

## **Influence of social media information acceptance on university students' shopping intention**

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### Abstract

This study examines how accepting information on social media—and the factors that shape that acceptance—affects students' intention to shop for sustainable goods. A survey of 160 Bangladeshi university students found clear, consistent patterns. Positive attitudes toward information on social media increased both the perceived usefulness of that information and the willingness to accept it, and also directly raised intention to shop via social platforms. Perceived usefulness further strengthened information acceptance, and acceptance, in turn, increased shopping intention. Attitudes toward information had the strongest effect on perceived usefulness and a sizable direct effect on intention, revealing two pathways: a direct persuasive route and an indirect route through usefulness and acceptance. These results extend established behavioral and information-adoption theories to a developing, collectivist setting. Practically, brands and educators should provide transparent, specific, and verifiable content, and support peer-led communities that help students judge credibility—thereby turning interest in sustainability into confident purchase intentions.

**Keywords:** Social media shopping, attitude to information, information acceptance, information usefulness

### 1. Introduction

University students in developing countries constitute a large and increasingly digital buyer segment. Yet, relatively few studies focus on how their social-media experiences shape shopping intentions—particularly in Bangladesh, where the number of universities has surged. Students are heavily influenced by social platforms. Given this context, it is essential to understand how social media information acceptance influences university students' intentions to shop via social media for sustainable goods. As digital marketplaces evolve, social media functions as both a commercial and social ecosystem (Jacobson et al., 2020), enabling direct consumer–brand interactions and amplifying peer influence on purchasing decisions (Wang et al., 2012). Social media marketing benefits consumers (Shareef et al., 2019), particularly digital natives who rely on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube; exposure to company pages and influencer endorsements shapes how these users discover, evaluate, and purchase products (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Van den Bergh et al., 2024). Such exposure often prompts peer communication, where users discuss and share views within their networks (Mikum et al., 2018), because relatable endorsements foster trust and reduce perceived risk (Bryła et al., 2022).

Cultural context further heightens these dynamics. In collectivist cultures, social norms and peer ties strongly influence decisions including consumption (Hofstede, 2011). In South Asia, peer and family networks significantly shape preferences; peer recommendations affect purchase intentions more among collectivists than among individualists (Kim et al., 2019). In countries such as India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, people often seek peer advice, especially for ethically significant or long-term purchases

such as sustainable goods (Kongsompong et al., 2009). Consumer socialization theory explains that individuals learn consumption behavior through social interactions (Ward, 1974). This is particularly relevant on platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, where over 74% of South Asian youth use social media and rely on peer input (Saeed et al., 2019). Peer-generated content—reviews, blogs, and discussions—enhances message trust and credibility, making peer endorsements more persuasive than traditional advertising for sustainable products (Zafar et al., 2021).

Despite the deep integration of social media into students' lives, sustainable shopping through social media remains underexplored in Asian economies. Bangladesh's digital media market is expanding and projected to reach 74.4 million users by 2027 (Statista, 2024). However, local research has concentrated on convenience, trust, and website quality (Al Asheq et al., 2022), cost efficiency and delivery (Saha et al., 2020), technology (Islam et al., 2023), and brand engagement (Hafez, 2023), while largely overlooking how peer communication and social media marketing co-shape sustainable shopping behavior. Moreover, the global literature lacks adequate insights into how peer communication interacts with marketing communications and key behavioral determinants to influence information processing and acceptance in social commerce contexts. These gaps are particularly salient for Bangladeshi university students—a sizable, digitally native population whose purchase journeys are increasingly mediated by social media.

Against this backdrop, the present study proposes and tests a conceptual model that integrates attitudes toward social-media information, information usefulness, information acceptance, and social media shopping intention, situated within the Theory of Reasoned Action/Theory of Planned Behavior and information-processing perspectives (Ajzen, 1991; Davis, 1989). The model is motivated by evidence that when consumers perceive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as credible, relevant, and diagnostic, they allocate more central-route attention and are more likely to find the information useful and adopt it in decisions (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Erkan & Evans, 2018). Extending consumer socialization theory to a social commerce setting, we conceptualize information acceptance as a proximal mechanism through which attitudes and perceived usefulness derived from community-page content translate into shopping intention (Chu & Kim, 2011; Cheung & Thadani, 2012). So, the study pursues the following objectives:

- A. To assess the link between attitudes toward information and information acceptance
- B. To determine whether information acceptance predicts social media shopping intention

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes context-specific evidence from Bangladesh's university population to clarify how attitudes toward community-page information shape perceived usefulness and information acceptance, and how these, in turn, influence social media shopping intentions for sustainable goods—thereby responding directly to the noted gaps in developing-country research.

## 2.Literature review

**Social media shopping** Social media has collapsed the path from discovery to purchase for sustainable goods into a few taps, blending brand messages with creator and peer communications in a single, always-on stream. This “hybrid element of the promotion mix” helps explain why platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube simultaneously host firm-generated content and interpersonal influence that marketers cannot fully control (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). In social commerce, community features (e.g., recommendations, reviews, groups) build trust, and that trust reliably predicts intention to buy—an effect documented across multiple platform contexts (Hajli, 2015). In Bangladesh, the salience of these dynamics is rising as social media adoption expands; recent estimates suggest roughly 60 million active social media user identities at the start of 2025, underscoring the channel's reach among young, university-age audiences (DataReportal, 2025).

Whether these exposures convert to shopping intentions for sustainable goods depends heavily on users' attitudes toward the information they encounter—its credibility, quality, and diagnostic value. Information-processing research shows that evaluations of message or source quality shape perceived usefulness, which then drives information adoption (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). Empirical work in social media settings further reports that when eWOM is judged credible and useful, purchase intentions increase—often more strongly than on traditional shopping sites (Erkan & Evans, 2018). These results align with dual-process persuasion theory: when sustainability messages invite central processing (clear evidence, certification, comparatives), young consumers form more stable, intention-relevant attitudes than when relying on peripheral cues alone (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

For student and early-career cohorts—often budget-constrained but values-oriented—credible, peer-visible content reduces uncertainty about “green” claims and makes sustainable options feel like savvy choices rather than costly sacrifices. As social ties and peer norms remain potent in South and Southeast Asian settings, interpersonal influence channeled through social platforms can further amplify these effects (Hofstede, 2011). In short, cultivating positive (yet discerning) attitudes toward sustainability information—grounded in transparent evidence and third-party assurance—plays a pivotal role in translating social media exposure into shopping intention among young consumers.

### 2.1 Attitudes toward information and information usefulness.

A favorable attitude toward community-page information should heighten users' cognitive appraisal of that information's utility. In the theory of reasoned action or theory of planned behavior, attitude shapes evaluative judgments that precede intention (Ajzen, 1991). In Technology acceptance model and information acceptance model, perceived usefulness (PU) is a proximal cognitive belief that is responsive to how users evaluate message quality and source credibility (Davis, 1989; Sussman & Siegal, 2003). When consumers hold positive attitudes toward eWOM—seeing it as credible, relevant, and diagnostic—they allocate more central-route attention, which enhances perceived usefulness (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Erkan & Evans, 2018). Recent eWOM work also shows that ATI's cognitive (credibility/relevance) and affective (trust/excitement) appraisals increase the perceived utility of social content, especially in mobile/social settings (Ngo et al., 2024). Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study is drawn as:

H1: Attitudes toward information on social media community pages positively relate to information usefulness.

### 2.2 Attitudes toward information on social media and information acceptance

Information acceptance/adoption reflects integrating eWOM into one's decision process (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). IAM posit that message-level evaluations (quality/credibility) and user attitudes toward that information drive adoption (Erkan & Evans, 2018). When users like, trust, and feel positive about eWOM, they are more willing to internalize it as decision input (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Cheung et al., 2008). Empirically, positive ATI increases willingness to act on eWOM (Ngo et al., 2024) and predicts subsequent acceptance in online communities (Chu & Kim, 2011; Erkan & Evans, 2018). Thus, the next hypothesis is developed as

H2: Attitudes toward information on social media community pages positively relate to information acceptance.

### 2.3 Attitudes toward information on social media and social media shopping intention

In TRA or TPB, attitude is a robust antecedent of behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). In social commerce, users with favorable ATI toward eWOM show stronger intentions to shop via social platforms, as ATI enhances brand or product evaluations and reduces uncertainty (Erkan & Evans, 2018; Leong et al., 2021). Meta-analytic and integrative reviews of eWOM further report that positive evaluations of online opinions translate into higher purchase intentions, particularly when content is perceived as helpful and credible (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). Evidence in social or mobile contexts

confirms attitudes to information direct intention through affective engagement and identification (Ngo et al., 2024). Thus, another hypothesis is developed as:

H3: Attitudes toward information on social media community pages positively relate to social media shopping intention.

#### 2.4 Perceived usefulness of information on social media and information acceptance

IAM specifies perceived usefulness as a key cognitive mechanism that converts exposure into adoption: higher usefulness leads users to accept and rely on the information (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Cheung et al., 2008). Across eWOM studies, perceived usefulness consistently predicts information adoption/acceptance because useful content reduces search costs and clarifies choice criteria (Chu & Kim, 2011; Erkan & Evans, 2018). Recent work reiterates that when social content is judged useful, consumers are more likely to integrate it into decisions (Leong et al., 2021). Hence, one more hypothesis is drawn as follow:

H4: Information usefulness on social media community pages positively relates to information acceptance.

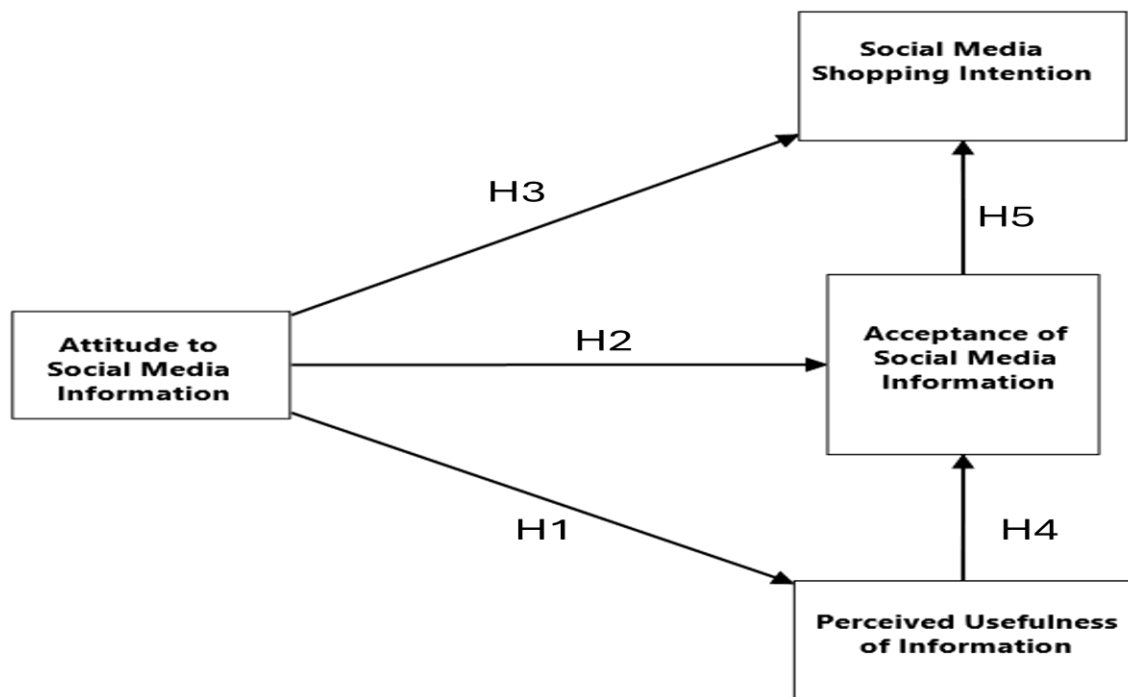
#### 2.5 Acceptance of information on social media and social media shopping intention

Social media shopping intention is the purchase intention of products or services online (Meskaran et al., 2013). Information acceptance means a willingness to rely on useful information—reading it, using it, and even contributing opinions that guide intended purchases (Hussain et al., 2017). When users accept and rely on online information, they are more likely to state an intention to buy, a result reported widely in online shopping research (Erkan & Evans, 2018). Accepting social media information reduces uncertainty and raises decision confidence, which in turn lifts shopping intention (Filiari, 2015). Consistent with the Information Adoption Model and related IACM work, adoption functions as a proximal driver of intention in social media communities (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Cheung et al., 2008). Social commerce studies repeatedly document a positive path from acceptance to intention (Torres et al., 2018; Hajli, 2015), including sustainability contexts where informative cues strengthen pro-purchase intentions (Horrich et al., 2025).

So, the final hypothesis of the study is the following:

H5. Information acceptance on social media community pages positively relates to social media shopping intention.

Based on the review, the following research model is drawn to test empirically for this study.



*Figure 1. Conceptual model of the present study*

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Measurement items of the study

The measurement items of the study were adopted from a previously established scale, as the current research project applies established theories in a specific context within a limited budget. Attitudes toward information (ATIF) included four items (Erkan & Evans, 2018), perceived usefulness of information was tested with four items (Leong et al., 2021), information acceptance of social media was measured with four items (Leong et al., 2021), and social media shopping intention (SMSI) was measured with five items (Fu et al., 2020).

#### 3.2 Data collection

A purposive, non-probability sampling approach was used due to the expense and logistical complexity associated with probability-based designs (Saunders, 2009). The survey instrument was drafted in English, translated into Bengali, and then back-translated by a bilingual academic to ensure fidelity. The study targeted Bangladeshi university students who actively use social media. A Google Forms link was shared with 60 Master's students through WhatsApp class groups, and—after removing duplicate entries—160 usable questionnaires were obtained over a two-week period in May 2024.

#### 3.3 Data analysis

Data were analyzed in SmartPLS 4 (Ringle et al., 2024). Measurement reliability and validity were examined via Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion alongside the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio. The structural model was estimated with path coefficients and significance metrics (t-values, p-values) obtained through bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, following the guidance of Hair et al. (2019).

4. Results of the study

4.1 Respondents' profile

The survey captured responses from 160 students. Most were undergraduates (63.1%), with the remaining 36.9% enrolled in postgraduate programs. The sample was 70.6% male and 29.4% female. As you would expect in a university setting, ages clustered in the early twenties: 125 students (78.1%) were 22–24 years old, 22 (13.8%) were 19–21, and 13 (8.1%) were 25–27 or older. Respondents reported a range of home locations: rural (31.25%) and city-center (30.0%) in near-equal proportions, followed by semi-urban (26.25%) and urban neighborhoods (12.5%). Social media engagement was high overall. The largest group used social media about four hours per day (41.9%); roughly one-third reported around two hours (34.4%); 16.3% used about three hours; and only small shares were at the extremes of one or five hours (about 7.5% each).

4.2 Measurement model results

All four latent constructs—attitudes toward information (ATIF), perceived usefulness of information (PUIF), information acceptance (AINF), and social media shopping intention (SMSI)—demonstrated strong indicator reliability, with standardized loadings predominantly  $\geq 0.80$ . Internal consistency was satisfactory: Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.847 (SMSI) to 0.880 (AINF), and composite reliability (CR) from 0.855 (SMSI) to 0.886 (AINF). Convergent validity was supported as average variance extracted (AVE) exceeded the 0.50 threshold for every construct (ATIF = 0.698; PUIF = 0.727; AINF = 0.735; SMSI = 0.620). Discriminant validity met the Fornell–Larcker criterion (the square roots of AVE on the diagonal exceeded off-diagonal correlations), and the HTMT assessment indicated adequate separation among constructs.

Table 1. Measurement model results for the study

Loadings		Reliability			Discriminate validity		
Items	Constructs	$\alpha$	CR	AVE	AINF	ATI	Constructs
	AINF F	ATI F	SMSI I		F	F	PUIF
AINF							
1	0.858						
AINF							
2	0.826						AINF
AINF							
3	0.883						
AINF				0.88	0.88	0.73	
4	0.860			0	6	5	
ATIF1	0.84						
	1						
ATIF2	0.82						
	1						ATIF
ATIF3	0.82						
	7						
ATIF4	0.85			0.85	0.85	0.69	0.839
	2			6	7	8	
PUIF1		0.83					
		2					
PUIF2		0.89		0.87	0.87	0.72	0.868
		9		4	7	7	0.83
						2	PUIF

	0.87					
PUIF3	1					
	0.80					
PUIF4	5					
SMSI						
1	0.796					
SMSI						
2	0.781					
SMSI						SMSI
3	0.770				0.72	
SMSI					5	
4	0.810					
SMSI		0.84	0.85	0.62		0.80
5	0.779	7	5	0	0.722	6

4.3 Structural model results

Bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples showed that all hypothesized paths (Figure 2 and Table 2) were positive and statistically significant. Specifically, ATIF→PUIF ( $\beta = 0.724, t = 14.642, p < 0.001$ ) and PUIF→AINF ( $\beta = 0.489, t = 5.391, p < 0.001$ ) underscore the information-processing pathway anticipated by IAM/IACM. ATIF also directly increased AINF ( $\beta = 0.382, t = 4.649, p < 0.001$ ) and SMSI ( $\beta = 0.503, t = 4.435, p < 0.001$ ). Finally, AINF positively influenced SMSI ( $\beta = 0.266, t = 2.038, p = 0.042$ ). Thus, H1–H5 were all supported.

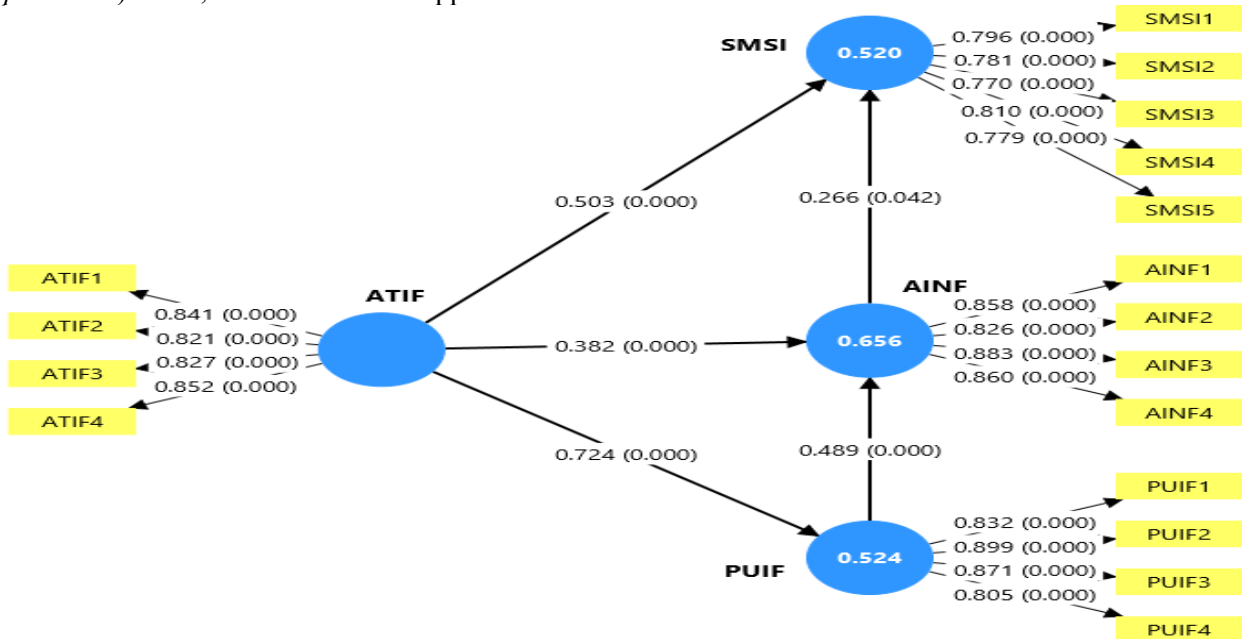


Figure 2. The structural model of the study.

Note: The values on the circle are R<sup>2</sup> values (coefficient of determination).

Table 2. Structural model results

Hypotheses	$\beta$	SD	t	Sig	Decision
AINF -> SMSI	0.266	0.130	2.038	0.042	Accept
ATIF -> AINF	0.382	0.082	4.649	0.000	Accept
ATIF -> PUIF	0.724	0.049	14.642	0.000	Accept
ATIF -> SMSI	0.503	0.113	4.435	0.000	Accept
PUIF -> AINF	0.489	0.091	5.391	0.000	Accept

Not only are the hypothetical relationships firmly based on the results of  $\beta$  values, but the higher  $R^2$  values also indicate that the predictability of the antecedents is strong in the proposed model.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 General discussion of the results

Three patterns stand out. First, attitudes toward information (ATIF) emerged as the strongest upstream driver (most significant coefficient to PUIF; meaningful direct effects on AINF and SMSI). This aligns with TRA/TPB logic that favorable evaluations precede intention (Ajzen, 1991) and with IAM's proposition that message evaluations shape usefulness and adoption (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Cheung et al., 2008). Second, usefulness operates as a cognitive conduit: the sizeable ATIF→PUIF and PUIF→AINF links indicate that students translate positive evaluations into perceptions of utility, which then foster acceptance—consistent with eWOM research in social or mobile contexts (Erkan & Evans, 2018; Leong et al., 2021). Third, acceptance bridges cognition and intention: AINF→SMSI, although smaller than ATIF→SMSI, remains significant, echoing findings that information adoption is a proximal driver of purchase intention in social commerce (Hajli, 2015; Torres et al., 2018).

The results reinforce core predictions from TPB (attitude → intention) and IAM (evaluation → usefulness → adoption). The strong ATIF→PUIF effect echoes studies showing that credibility, relevance, and diagnosticity heighten perceived usefulness of social content (Erkan & Evans, 2018; Leong et al., 2021). The positive AINF→SMSI path accords with social-commerce work linking community eWOM adoption to buying intention (Hajli, 2015; Torres et al., 2018). In a developing country, student sample, these effects suggest that—even amid price sensitivity—trusted, applicable social content can move students toward sustainable shopping via social media, complementing evidence that peer/creator signals lower uncertainty for young buyers (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Where our findings push further is the simultaneous presence of both a direct ATIF→SMSI effect and an indirect route via PUIF and AINF, highlighting a dual pathway (persuasion and adoption) in a Bangladesh context.

Although all hypotheses were supported, two cautionary notes are warranted. First, the AINF→SMSI coefficient while significant, is modest relative to the direct ATIF→SMSI effect. This suggests that shaping attitudes toward information may be at least as consequential as fostering adoption mechanics—especially when students form quick judgments from creator/peer content. Second, the cross-sectional, non-probability design limits causal claims and generalizability beyond the sampled universities; longitudinal or experimental work could unpack how repeated exposures and evolving trust recalibrate usefulness and acceptance over time. Finally, given the prevalence of greenwashing risks in social feeds, future models might incorporate claim credibility/authentication and platform differences to test boundary conditions for the ATIF→PUIF→AINF cascade.

### 5.2 Theoretical and practical implications

The study corroborates an integrated TPB and IAM/IACM account in social commerce for sustainable goods among students: evaluative attitude (ATIF) is foundational, cognitive appraisal (PUIF) is the mediator that translates attitude into adoption (AINF), and adoption contributes to intention (SMSI). This sequencing refines consumer-socialization views by specifying *how* peer/creator messages on community pages become actionable intentions in a collectivist, developing-country setting (Ajzen, 1991; Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Cheung et al., 2008; Leong et al., 2021).

Practically, for sustainable brands and campus-adjacent sellers, clarity and proof can lead to increased perceived usefulness: Emphasize certifications, comparative impact, and concrete benefits to enhance perceived value. Use relatable creators and peer advocates; align claims with student values and budgets to boost ATIF and its direct effect on SMSI. It is needed to support student-led reviewer communities

and media-literacy interventions that sharpen credibility judgments—leveraging the demonstrated role of attitudes and usefulness in intention formation.

## 6. Conclusion

The model tested on Bangladeshi university students shows that positive attitudes toward social-media information substantially enhance both the perceived usefulness and acceptance of that information, and—directly and indirectly—increase social-media shopping intention for sustainable goods. The pattern validates well-established behavioral and information-adoption theories within a developing-country student context, offering actionable guidance for sustainable marketers and campus decision-makers. Future work should test boundary conditions (platform differences, claim verification) and employ designs that can strengthen causal inference.

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