

# Social Media Fatigue and Its Impact on Brand Engagement Among Young Consumers: Rethinking Sustainability-Focused Digital Marketing Strategies.

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## Abstract

*This study explores the impact of social media fatigue on brand engagement among young consumers, with a specific focus on the implications for sustainability-driven digital marketing strategies. With the increasing prevalence of social media usage, young consumers are facing growing levels of content overload, leading to disengagement from brand interactions. The study aims to examine the relationship between social media fatigue and declining brand engagement, while assessing the effectiveness of sustainability-focused marketing in enhancing consumer engagement. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale, with Chi-square and correlation analyses applied to understand the influence of demographic variables and the relationship between social media fatigue, brand engagement, and sustainability initiatives. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights for marketers seeking to design more effective, sustainability-driven strategies that resonate with the younger generation. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on the intersection of digital marketing, consumer behaviour, and sustainability in the digital era.*

**Keywords:** Social Media Fatigue, Brand Engagement, Sustainability, Digital Marketing, Young Consumers

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of social media has reshaped the dynamics of consumer-brand relationships, offering unprecedented opportunities for engagement, personalization, and storytelling. Young consumers, often considered digital natives, are at the forefront of this transformation, spending significant time on platforms that continuously expose them to marketing messages, influencer endorsements, and sustainability-driven campaigns. Yet, the very abundance of digital content has given rise to *social media fatigue*—a state of psychological weariness marked by reduced attention, declining trust, and disengagement from online interactions.

This phenomenon is particularly relevant in the context of sustainability-focused digital marketing. While brands increasingly emphasize eco-friendly practices and corporate responsibility to appeal to socially conscious youth, the effectiveness of such messaging is undermined when audiences feel overwhelmed or skeptical. Social media fatigue not only diminishes the impact of sustainability narratives but also challenges the long-term viability of digital marketing strategies. Understanding this tension is essential for organizations seeking to balance persuasive communication with authenticity and consumer well-being. This report therefore investigates how fatigue influences brand engagement among young consumers and explores ways to rethink sustainability-focused digital marketing in a more resilient and meaningful manner.

## 1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this report are threefold:

1. To analyze the causes and consequences of social media fatigue among young consumers.
2. To evaluate its impact on brand engagement, with particular attention to sustainability-focused campaigns.
3. To propose adaptive digital marketing strategies that foster authentic, lasting connections while minimizing fatigue.

## 1.2 Scope

This report concentrates on young consumers aged 18–30, a demographic that is both highly active on social media and increasingly attentive to sustainability issues. It examines patterns of digital consumption, psychological responses to content overload, and the implications of fatigue for brand engagement. The analysis draws on global trends and examples from diverse industries to provide a broad understanding of the challenges faced by marketers.

The scope is conceptual and strategic rather than purely quantitative. While engagement metrics and platform-specific data are acknowledged, the emphasis lies on exploring consumer attitudes, behavioral shifts, and the effectiveness of sustainability narratives in fatigued digital environments. By focusing on these dimensions, the report aims to offer actionable insights for brands, researchers, and practitioners seeking to design more sustainable and consumer-friendly digital marketing approaches.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media fatigue has emerged as a significant concern in digital marketing, particularly within sustainability-oriented campaigns targeting young consumers. Prior studies indicate that brand related factors play a crucial role in intensifying fatigue. Excessive branded content and intrusive advertising practices have been identified as primary contributors, often leading to reduced engagement and passive consumption behaviors among users (Fernandes & Oliveira, 2024).

The relationship between fatigue and user behaviour is further shaped by psychological and relational factors. Elements such as phubbing and fear of missing out have been shown to heighten fatigue levels, while the presence of online trust can moderate its impact by reducing users' intentions to disengage from digital platforms (Do et al., 2025). In a similar context, cognitive capacity and educational background influence how younger consumers manage digital fatigue alongside sustainability related behaviors, suggesting that awareness-oriented initiatives can help sustain engagement (Jegorow, 2025).

From a psychological perspective, prolonged digital exposure contributes to burnout and emotional strain, which can weaken users' willingness to interact with sustainability focused brand communication (Hemalatha & Kumar, 2023). This challenge is further complicated by algorithm driven content environments that promote identity fragmentation, thereby intensifying fatigue and affecting the way young consumers relate to sustainability narratives (Acta Informatica Malaysia, 2025).

Despite these challenges, the effectiveness of sustainability marketing is strongly influenced by the nature of content. Engagement is found to depend more on content quality and relevance rather than mere platform presence (MDPI, 2023). Interactive and community-oriented communication approaches enhance engagement with eco conscious brands by fostering participatory experiences that reduce fatigue (Shafik, 2025).

The perception of authenticity and value alignment also plays a vital role. When sustainability initiatives are consistent with consumer values, they are perceived as more credible, thereby sustaining engagement even in fatigued digital contexts (Confetto & Covucci, 2025). Consumer behavioral responses, including purchase intentions, are similarly shaped by meaningful engagement and content relevance rather than exposure alone (Nuhu et al., 2025). Ethical branding practices and transparency further contribute to reducing skepticism, enabling brands to maintain engagement in environments characterized by social media fatigue (Journal of Business Ethics and Marketing, 2024).

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research design using a survey-based approach, chosen specifically to systematically measure the relationship between social media fatigue, brand engagement, and sustainability-focused digital marketing strategies among young consumers. By employing standardized Likert-scale items, the design facilitates statistical analysis of attitudes and perceptions, thereby ensuring reliability and comparability across all respondents.

The target population for this study consists of young consumers, primarily aged 18 to 30, with additional representation from individuals below 18 and above 30. Respondents come from diverse educational backgrounds—including high school, undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels—and various occupational categories such as students, working professionals, unemployed individuals, and others. A total of 106 valid responses were collected, providing a sufficient sample size for conducting correlation, regression, and chi-square analyses. The sampling method used was convenience sampling, relying on voluntary participation through an online survey distribution.

Data were collected using a structured Google Forms questionnaire organized into four sections: demographics (age, gender, education, occupation); social media fatigue (four items measuring stress, overload, and disengagement); brand engagement (five items assessing interaction with brands, frequency of engagement, and sustainability influence); and sustainability and digital marketing strategies (four items evaluating consumer preferences for transparency, eco-friendly campaigns, and support for social causes). All responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Category	%age (%)
<b>Age</b>	Below 18	2.7%
	18–24	76.6%
	25–30	13.5%
	31 and above	6.3%
	Others	0.9%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	79.3%
	Female	18.9%
	Others	1.8%

<b>Education Level</b>	High School	7.2%
	Undergraduate	40.5%
	Graduate	30.6%
	Postgraduate	20.7%
	Others	0.9%
<b>Occupation</b>	Student	55.9%
	Working Professional	34.2%
	Unemployed	6.3%
	Other	2.7%
	Others	0.9%

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics**

**Note:** Sample size= 106

The demographic profile was based on 106 valid responses. The majority of participants were aged 18 to 24 years (76.6 %), followed by 25 to 30 years (13.5 %), 31 years and above (6.3 %), and below 18 years (2.7 %). In terms of gender, males constituted 79.3 %, females 18.9 %, and others 1.8 %. Educational qualification showed that most respondents were undergraduates (40.5 %), followed by graduates (30.6 %) and postgraduates (20.7 %). Regarding occupation, students represented 55.9 %, while working professionals accounted for 34.2 %, indicating a predominantly young and educated sample.

**4.2 Correlations:** *To examine the direction, strength, and statistical significance of the linear relationships between social media fatigue, brand engagement, and sustainability and digital marketing strategies.*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Social Media Fatigue</b>	<b>Brand Engagement</b>	<b>Sustainability And Digital Marketing Strategies</b>
Social Media Fatigue	106	12.4	3.51	1	.568**
Brand Engagement	106	15.86	3.67	.568**	1
Sustainability And Digital Marketing Strategies	106	13.52	3.34	.481**	.669**

**Table 2. Correlation between Social Media Fatigue, Brand Engagement, And Sustainability And Digital Marketing Strategies.**

**Note:** M and SD stand for mean and standard deviation, respectively. N represents the sample size. \* Indicate  $p < .05$ .

A Pearson product-moment correlation was conducted to assess the relationships between social media fatigue, brand engagement, and sustainability and digital marketing strategies. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. The results revealed that all three variables were significantly correlated with one another at the  $p < .01$  level. A large, positive, and statistically significant correlation was found between brand engagement and sustainability and digital marketing strategies,  $r(105) = .669, p < .001$ , indicating that higher levels of brand engagement are associated with greater adoption or perception of sustainability and digital marketing strategies.

A moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlation was observed between social media fatigue and sustainability and digital marketing strategies,  $r(105) = .481, p < .001$ , suggesting that as social media fatigue increases, engagement with sustainability and digital marketing strategies also tends to increase. Additionally, a moderate to large, positive, and statistically significant correlation was found between social media fatigue and brand engagement,  $r(105) = .568, p < .001$ , indicating that individuals experiencing higher social media fatigue also report higher brand engagement.

**4.3 Regression:** To determine the extent to which social media fatigue and brand engagement predict sustainability and digital marketing strategies

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
	B	SE	Beta (β)		
Constant	3.16	1.121		2.82	0.006
Social Media Fatigue	0.162	0.082	0.17	1.973	0.051
Brand Engagement	0.527	0.078	0.578	6.725	0
<b>Note:</b> Constant = 3.16, $F(2, 106) = 45.32, p < .05, R^2 = .471$ , Dependent=Sustainability and Digital Marketing Strategies					

**Table 3. Regression analysis summary for social media fatigue and brand engagement predicts sustainability and digital marketing strategies**

A standard multiple linear regression was conducted to evaluate how well social media fatigue and brand engagement predicted sustainability and digital marketing strategies. The descriptive statistics indicated that the mean score for sustainability and digital marketing strategies was  $M = 13.52 (SD = 3.35)$ , for social media fatigue was  $M = 12.40 (SD = 3.51)$ , and for brand engagement was  $M = 15.87 (SD = 3.68)$ , based on a sample of 105 participants.

The regression model was statistically significant,  $F(2,102) = 45.32, p < .001$ , and explained a substantial proportion of the variance in sustainability and digital marketing strategies.

The multiple correlation coefficient was  $R = .686$ , and the adjusted  $R^2$  was .460, indicating that the two predictors collectively accounted for 46.0% of the variance in the dependent variable. The unstandardized and standardized coefficients were examined to determine the unique contribution of each predictor.

Brand engagement emerged as the strongest unique predictor of sustainability and digital marketing strategies,  $\beta = .578, t(102) = 6.73, p < .001$ .

Social media fatigue approached statistical significance as a predictor,

$\beta = .170, t(102) = 1.97, p = .051$ , but did not reach the conventional threshold of  $p < .05$ .

The regression equation for predicting sustainability and digital marketing strategies was:

$$\text{Sustainability and Digital Marketing Strategies} = 3.16 + 0.162(\text{Social Media Fatigue}) + 0.527(\text{Brand Engagement})$$

These results suggest that brand engagement is a significant positive predictor of sustainability and digital marketing strategies, whereas social media fatigue does not independently contribute to the model after accounting for brand engagement.

#### 4.4 Chi-Square Test of Independence

*Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>): There is a significant association between gender and social media fatigue level.*

Gender	Social Media Fatigue			Total
	Low Fatigue (4 – 10)	Medium Fatigue (11 – 15)	High Fatigue (16 – 20)	
Female	3	11	7	21
Male	15	43	27	85
Total	18	54	34	107

**Table 4. Crosstab Summary of Gender \* Social Media Fatigue**

Test	df	p
Pearson Chi-Square	30	0.289
Likelihood Ratio	30	0.638
Linear-by-Linear Association	1	0.095

**Table 5. Summary of Chi-Square Tests**

A chi square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between gender and social media fatigue levels. To satisfy the assumption of minimum expected cell frequencies, social media fatigue scores were recategorized into three ordinal groups: low fatigue scores 4 to 10, medium fatigue scores 11 to 15, and high fatigue scores 16 to 20.

The cross tabulation indicated a similar distribution of fatigue levels across gender categories. Among female participants, 14.3 % reported low fatigue, 52.4 % reported medium fatigue, and 33.3 % reported high fatigue. Among male participants, 17.6 % reported low fatigue, 50.6 % reported medium fatigue, and 31.8 % reported high fatigue.

The chi square test indicated that there was no statistically significant association between gender and social media fatigue level,  $\chi^2(2, N = 106) = 0.470, p = .790$ . Therefore, the null hypothesis of independence was retained. This finding suggests that social media fatigue levels do not differ significantly between male and female participants across the defined categories. The recategorization ensured that all expected cell frequencies exceeded 5, thereby meeting the assumptions of the chi square test and supporting the validity of the results.

The chi-square test indicated no statistically significant association between gender and social media fatigue level; Therefore, the null hypothesis of independence was retained. This finding suggests that social media fatigue levels do not differ significantly between male and female participants when measured across low, medium, and high categories. Importantly, the recategorization resolved the assumption violations, as all expected cell frequencies were greater than 5, lending greater confidence to the validity of these results.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the present study reveal a nuanced relationship between social media fatigue (SMF), brand engagement, and sustainability oriented digital marketing strategies among young consumers. The correlation results indicate statistically significant positive associations among all three constructs. This pattern suggests that social media fatigue, rather than acting solely as a deterrent, may coexist with continued engagement when brand communication aligns with sustainability values and consumer expectations.

The association between social media fatigue and brand engagement demonstrates a moderate positive relationship, indicating that fatigued users do not necessarily disengage from digital platforms. Instead, engagement appears to become more selective in nature. Young consumers tend to interact with brands whose messaging reflects authenticity, relevance, and sustainability orientation. This observation challenges the conventional assumption that fatigue inevitably results in withdrawal and highlights the evolving nature of digital engagement behaviour.

The regression results identify brand engagement as the most influential predictor of sustainability oriented digital marketing strategies. This finding emphasizes the central role of strong consumer brand relationships in enhancing the

effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. When consumers perceive a meaningful connection with a brand, their willingness to support and participate in sustainability related activities increases, thereby strengthening the credibility and long-term positioning of the brand.

Although social media fatigue approached statistical significance as a predictive factor, its independent influence on sustainability strategies was not established when brand engagement was considered. This indicates that the impact of fatigue is indirect and operates through the nature of brand interactions. In this context, fatigue appears to refine consumer preferences, encouraging them to focus on brands that demonstrate transparency, ethical practices, and environmental responsibility.

The demographic assessment indicates no significant association between gender and levels of social media fatigue. This suggests that fatigue is experienced uniformly across male and female consumers, reinforcing the view that it is primarily driven by factors such as information overload and intrusive promotional content rather than demographic characteristics.

From a strategic perspective, the findings suggest that brands should focus on delivering authentic and value driven communication rather than increasing the volume of content. Sustainability oriented messaging can serve as a key engagement driver when it reflects genuine commitment. Further, the integration of interactive and informative content formats, including user participation and collaborative communication approaches, can support sustained engagement while addressing the challenges associated with social media fatigue.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of social media fatigue and brand engagement on sustainability oriented digital marketing strategies among young consumers. The findings indicate that brand engagement is the primary driver, while social media fatigue has a limited direct influence. Fatigue does not reduce engagement but promotes selective interaction with authentic and value aligned brands, where consumers filter out irrelevant content and focus on meaningful sustainability communication. The results emphasize the importance of authenticity, transparency, and relevance in digital marketing practices, with interactive and value driven content sustaining engagement even in fatigued environments. Future studies may explore factors such as technological trust, cultural variations, and changes in engagement over time.

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