significant proportion of respondents use these platforms on a weekly to daily basis, with mean values ranging between 4.00 and 4.12. This suggests that the majority of participants are actively involved in social media activities, creating a fertile ground for disseminating information about sustainable dairy practices.

Regarding the time spent on social media, the mean value of 4.12 indicates that a substantial portion of participants spends more than two hours on these platforms daily. This extensive daily engagement highlights the potential reach and impact of social media as a communication channel for sustainable dairy practices.

The section on engagement with sustainability-related content explores participants' interactions with information promoting sustainable dairy practices on social media. The responses reveal a positive inclination, with mean values ranging from 4.05 to 4.16. A significant proportion of respondents actively follows accounts/pages, seeks out information, and engages with content (likes, shares, comments) related to sustainable dairy practices. This indicates a high level of interest and involvement in sustainability-related content within the social media sphere.

In summary, Table 3 portrays a robust presence of participants on social media platforms, with a notable frequency of use, substantial time spent, and active engagement with sustainability-related content. These findings underscore the potential of social media as an effective channel for promoting awareness and education about sustainable dairy practices in Thane. The high mean values suggest that leveraging social media platforms strategically could contribute significantly to disseminating information and fostering positive attitudes towards sustainable dairy practices among the study participants.

	Never	1-2 times per month	Weekly	A few times per week	Daily	Mean
<b>How often do you read news articles about sustainable dairy practices in Thane?</b>	1.6 %	4.4 %	20.4 %	42.0 %	31.6 %	3.98
<b>How often do you read blogs or websites about sustainable dairy practices?</b>	2.4 %	3.2 %	17.2 %	40.8 %	36.4 %	4.06
	Never	1-2 times per month	3-5 times per month	Monthly		
<b>How often do you watch documentaries about the dairy industry or sustainable practices?</b>	0.8 %	2.4 %	21.2 %	40.8 %	34.8 %	4.06
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often		
<b>I trust information about sustainable dairy practices from news websites, blogs, and documentaries.</b>	2.0 %	10.4 %	22.0 %	39.2 %	26.4 %	3.78

Table 4 focuses on participants' exposure to different information channels and their trust levels in information from these sources regarding sustainable dairy practices in Thane. The mean values provide an average assessment of the frequency of exposure and trust in information from various channels.

When it comes to the frequency of exposure to information, participants report varying levels across different channels. For news articles about sustainable dairy practices in Thane, a considerable 42.0% report weekly exposure, contributing to a mean value of 3.98. Blogs or websites about sustainable dairy practices also receive regular attention, with 40.8% reporting exposure a few times per week, resulting in a mean value of 4.06. Additionally, documentaries about the dairy industry or sustainable practices are watched frequently, with 40.8% reporting exposure at least a few times per week, yielding a mean value of 4.06.

The trust level in information from news websites, blogs, and documentaries is assessed, and the mean value of 3.78 suggests a moderate level of trust. While 39.2% often trust information from these sources, a significant portion expresses trust at a lower frequency, with 26.4% reporting occasional trust.

In summary, Table 4 indicates a notable frequency of exposure to information about sustainable dairy practices across various channels, including news articles, blogs, and documentaries. The participants exhibit a moderate level of trust in information from these sources. This suggests that these channels play a significant role in shaping participants' knowledge and perceptions of sustainable dairy practices in Thane. However, the varying trust levels also highlight the need for further exploration into the factors influencing participants' trust in the information received from these channels.

### Testing of Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant relationship between social media usage and exposure to information channels and consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane.

### Result:-

The study aims to investigate the predictors of consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane, with a focus on the impact of social media usage and exposure to information channels. The linear regression analysis indicates that the overall model is statistically significant, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.603, suggesting that 60.3% of the variance in consumer knowledge can be explained by the predictors (social media usage and exposure to information channels).

The omnibus ANOVA test further examines the individual contributions of social media usage and exposure to information channels. Both predictors are found to be statistically significant, as evidenced by their respective p-values ( $<.001$  for social media usage and 0.044 for exposure to information channels). This suggests that both variables significantly contribute to predicting consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices.

The model coefficients provide insight into the strength and direction of the relationships. The intercept (6.469) represents the estimated consumer knowledge when social media usage and exposure to information channels are zero. Social media usage has a significant positive effect ( $p <.001$ ), with a standardized estimate of 0.855, indicating that as social media usage increases, consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices is expected to increase. Exposure to information channels also has a positive effect ( $p = 0.044$ ), with a standardized estimate of 0.116, suggesting that increased exposure to information channels is associated with higher consumer knowledge.

The Cook's Distance values assess the influence of individual data points on the model. The mean Cook's Distance is low, indicating that there are no influential outliers that significantly affect the model.

Assumption checks for normality, heteroskedasticity, and autocorrelation are conducted. The normality tests (Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Anderson-Darling) indicate that the residuals reasonably approximate a normal distribution. Heteroskedasticity tests (Breusch-Pagan, Goldfeld-Quandt, Harrison-McCabe) show no significant violation of homoskedasticity assumptions. The Durbin-Watson test for autocorrelation yields a DW statistic of 1.92, indicating no significant autocorrelation.

Collinearity statistics (VIF and Tolerance) suggest that there is no severe multicollinearity issue among the predictors, as both variables have VIF values around 2 and tolerance values around 0.5.

In conclusion, the results support the hypothesis that social media usage and exposure to information channels significantly predict consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane. Increased social media usage and exposure to information channels are associated with higher consumer knowledge. The model meets the assumptions of linear regression, indicating its reliability and validity.

### Linear Regression

Table 5:- Model Fit Measures.

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Overall Model Test			
			F	df1	df2	p
1	0.777	0.603	188	2	247	<.001

**Table 6:-** Omnibus ANOVA Test.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
Social Media Usage	3214.9	1	3214.9	224.59	< .001
Exposure to Information Channels	58.9	1	58.9	4.11	0.044
Residuals	3535.6	247	14.3		
Note. Type 3 sum of squares					

**Table 7:-** Model Coefficients - Consumer Knowledge about Sustainable Dairy Practices.

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Stand. Estimate
Intercept	6.469	1.4404	4.49	< .001	
Social Media Usage	0.785	0.0523	14.99	< .001	0.855
Exposure to Information Channels	0.252	0.124	2.03	0.044	0.116

**Table 8:-** Data Summary.

Cook's Distance				
			Range	
Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
0.00902	8.75E-04	0.0522	1.52E-07	0.618

**Table 9:-** Assumption Checks.

1. Normality Tests		
	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>p</b>
Shapiro-Wilk	0.928	0.11
Kolmogorov-Smirnov	0.097	0.118
Anderson-Darling	2.86	0.213
Note. Additional results provided by moretests		
2. Heteroskedasticity Tests		
	<b>Statistic</b>	<b>p</b>
Breusch-Pagan	43.9	0.101
Goldfeld-Quandt	1.1	0.299
Harrison-McCabe	0.476	0.295
Note. Additional results provided by moretests		
3. Durbin-Watson Test for Autocorrelation		
<b>Autocorrelation</b>	<b>DW Statistic</b>	<b>p</b>
0.042	1.92	0.46
4. Collinearity Statistics		
	<b>VIF</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>
Social Media Usage	2.03	0.494
Exposure to Information Channels	2.03	0.494

**Discussion:-**

The study aimed to investigate the impact of social media usage and exposure to information channels on consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane. The results indicate a significant relationship between these variables, shedding light on the potential role of digital platforms in shaping consumer awareness and understanding of sustainable dairy practices.



The demographic distribution, as presented in Table 1, offers valuable insights into the composition of the study participants. The majority of respondents were female, constituting 60.4% of the sample, with the largest age group falling between 31 and 40 years. These demographics provide a diverse representation, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of consumer knowledge across different gender and age groups.

Table 2 provides a detailed assessment of consumers' knowledge about sustainable dairy practices. The high percentages in agreement categories suggest a commendable level of awareness and positive perception among participants. This positive stance creates a promising foundation for further initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable dairy practices in the region. It's crucial to note that participants exhibited confidence in identifying key features, understanding environmental benefits, and recognizing social and economic advantages of sustainable dairy practices.

Table 3 and Table 4 delve into social media usage patterns and exposure to information channels. The high mean values indicate active engagement with social media platforms, extensive time spent, and positive interactions with sustainability-related content. Leveraging these channels strategically could significantly contribute to disseminating information and fostering positive attitudes towards sustainable dairy practices. The findings highlight the potential of social media as an effective communication channel for promoting awareness and education.

The hypothesis testing results confirm a significant relationship between social media usage, exposure to information channels, and consumer knowledge. The model's reliability is supported by various statistical tests and checks, ensuring the validity of the findings. The positive coefficients for both social media usage and exposure to information channels suggest that increasing these activities is associated with higher consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices.

### **Conclusion:-**

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the predictors of consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane. Social media usage and exposure to information channels emerged as significant contributors to consumer awareness. The demographic distribution showcases a diverse sample, and participants exhibit a positive stance toward sustainable dairy practices.

The study recommends strategic communication campaigns tailored to social media platforms, diversified content creation, collaboration with influencers, continuous education programs, and regular monitoring and evaluation. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to the promotion of sustainable practices in Thane and potentially serve as a model for similar initiatives in other regions.

Overall, the findings emphasize the pivotal role of digital platforms in shaping consumer knowledge and attitudes, highlighting the need for targeted and engaging communication strategies to promote sustainable practices in the dairy industry.

### **Recommendation:-**

In summary, the study suggests several key recommendations to enhance consumer knowledge about sustainable dairy practices in Thane. Firstly, the implementation of strategic communication campaigns tailored to social media platforms is advised, ensuring content resonates with the preferences and behaviors identified in Table 3. Diversifying content, including articles, blogs, and documentaries, is crucial to catering to the varied preferences of consumers, as indicated in Table 4. Collaborating with influencers and accounts promoting sustainable dairy practices on social media, as highlighted in Table 3, can significantly amplify the reach and impact of awareness campaigns. Continuous education programs are recommended to address specific areas where participants may have less confidence or familiarity, with a focus on key features, environmental benefits, and economic aspects for a holistic understanding. Finally, the importance of monitoring and evaluation is emphasized, with regular assessments of social media metrics to gauge the effectiveness of communication strategies. Utilizing feedback mechanisms will enable ongoing adaptation and improvement of campaigns over time, ensuring a sustained and impactful promotion of sustainable dairy practices in Thane.

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