



## **Effects of Greenwashing on Consumer Perception**

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## Abstract

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This research-oriented bachelor's thesis is part of the requirements of Haaga-Helia's programme in International Business, major in Customer Relationship Management and Communication.

The aim of this thesis is to understand the effects of greenwashing on consumer perception. Additionally, it examines the consumer's reasons for buying green, and their perception of the greenwashing phenomenon.

The thesis consists of a theoretical and an empirical section. The theoretical part of this study reviews the concepts of ethical consumer behaviour, brand image and perception, corporate social responsibility, and greenwashing. The empirical part analyses the data gathered through a survey answered by 152 participants from Spain and Finland. The results aim at answering the research question of this study and are analysed according to the participant's country of residence, age, and sex.

The results from this thesis indicate that about half of the participants acknowledged to often purchase eco-labelled products, mainly due to environmental reasons and health-related benefits. However, from all the sociodemographic factors analysed, only the country of residence played a significant role in the decision-making of purchasing ecological products. Also, majority of the respondents were not familiar with the concept of greenwashing, and many were unable to correctly identify greenwashed products in a proposed case-study. Additionally, about half of the participants claimed that they would not purchase products from greenwashing companies.

Overall, this study shows that the participants had relatively low awareness about greenwashing. Also, it suggests that several factors can suppress ecological principles when it comes to making purchasing decisions of greenwashed products.

**Keywords**

Greenwashing, sustainability, CSR, brand image.

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# 1 Introduction

This is a research-based bachelor's thesis for the Degree Programme in International Business in the major specialization of Customer Relationship Management and Communication in the Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. This chapter introduces the topics relevant to this research (including greenwashing and ethical purchasing). Additionally, the research problem and objectives of this thesis are established.

## 1.1 Background

The concept of greenwashing was coined over 30 years ago (Watson 2016), and it has become more and more commonplace. With the increase in public concern over greenwashing during the past two decades, a great body of academic research has emerged, with over 1 300 scholarly articles published to date (Gatti, Seele & Rademacher 2019, 1).

The increase in greenwashing practices is in line with a general increase in ethical consumption. Only in the UK, the the consumer market for ethical goods has grown 34-fold, especially the food and drink segment. (Berjikian 2020.) Hence, it is only logical that sustainable values and actions affect a company's image (brand image), the customer's perception, and, ultimately, the corporation's revenue (Oliveira & Sullivan 2015, 2).

This shift in the market has brought not only new legislation, but also self-regulatory practices within small and large corporations (corporate social responsibility, CSR). Interestingly, corporate responsibility is an increasingly popular indicator of non-financial performance. (Carpenter, Bauer & Erdogan 2012, 344-346.)

In conclusion, the topics of ethical consumer behaviour and greenwashing are of great interest within the field of customer relationship management and communication. Hence, the results from this research will be highly relevant and will increase the overall knowledge on how widespread greenwashing is, and how it is perceived by the general public. Additionally, the outcome of this thesis will be helpful for companies to design their marketing campaigns and to design their CSR strategy. Finally, it will enable consumers to make better purchasing decisions and to realise their influence over the market.

## 1.2 Research Question

This thesis aims to understand whether the general public is aware of greenwashing and whether people perceive this marketing strategy in their daily lives. The outcomes of the thesis aim at better understanding the effects of unethical marketing strategies in brand

perception and consumer behaviour. This will be useful for companies in the private sector when developing their marketing strategy.

The research question (RQ) of this thesis is: What are the effects of greenwashing on consumer perception?

The research question was divided into investigative questions (IQ) as follows:

IQ1. What are people's reasons for buying green?

IQ2. How aware is the general population of the greenwashing phenomenon?

IQ3. How are people's perception and trust affected when they discover that a company has been using greenwashing tactics?

The table below (Table 1) presents the investigative questions, theoretical framework components, research methods, and results chapters for each investigative question.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

<b>Investigative question</b>	<b>Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>Research Methods</b>	<b>Results (chapter)</b>
IQ 1. What are people's reasons for buying green?	Ethical consumer behaviour Ethical consumer behaviour according to age and sex Corporate social responsibility	Survey of consumers. Questionnaire questions 4-6	4.2 4.2.1 4.2.1.1 4.2.1.2 4.2.1.3 4.2.2
IQ 2. How aware is the general population of the greenwashing phenomenon?	Ethical consumer behaviour Greenwashing Greenwashing history and examples	Survey of consumers. Questionnaire questions 7-10	4.3 4.3.1 4.3.2 4.3.3
IQ 3. How are people's perception and trust affected when they discover that a company has been using greenwashing tactics?	Ethical consumer behaviour Greenwashing Greenwashing history and examples Corporate social responsibility Brand image and perception	Survey of consumers. Questionnaire questions 11-12	4.4 4.4.1 4.4.2

### 1.3 Project Scope

The target of this research is the general public, but the results will be fragmented according to age and sex. These segmentations have been selected because they are often analysed in articles researching ethical buying behaviours with conflicting results (Fisher, Bashyal & Bachman, 172-184; Pedrini & Ferri 2014, 127-138; Elliott 2013, 294-322). Additionally, two different cohorts will be analysed: one from Spain and another one from Finland. This will allow us to understand whether the variable “country of residence” plays an important role in everyday purchasing behaviour and greenwashing perception, as it does with brand image/perception (Hsieh, Ze & Pan 2004, 252).

In order to facilitate the participant’s responses, I will focus the research on customer’s behaviours when purchasing first-need products (e.g. food, beverages, and hygienic products) from the supermarket. This is an everyday task that everyone participates in, so it will give accurate information about how greenwashing penetrates the quotidian life of the participants.

### 1.4 Benefits

Major stakeholders for this project are companies and organizations oriented to ethical business practices, and the general population.

Ethical brands can benefit from this study as it provides data regarding ethical customer behaviour and their reaction to greenwashing. This is useful when preparing marketing campaigns and defining their CSR strategy.

Regarding the general public, this study offers valuable information on how companies can manipulate them in believing that their products are ecological and/or ethical. Hence, it will help in allowing them to make better purchasing decisions and realising their power to influence the market.

The author of this thesis is an important stakeholder, as she is very interested in sustainable businesses and corporate responsibility and sustainability. Naturally, she is very concerned about the greenwashing effect, and wants to better understand how widespread it is and how it is perceived by the general population. Hence, the results of this research will have a direct impact on her.

## 1.5 Key Concepts

**Greenwashing** refers to a form of selective disclosure in which companies encourage environmentally friendly programmes without full disclosure of negative information, in order to deflect attention from its less ethical activities (Bowen 2014, 19)

**Ethical consumer** refers to someone who considers the public consequences of her private consumption. These individuals also attempt to use their purchasing power to encourage social change. (Webster 1975, 188-196; Papaoikonomou, Ryan & Valverde 2011, 197-198.)

**Corporate social responsibility (CSR)** is the model that a company has in place to self-regulate. In spite of the ubiquitous use of this concept, there is no clear consensus about its definition. (Sheehy 2015, 625.)

**Brand image** is the mental picture that a consumer has about a brand; it is related to the brand identity, which is the essence (including core values and deeper meaning) of a brand. (Franzen & Moriarty 2009, 19-20.)



## 2 Ethical consumer behaviour and greenwashing

This chapter defines the key concepts, theories and models used in this thesis. The purpose of this chapter is to establish the theoretical basis required for the empirical section of the thesis.

The main topics of this review are ethical consumer behaviour, brand image, corporate social responsibility, and greenwashing. All these are intertwined as indicated in Figure 1, which offers a visual representation of the theoretical framework of the thesis.

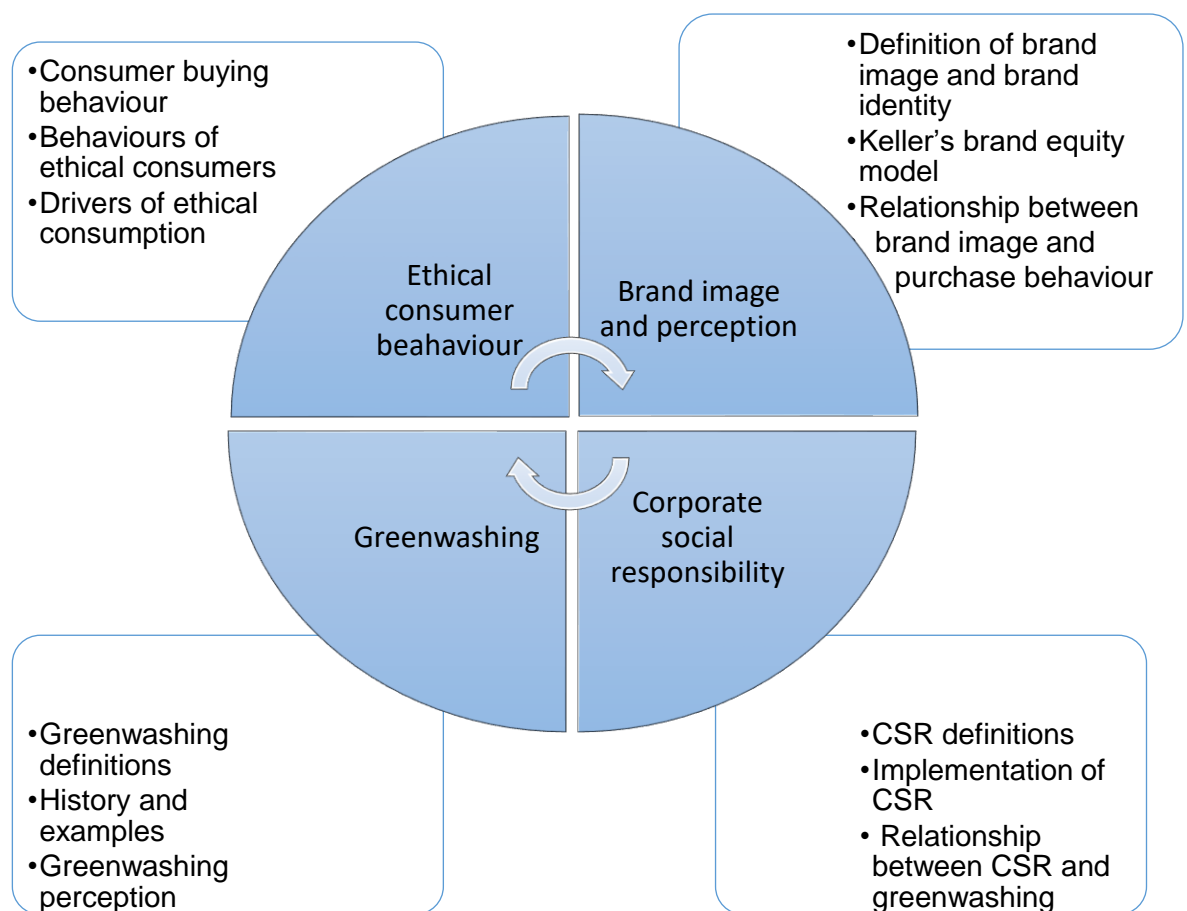


Figure 1. Structure of the theoretical framework of this thesis.

### 2.1 Ethical consumer behaviour

Ecological consumption is on the rise- Globally, the number of consumers turning to eco-friendly products grew 10% annually between the years 2011-2014 (IESE 2013). In general terms, consumer buying behaviour is the decision processes involved in buying and using products. It is compound of six stages: (1) problem recognition (awareness of need), (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase decision, (5) purchase, and (6) post-purchase evaluation. However, not all consumers go through all

the phases, as it depends on how familiar they are with the product before entering the decision process (Brown 1996, 24-26.) However, there are various factors that can directly affect consumer's purchase decision, other than the product, these brand awareness and market share (Hsieh & al. 2004, 252).

### **2.1.1 Ethical consumers**

Ethical consumers are those whose purchase decision is influenced by ethical reasons (Papaoikonomou & al. 2011, 197-198). The ethical reasons behind this behaviour are usually from the environmental or societal standpoints (Parks 2019).

Consumers expressing ethical concerns is not a new idea. Already in 1975, Webster defined the ethical consumer as someone who considers the public consequences of her private consumption and that attempts to use their purchasing power to encourage social change. Nowadays, politics, altruism and the market, are some of the variables driving ethical consumption (Parks 2019).

It is worth noting that, in general lines, ethical consumption is on the rise. Only in the UK, the consumer market for ethical goods has grown from 1.2 GBP billion in 1999 to 41.1 GBP billion in 2018. The food and drink segment has been the largest, with a grow from 1 GBP billion in 1999 to 12 GBP billion in 2018, in a market increase of 611%. A reason for this is that this segment has well-established ethical standards, such as Fairtrade and standardised organic labels issued by independent bodies. (Berjikian 2020.)

However, as mentioned earlier, there is more than one motivation behind the ethical consumers. A recent article has researched this in depth and has found that most consumers chose to buy ecological/ethical products because they prefer and value fair-trade products. Interestingly, the second most valuable narrative for consumers was that the products were charitable. (Parks 2019) This is in line with studies that indicate that ethical consumer behaviour is a multifaceted phenomenon, and ethical consumers constitute an ever-evolving tendency (Papaoikonomou & al. 2011, 198-199).

However, researchers have found that very seldom do people engage in consistent action in terms of ethical consumption (Rahikainen 2015, 21). Parks (2019) suggests that "Perhaps ethical consumption appeals to those who want to make a difference but don't want to spend too much time or energy doing it". In line with this, research shows that the level of ethical awareness/knowledge seems to affect only marginally the ethical consumption actions (Rahikainen 2015, 79).

### **2.1.2 Ethical customer behaviour according to age and sex**

Previous studies show that women are more likely to exhibit green behaviours, but age was found to have no impact on the environmentally friendly behaviours of respondents. Differently, other studies find that age is positively associated with responsible consumption, while sex is not a predictor of valuing green goods (Fisher & al. 2012, 172-184; 127-138; Elliott 2013, 294-322).

However, sex and age are not the only variables affecting consumer behaviour. For example, highly educated people are more likely to purchase ethical goods than the average (Pedrini & Ferri 2014, 127-138).

### **2.1.3 Brand image and perception**

Some marketing experts claim that the idea of brand image is superficial; most likely this is due to the interchangeability between “brand identity” and “brand image” concepts. The former refers to the essence of the company, including core values and deeper meaning, while brand image is the mental picture that a consumer has about a brand. (Franzen & Moriarty 2009, 19-20.)

Consumers often select brands based on their perception of the brand, so brand strategy is essential in building a brand image and capturing clients. However, the perception of a brand might be affected by factors other than product, such as the country and corporate image (Hsieh & al. 2004, 252).

### **2.1.4 Brand equity**

The value of a brand, or brand equity, can be defined as the “premium that a company generates from a product with a recognizable name when compared to a generic” (Hayes 2021). In order to generate a good perception of the brand, the correct type of experiences must be built around the brand in order to generate positive perceptions about it (Corporate Finance Institute).

Keller’s brand equity model offers four steps to create a successful brand:

- (1) Brand identity: to create a brand that stands out.
- (2) Brand meaning: based on performance (meaning of the brand) and imagery (what the brand stands for).
- (3) Brand Response: response from the customers, driven by quality, credibility, consideration, and superiority.

- (4) Brand resonance: in which the customer develops a deep relationship with the brand. (Corporate Finance Institute.)

Hence, it is important that the strategy takes into consideration both the brand's identity and image: it should identify the function of its products and then create the meaning (or image) of the brand. By doing so it will be able to organise a consumer's experiences with the product and build a long-term relationship. (Franzen & Moriarty 2009, 19-20.)

However, how a specific customer perceives a brand might be different than what the firm intended (Hsieh & al. 2004, 252).

### 2.1.5 Relationship between brand image and purchase behaviour

As discussed in chapter 2.1., consumer behaviour is influenced by various external stimuli. Hence, brand image perception influences brand purchase behaviour.

Customer's perception of a brand is usually not only based on the product (product-specific), but it is influenced by other factors, such as the country and corporate image. It has been shown that brand image of a multi-national company can change across countries: factors such as socioeconomic development can affect the link between brand performance and brand image. Additionally, sociodemographic factors (such as age, sex, or household income) are moderators of the brand image perception and influence the customer's purchase behaviour. Furthermore, researchers claim that characteristics such as brand awareness and market share can directly affect consumer choices. These factors are summarised in Figure 2. (Hsieh & al. 2004, 254.)

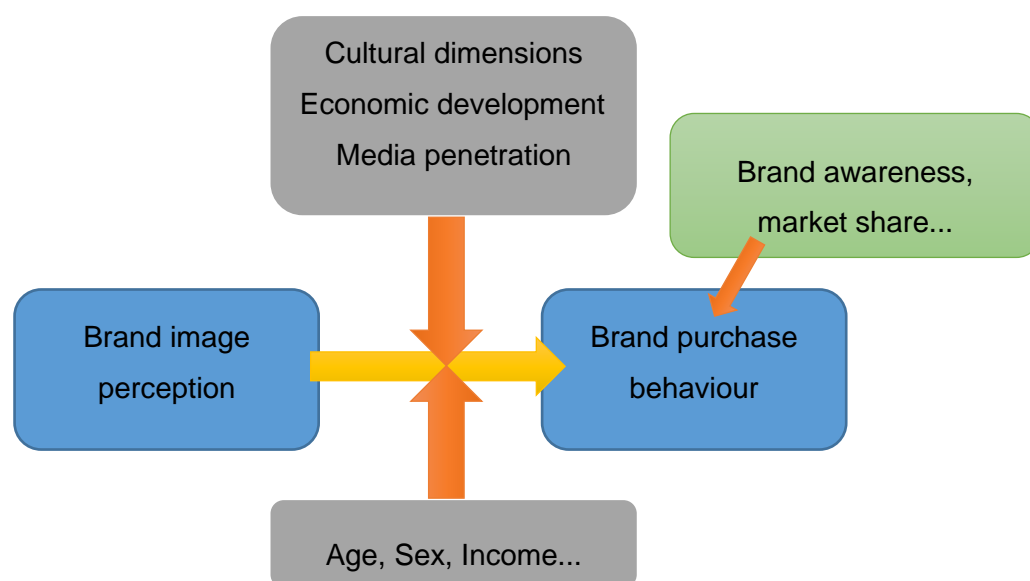


Figure 2. Relationship between brand image and purchase behaviour. Modified from Hsieh & al (2004, 254).

## 2.2 Corporate social responsibility

The term corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been in use for over 15 years (Carpenter & al. 2012, 33-36). However, despite its long history and widespread use, there is no consensus about the definition for it (Sheehy 2015, 625).

The following definitions can be used to understand the concept of CSR:

CSR “refers to how companies manage their business processes to produce an overall positive effect on society” (Carpenter & al. 2012, 342).

CSR is the model that a company has in place to self-regulate (Sheehy 2015, 625).

CSR is “the responsibility of enterprises for their impact on society (European Commission).

CSR is “a business approach that creates long-term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risks deriving from economic, environmental and social developments.” (The Dow Jones Sustainability Index in Carpenter & al. 2012, 342).

Previous research that shows that globally people care about company’s CSRs. For example, about 70% of participants located in Canada and the UK cared about the social responsibility of the organisation. This number is even higher in emerging economies- 85% of Brazilians, 74% of Pakistanis, and 94% of Chinese care about the social responsibility of companies, respectively. Consequently, higher green aspects of products are advertised from the companies. (Urbanski & ul Haque 2020, 1-3.)

### 2.2.1 Implementation of a CSR strategy

Hence, as it is something defined by the company, should be led by the business itself (European Commission). However, different approaches of public regulation have blooming in the recent years, with governments heavily investing in policies aiming at shaping the regulatory environment. A very significant case is India’s Company Law reform from 2013, which dictates spending a percentage of the company’s profits on CSR. (Sheehy 2015, 634.) In line with the previous, the European Union has acknowledged its important role in encouraging companies to act responsively, as corporations have “significant impacts on the lives of citizens in the EU in terms of working conditions, human rights, health, the environment, innovation, education and training”. Thus, the EU has in place a mix of voluntary and mandatory actions to promote CSR. (European Commission.)

Companies can become socially responsible by “integrating social, environmental, ethical, consumer, and human rights concerns into their business strategy and operations” (European Commission). Various reports have found that corporate responsibility has been growing in importance as an indicator of nonfinancial performance. In 2008, KPMG consulting found an increase in the publication of corporate responsibility reports in the United States, (from 37% in 2005 to 74%). (Carpenter & al., 2012, 344-346.) However, in 2010, even though over 75% of executives worldwide believed that sustainability is key for financial success, only between 30-40% of them seriously implemented CSR policies.

One reason might be that they do not have a clear view on sustainability, or that there is no alignment on who is responsible for these issues, or that, simply, the company does not make a strong commitment to sustainability. (Mirvis, Googins & Kinnicutt, S. 2010, 316.)

Therefore, companies should have a clear notion of their CSR, and they should include it in the company’s vision, mission, and values, in order to confer purpose and meaning as an organisation. Additionally, the company should implement its CSR policy by making public commitments that should not be broken. By doing so, the company will establish a framework on how to manage relationships and take appropriate decisions and, ultimately, create shared value. (Insight Corporate Excellence, 2012.)

### **2.2.2 Relationship between CSR and greenwashing**

An increasing number of companies have been accused of not following through with their CSR claims (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-2). Hence, using CSR and sustainability only for public relations can come at a risk, as it might result in “failing to close the gap between preaching and practices” (Mirvis & al. 2010, 320). This divergence between socially responsible communication and practices is commonly known as greenwashing (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-2).

Oliveira and Sullivan (2015, 3) claim that “The first step in developing a “sustainable” strategy is to identify the relevance of the issue for the sector”. In line with this, brands in sectors where sustainability is not relevant have a high risk of incurring in greenwashing practices by “trying to differentiate through communication but not investing in sustainable development”.

## 2.3 Greenwashing

The term greenwashing was conceptualised over three decades ago, and the number of examples of this practise has grown at a great rate. A study by an environmental marketing firm showed that 99% of 1 018 surveyed consumer products were guilty of greenwashing (Oliveira & Sullivan 2015, 3).

Consequently, the phenomenon is widely discussed in the media, and several non-governmental organisations have assumed the role of market monitors. Interestingly, a third-party accusation is essential, as greenwashing only seems to exist when one of these “watchdogs” highlights its falsehood. As a result, the general public has grown increasingly wary about the veracity of corporate environmental claims. (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-3.)

### 2.3.1 Definitions of greenwashing

Given the increase in greenwashing practices, the body of research about the topic has greatly increased in the recent years. One of the main topics of research is the diverging definitions of the term greenwashing. (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-14.) As written in a recent review (Gatti & al. 2019, 7-8), Marcus Linder from the Center for Business Innovation at Chalmers University (Sweden) distinguishes between two major classes of definitions:

- (1) Object attribute view: From the perspective of the consistency between the attributes of a product and the corporate claims regarding the sustainability of said product. In this case, the focus is on the product and its characteristics, and it can be considered false advertising, as they promise more than what they eventually deliver.
- (2) Process attribute view: Analyses the phenomenon from the point of view of the communication process. Hence, it considers the company’s efforts to communicate the sustainability values of a product in relation to the efforts to improve the greenness of the product itself. So, it misleads the customers about the company’s environmental practices.

As discussed in the chapter 2.3., CSR is totally voluntary and virtually unregulated. This greatly facilitates the diffusion of greenwashing. However, this issue is not easily solved, as mandatory CSR regulations would promote that companies find ways to go around the law. (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-14.) Gatti and colleagues (2018, 961–972) concluded that it is necessary to promote CSR through various mechanisms, including as public anti-greenwashing enforcement and certification mark infringement litigation.

### 2.3.2 Greenwashing history and examples

As mentioned earlier, the term greenwashing first appeared over 30 years ago. In the mid-1980s, Chevron, an oil company, released a publicity campaign showing how its employees protected several wild animals. The commercials aimed at convincing the public of Chevron's pro-environmental actions. The award-winning campaign soon became criticized by environmentalists and Jay Westerveld coined the term greenwashing "the corporate practice of making diverting sustainability claims to cover a questionable environmental record". (Watson, 2016.)

However, the idea of greenwashing is even older than that- in the 1960s Westinghouse's nuclear plant launched a campaign about the cleanliness and safety of nuclear power plants. These totally disregarded concerns about safety (after two recent nuclear meltdowns in the USA) and the environmental impact of nuclear waste. (Watson, 2016.)

There are many examples within the bottled water industry. One of the most shocking ones is from Nestlé Waters Canada, which in 2008 released a commercial that claimed that "Bottled water is the most environmentally responsible consumer product in the world.", and, in 2013, added that bottled water was "the face of positive change" because they were using more recycled plastic. (Watson, 2016.) These claims bluntly disregarded the environmental cost- 13 million tonnes of plastic end every year in the ocean, and plastic bottles annual consumption is predicted to grow to 500 000 million in 2021 (Roderick 2019), with only about 31% of plastic bottles end up getting recycled (Watson, 2016).

Greenwashing happens daily and across industries. One of the most blatant cases has been the recent Volkswagen's emissions scandal, who used sophisticated software to cheat in emissions tests. Sadly, it is not the first time that the company is involved in a greenwashing scandal, as it was found guilty of installing in their cars defeat temperature-sensing switches that cut out pollution controls at low temperature. (Plungis 2015.)

Also, many fashion retailers have been accused of using greenwashing tactics in recent years. H&M has recently been accused of it for constantly using sustainability claims in its advertising campaigns while "Ultimately, the sheer amount of product H&M produces is causing irreversible harm to both planet and people, and completely outweighs their sustainability efforts," an anti-fast fashion campaigner told The Independent (Petter 2020).

### 2.3.3 Greenwashing perception by the general public

A recent study indicates that consumers perceive that the automobile and the beauty products sector are among the sectors where greenwashing is more prevalent (Khandel-



wal, Sharma & Jain 2019, 610). This might be, in part, due to the famous Volkswagen example explained in the previous chapter of this thesis. Interestingly, participants identified words like “eco-friendly” and “natural”, and the use of suggestive images and green backgrounds as the most frequently used greenwashing tactics (Khandelwal & al. 2019, 611).

Companies exposed for engaging in greenwashing practices have a great risk of ruining their brand image, and losing the customer’s trust (Khandelwal & al. 2019, 612). Additionally, these can lead to legal actions against the company, as shown in the previous chapter.

### 3 Research Methods

In the following chapter, the different methods of research used in the thesis are described. Additionally, the overall research design (including data collection and analysis) is justified.

#### 3.1 Research design

In this thesis, I conducted both descriptive and explanatory or analytical research:

Descriptive research: I aimed at identifying the variability in purchasing behaviour and greenwashing perception

Analytical research: I tried to define whether there are relationships between the previous conditions and age and nationality.

According to Saunders and colleagues (2019, 356), the use of questionnaires is highly appropriate for both purposes. As presented in Figure 3, this project is comprised of one single phase, and the data is obtained using a questionnaire. Most of the questions offer quantitative data and are analysed statistically; the open-ended questions in the questionnaire are analysed thematically (i.e. by establishing patterns of meaning).

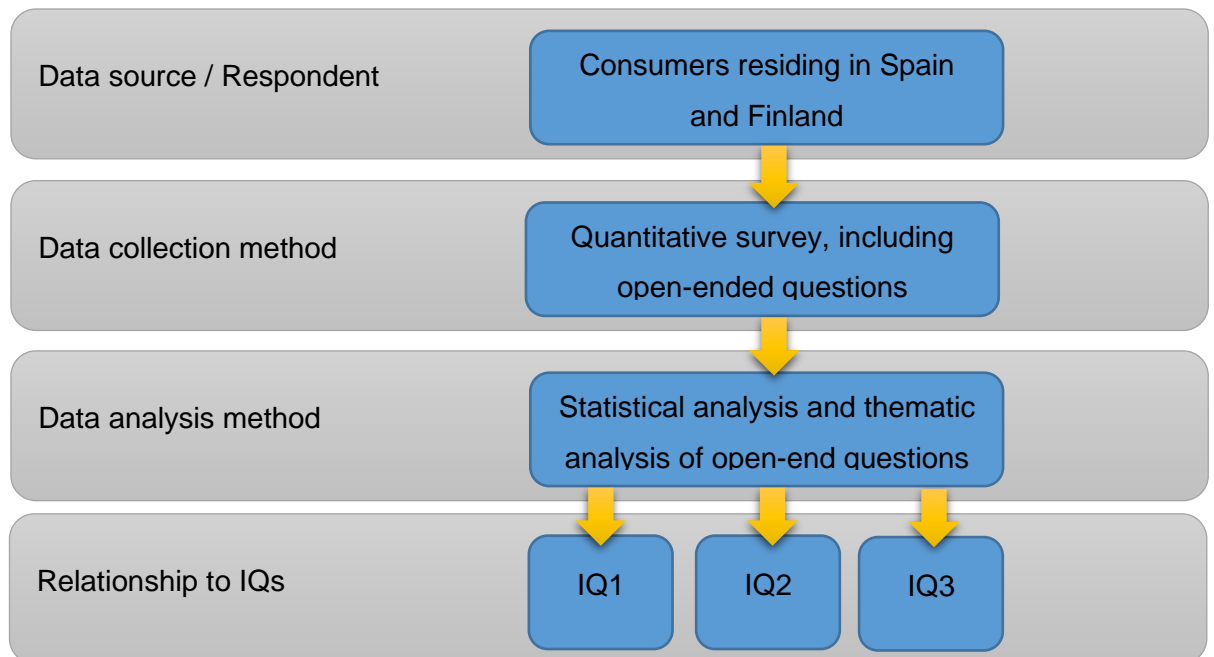


Figure 3. Research design.

### **3.2 Sampling**

The questionnaire used in this research was a self-administered, internet-mediated questionnaire. The participants were collected on the basis accessibility (easiest to obtain), so using convenience sampling. This was a non-probability or non-random sampling procedure, so the chance of each case/participant being selected was not known. (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, 594.) Regarding the analytical research part of this thesis, the respondents in this research freely chose to participate, so there was a chance for self-selection bias, and the results would not be representative of the entire population. However, the results offer an overview of the trends within the analysed populations and can be a starting point for further research.

The sample size is often a limiting factor in statistical studies. It has been shown that a sample size of 30 or more will often result in a sampling distribution very close to a normal distribution. Hence, 30 should be the minimum number of participants in each category (females vs. males, Finland vs. Spain, and across the different age groups) (Saunders & al. 2019, 211.)

### **3.3 Data collection method**

The data for this study was collected via online survey (Appendix). The questions were designed to obtain quantitative data; however, some open-ended questions were added to gather qualitative data and offer a deeper understanding of the participants' preferences and opinions.

The measurement questions and their relation to the IQs are presented in Figure 4.

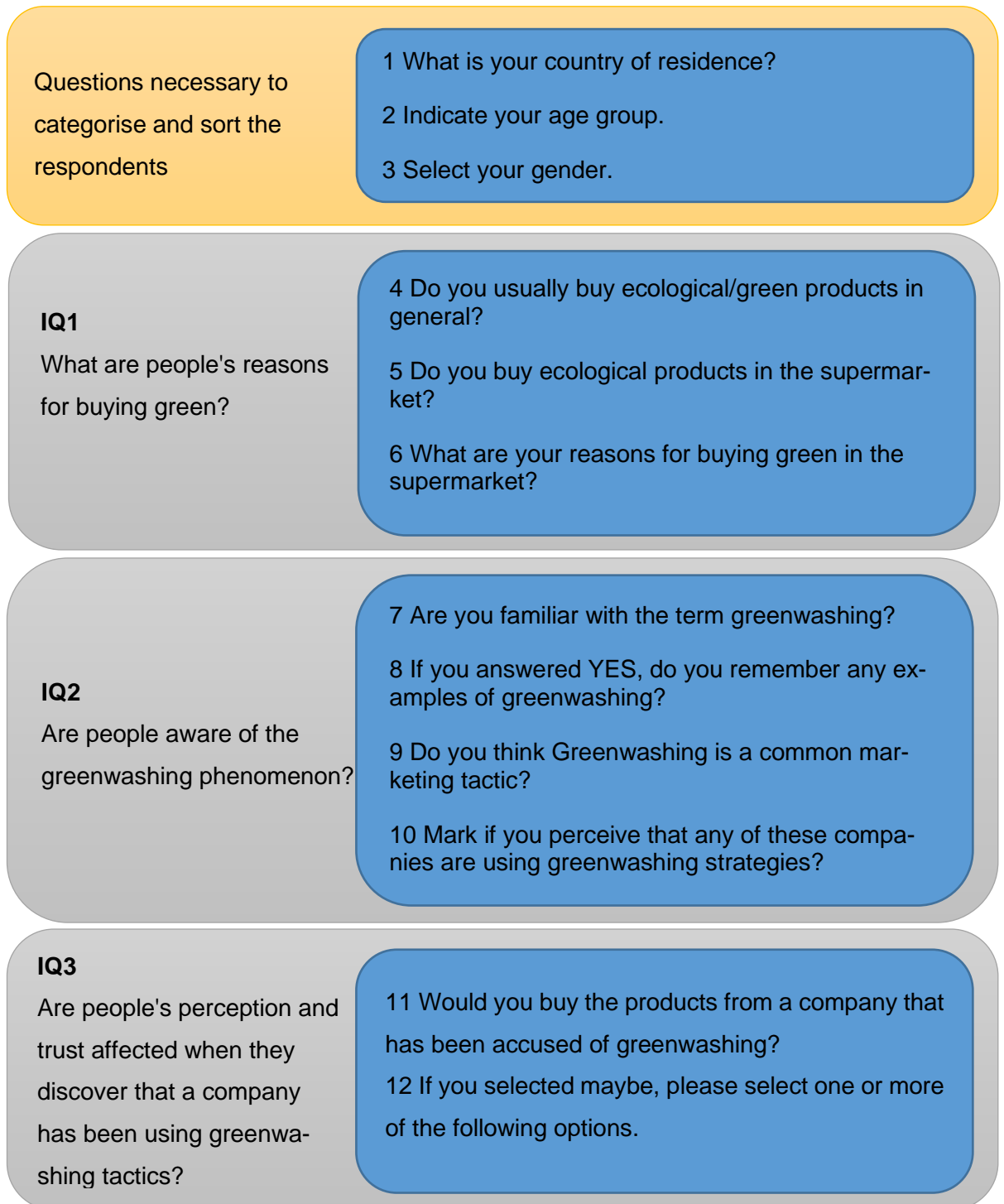


Figure 4. Relationship between Investigative questions (in grey) and the survey's measurement questions (in blue).

In the beginning of the survey, the participants were asked for introductory and demographic questions, to establish that they fulfil the demarcation criteria of the thesis as well as guide them to the topic of greenwashing.

In order to understand whether the respondent could identify greenwashing signs in everyday products, the questionnaire included two examples of greenwashing and another ethical commercial. According to the literature, printed advertising generally employ

greenwashing tactics in the shape of selective misinformation. For example, green, eco-friendly features of a product are highlighted while other negative aspects are hidden (IESE 2013).

The first commercial for the greenwashing category was from FIJI water. The company has been accused of greenwashing for various reasons. Not only the environmental cost of plastic bottles (see 2.4.1), also, Fiji was accused of “claim[ing] credit for carbon removal that may or may not take place — up to several decades in the future.” in 2011, in a since-dropped law-suit. However, the company has since stopped using the carbon-neutral label. (MacDonald 2019.)

The second advertisement utilising greenwashing tactics was Huggies, which claimed that the diapers are “pure and natural”. In 2015, a class-action was filed against Kimberly-Clark (the maker of these disposable diapers) for misleading advertising. According to the lawsuit “The diapers are neither pure nor natural because they contain unnatural and potentially harmful ingredients”. (Gelles 2015.)

Finally, the questionnaire included an example of a company with good CSR: Organix. The company does not use false claims and is “completely free from preservatives, chemicals, pesticides”. Additionally, it has a very strong CSR model (Guide ethical Australia 2013; Organix Sustainability.)

### **3.4 Data collection and analysis**

The data collection started on 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2021 and closed on 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2021. The survey was closed once the minimum number of participants in each category was fulfilled, as stated in subchapter 3.2. Sampling.

The participants were recruited through personal communication and by publishing a request in different social media channels. In total the survey was filled in by 152 participants- all respondents fulfilled the demarcation criteria.

The data was collected through a Google survey and transferred to an Excel file. Data was analysed using MS Excel and SPSS statistics software. For quantitative MS Excel was used for data plotting, and SPSS to perform statistical analysis as explained in subchapter 3.5.3 Statistical analysis. Data for qualitative research was plotted using MS Excel.

Regarding the statistical analysis, the author analysed whether there was a difference between people from Finland in Spain, between people from different sex, and depending on the age group for (1) whether they usually buy ecological products, (2) whether they buy ecological products in the supermarket, and (3) if they are familiar with the term greenwashing (Questions 4, 5 and 7 of the questionnaire). The author performed a non-parametric test (not numerical values) with independent samples (separated groups) (Corder and Foreman 2009, Chapter 1). For the analyses according to the country of residence and sex, as there were two independent samples (non-related), the author chose the Mann-Witney U test (Corder and Foreman 2009, Chapter 4). To research whether there was a difference in the response depending on the age, the author performed a Kuskal-Wallis test (three independent samples) (Corder and Foreman 2009, Chapter 6).

## 4 Results and discussion

The results of the research were analysed and compared to the previously existing literature in order to offer a broader perspective.

### 4.1 Sample distribution

The sample was distributed as shown in Figure 5. There were 152 participants (N= 152) in the survey. Majority of the respondents were residents of Spain (121 participants), with only 31 Finnish residents participating in the study (Figure 5A). Also, about half of the respondents were aged 23-45 (71 respondents), while 44 were under 23 years of age, and 37 were over 45 years old (Figure 5B). Similarly, the sample was not equally distributed for sex- as 100 of participants were female and only 51 males participated in the questionnaire, and one person did not want to identify with either sex (Figure 5C).

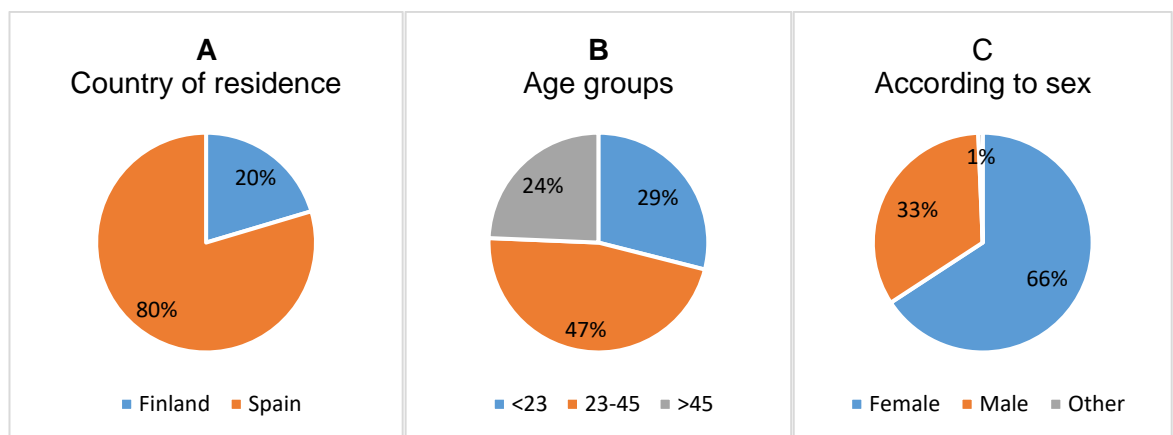


Figure 5. Sample distribution according to the participant's country of residence (A), age (B), and sex (C).

While the number of participants belonging to each group in the different categories, the minimum number of participants in each category was fulfilled, as stated in subchapter 3.2. Sampling.

### 4.2 What are people's reasons for buying green?

The first investigative question of this report focused on the participant's motivation to buy green or ecological products. Furthermore, it aimed at understanding whether variables such as country of residence, age, and sex affect the consumer's behaviour.

#### 4.2.1 Predisposition of the participants to buy ecological products

The results of this research indicated that the number of people that usually buy ecological products is comparable to the number of participants that did not engage in this practice- 49% of participants did not usually buy ecological products, while 51% do (Figure 6A).

The next step was to understand if the participants favoured ecological labels when purchasing first-need products. This way, one can have a better overview on how greenwashing is present in the everyday life of the participants. Surprisingly, when the participants were asked whether they purchase ecological products in the supermarket, majority of them indicated that they did (68% of the total), as shown in Figure 6B.

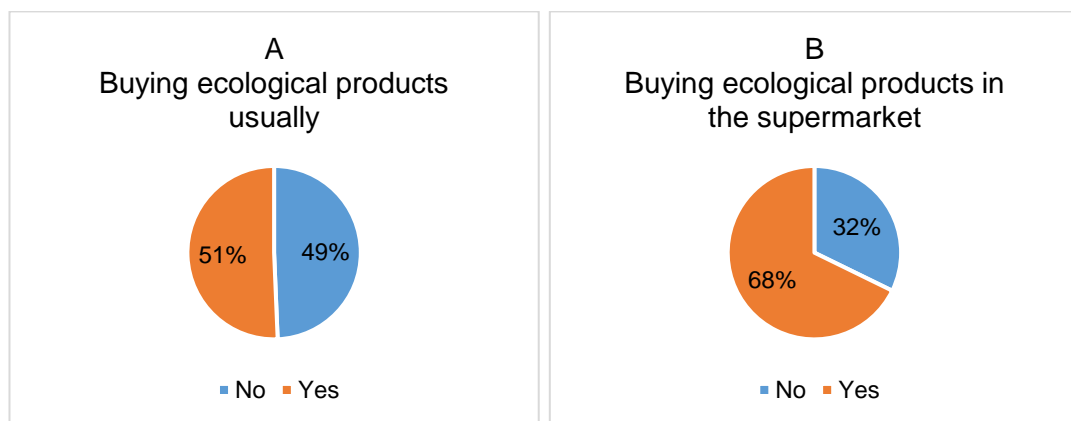


Figure 6. Percentage of participants that do and do not (A) usually buy ecological products, and (B) buy ecological products in the supermarket. N= 152.

The differences in the number of participants willing to buy ecological products in general and to buy eco-labelled products in the supermarket was different- 33% more participants claimed to buy ecological products in the supermarket than in other categories. There is a large amount of literature showing that consumers behave differently when it comes to different purchasing categories. For example, different purchasing behaviours have been identified in the purchase decision of electric vehicles compared to purchasing green food. (Zhang & Dong 2020, 10-13.)

Next, I analysed the sample in order to understand whether the variables (1) country of residence, (2) age, and (3) sex influence customer's purchasing behaviour.

##### 4.2.1.1 Predisposition to buy ecological products according to country of residence



First, I categorised the participants that did buy ecological products according to their country of residence (Figure 7). The general trend is that Finnish residents were keener on both buying ecological products in general and purchasing ecological items in the supermarket.

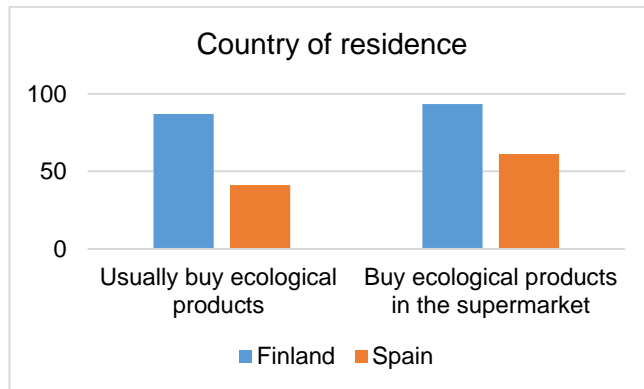


Figure 7. Percentage of participants that buy ecological products according to their country of residence (Spain and Finland). N= 152.

There was only a significant difference in the results when it came to buying ecological products in general (Table 2). In this case, people residing in Finland were significantly more used to buying ecological products. These results were statistically significant and, thus, could be extrapolated to the general population. This result correlates with the fact that Finland has ranked the highest in 2017 Yale University's annual Environmental Performance Index (EPI) (Kaufman 2017).

Table 2. Results from the statistical test, according to the country of residence

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
1	The distribution of Usually buy ecological products is the same across categories of Country.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Buy ecological products in the supermarket is the same across categories of Country.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.105	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Regarding the predisposition to buy ecological products in the supermarket, there is a trend that in Spain people are less keen to engage into this practice. However, the differences were not statistically significant.

Even though the statistical test indicated that the differences in buying behaviour in the supermarket were not significant, these go in line with the fact that Finnish residents are more prone to buying ecological products in general. Additionally, a previous study on

consumers in Finland that buy in the S-Group supermarkets showed that 60% of participants frequently purchased eco-labelled products (Järvi 2010, 39). However, they also demanded more information about them (Järvi 2010, 51-53).

#### 4.2.1.2 Predisposition to buy ecological products according to age

The second segmentation of the sample was according to age, and I quantified how many of them purchased ecological products routinely. As shown in Figure 8, 34% of participants under 23 years of age often purchased ecological products, while 63% of respondents aged 23-45, and 46% of participants older than 45 years of age engaged in this practice. Differently, the percentage of participants buying ecological products in the supermarket was higher across age groups: 59% of participants under 23, 72% of contestants between 23-45 years of age, and 70% of the participants older than 45 years claimed to buy ecological products in the supermarket.

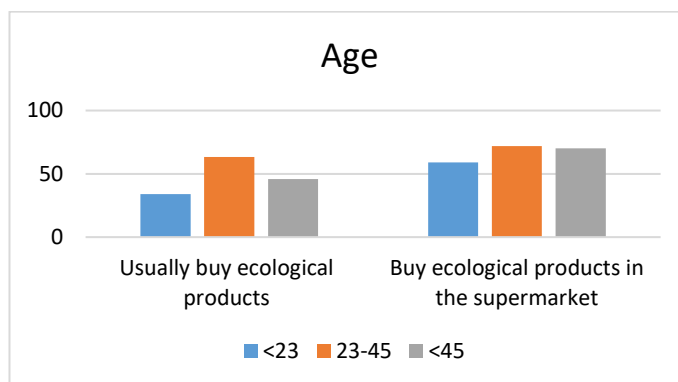


Figure 8. Percentage of participants that buy ecological products according to their age. N= 152.

The statistical analysis (Table 3) indicated that there were no differences across age groups for neither of the two questions (Usually buying ecological products and Buying ecological products in the supermarket). Indicating that age is not a modulating factor in the consumer's behaviour when it comes to purchasing ecological products.

Table 3. Results from the statistical test, according to age groups

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
1	The distribution of Usually buy ecological products is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.491	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Buy ecological products in the supermarket is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.570	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Hence, there was no clear trend on whether age affects the customer's buying behaviour, even though the group of participants aged under 23 had the lowest percentage of participants purchasing ecological products in general. This was most likely due to an economical aspect, as people in this age group is likely to have the lowest purchasing power. However, this effect was not appreciated in the question "Do you buy ecological products in the supermarket". As speculated in a recent review article, "the price of green food is relatively cheap, which indicates that the behavioural cost difference between consumers is small" (Zhang & Dong 2020, 10-13). So that could be the reason behind not seeing any differences across age groups. Additionally, this result was in consonance with the conclusions of a previous study that researched purchasing behaviour of eco-labels for fish products in Italian hypermarkets. The article indicated that age and income did not have a significant impact on purchasing green food. (Vitale, Biondo, Giosue, Bono, Odilichukwu & al. 2020, 1-12.)

Hence, literature on the impact of age on consumption of ecological products is extensive but has failed to reach a consensus, as some studies find that age is positively associated with responsible consumption while others have do not find a correlation (Fisher & al. 2012, 172-184; 127-138; Elliott 2013, 294-322). The results of this study fall in the latter category, as they showed no significant correlation between age and predisposition to buy eco-friendly products.

#### 4.2.1.3 Predisposition to buy ecological products according to sex

Lastly, I researched whether the participant's sex had an influence on customer's purchasing decision regarding ecological products. The results are shown in Figure 9, and the percentage of males and females buying ecological products both in general and in the supermarket are comparable. This is further confirmed the statistical analysis (Table 4), that indicates that no significant differences exist within sexes.

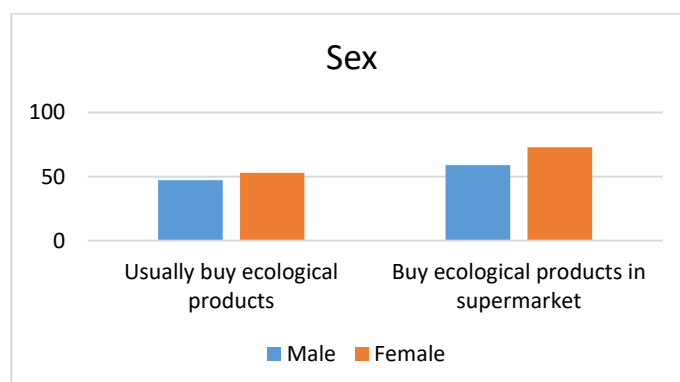


Figure 9. Percentage of participants that buy ecological products according to their sex. N= 152.

Similar to the age variable, sex has sometimes been considered to influence ethical consumer behaviour, as “women are more likely to care about other people’s lives and are more willing to buy green products” (Zhang & Dong 2020, 13). However, often it has not been found to be a predictor of valuing green goods (Fisher & al. 2012, 172-184; 127-138; Elliott 2013, 294-322, Zhang & Dong 2020, 13). This study adds on to the second category, as no significant association was found between sex and predisposition to buy eco-labelled products (Table 4).

Table 4. Results from the statistical test, according to sex

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
1	The distribution of Usually buy ecological products is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.277	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Buy ecological products in the supermarket is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.342	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

#### 4.2.2 Reasons for buying green

In order to have a better understanding on what were the drivers of the customer’s decision, I asked the participants to choose from various options regarding their reasons to buy green products (Figure 10).

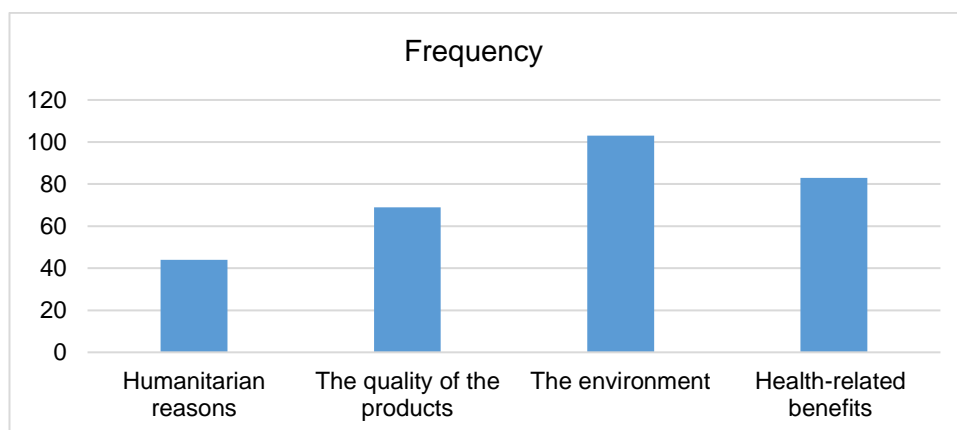


Figure 10. Reasons why participants chose to buy green products in the supermarket. Each column represents the number of times that the option was selected in the questionnaire.

The most popular reason for buying ecological products was the environment, which indicates that issues such as global warming and good sourcing practices might be behind the choice of ecological purchases of many of the participants. This is in line with a previous study that indicated that 85% of the consumers are willing to change brands and their

own purchasing behaviours to protect the environment (Szabo & Webster 2020). So, in addition to the socio-demographics, a product's attributes are also the focus of consumers' purchase intentions. For example, the eco-label of a product is the most important factor affecting consumers' purchase, and the price premium does not have a significant effect. (Zhang & Dong 2020, 14-15.)

The second most popular reason was possible health-related benefits associated to certain products. The third most mentioned reason was the quality of the products, indicating that a number of participants believe that ecological/green products are of better quality.

The least chosen option was humanitarian reasons. Which does not correlate with pre-existing data that indicates that consumers favour fair-trade and charitable products the most (Parks 2019). However, experts indicate that ethical consumers constitute an ever-evolving tendency, with multiple variables affecting their purchasing decisions (Papoiconomou & al. 2011, 198-199).

#### 4.3 How aware is the general population of the greenwashing phenomenon?

Understanding whether greenwashing has a negative effect on companies employing it can constitute a powerful tool in order to reduce its usage, as companies accused of greenwashing have a great risk of losing the customer's trust (Khandelwal & al. 2019, 612).

Interestingly, 65% of the participants in this study were not initially aware of the term greenwashing, as shown in Figure 11. For that fraction of the sample, all information on this term comes from the brief description included in the questionnaire.

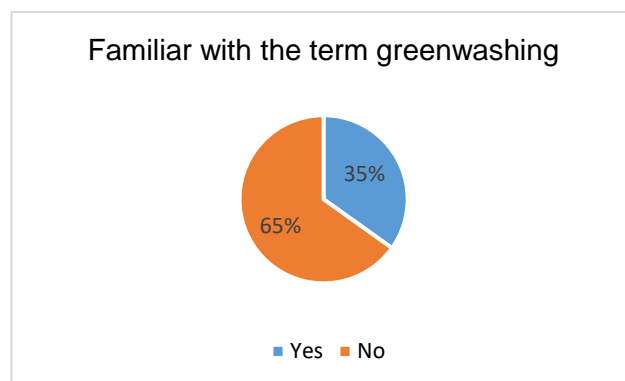


Figure 11. Pie chart indicates the percentage of participants acquainted and unfamiliar with the term greenwashing. N= 152.

Those participants familiar with the term greenwashing were asked to relay any examples they had encountered. The most mentioned example was oil and energy companies in general, followed by Volkswagen, Nespresso capsules, and bottled water companies. Other examples mentioned were Asian Paper Company, Ben&Jerry's, and Biofrutas (Spanish juice brand). These varied responses indicate that greenwashing is known to happen across industries. Advertising is one of the most common platforms where greenwashing appears, in the shape of selective misinformation (IESE 2013).

Next, the author analysed whether there were differences in greenwashing-awareness across groups according to country of residence, gender and age.

#### 4.3.1 Familiarity with the term greenwashing according to country of residence

The percentage of people aware of the greenwashing phenomenon was larger among the Finnish residents than among the participants living in Spain (74% vs. 24%), as shown in Figure 12.

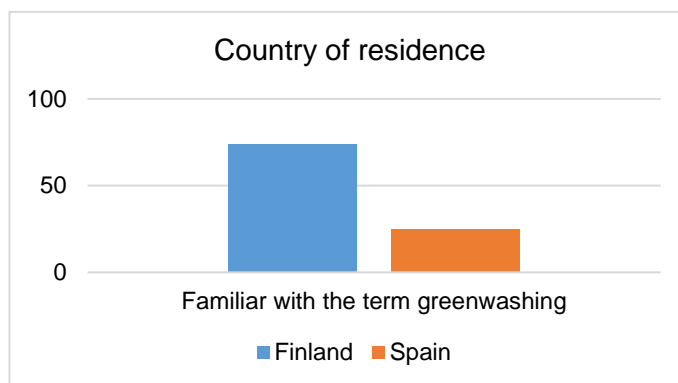


Figure 12. Percentage of participants that are familiar of the term greenwashing according to their country of residence. N= 152.

Surprisingly, these results were not statistically significant, as shown in Table 5. Hence, one cannot conclude that the differences observed in this sample can be extrapolated to the general population.

Table 5. Results from the statistical test for greenwashing familiarity according to country of residence.

Hypothesis Test Summary			
Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
3 The distribution of Familiar with the term greenwashing is the same across categories of Country.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.117	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

### 4.3.2 Familiarity with the term greenwashing according to age

Differences in greenwashing-awareness were also seen across age groups, as shown in Figure 13. Participants aged 23-45 were the most aware of the greenwashing phenomenon (44% were familiar), followed by participants younger than 23 years (32% were familiar), and those older than 45 years (21% were familiar).

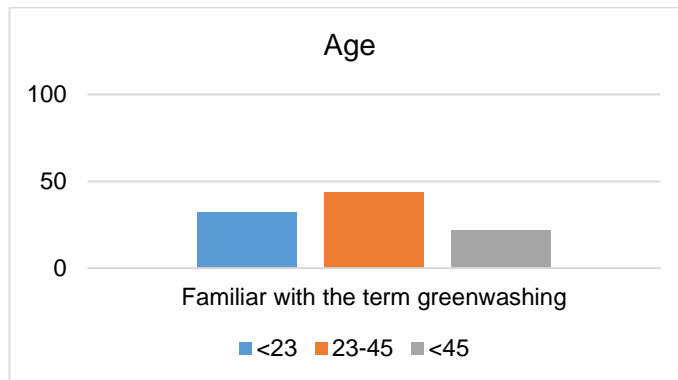


Figure 13. Percentage of participants that are familiar of the term greenwashing according to their age. N= 152.

The differences among age groups were, however, not statistically significant, as shown in Table 6. So, one cannot claim that greenwashing-awareness is linked to age in the general population.

Table 6. Results from the statistical test for greenwashing familiarity according to age.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
3	The distribution of Familiar with the term greenwashing is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	.109	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Interestingly, a recent study conducted in residents of the United Kingdom, Canada and Pakistan showed that young consumers are more sceptical towards green-labels and eco-friendly products and find greenwashing more problematic than previous generations (Urbanski & ul Haque 2020, 1-3). This reads nicely with the trend shown in this study, where people younger than 45 years are more aware about greenwashing than older participants.

### 4.3.3 Familiarity with the term greenwashing according to sex

The last variable analysed in this report was sex. In this case, the percentage of participants familiar with the term greenwashing was 35% in each group (Figure 14). Unsurprisingly, no statistical differences were found among sex groups (Table 7).

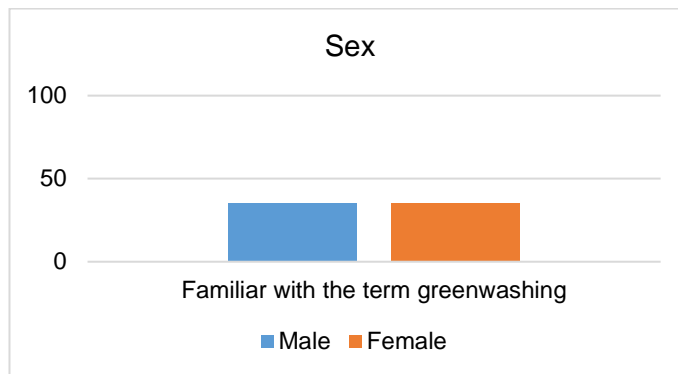


Figure 14. Percentage of participants that are familiar of the term greenwashing according to their sex. N= 152.

Table 7. Results from the statistical test for greenwashing familiarity according to sex.

Hypothesis Test Summary				
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. <sup>a,b</sup>	Decision
3	The distribution of Familiar with the term greenwashing is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.067	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

## 4.4 How are people's perception and trust affected when they discover that a company has been using greenwashing tactics?

Being aware of the existence of greenwashing is not the same as being able to identify greenwashing tactics in every-day life. Hence, this chapter researches whether the end-customer is able to detect greenwashing tactics and how he/she would react to green-washed products and campaigns.

Even though only 35% of the participants were familiar with the term greenwashing, 91% of the participants considered it a common marketing tactic. The number of participants that considered it commonplace was comparable among people residing in Finland and in Spain (93% vs. 91%). These results are summarised in Figure 15.



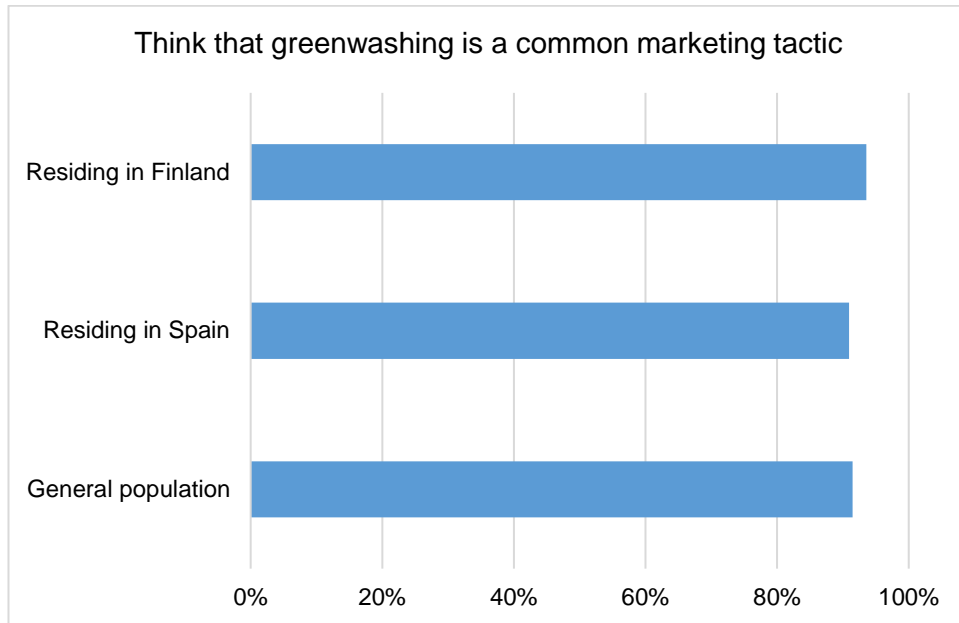


Figure 15. Percentage of the participants that consider that greenwashing is a commonly used marketing technique.

Unfortunately, the belief of widespread greenwashing is often substantiated- Studies on products from Australian supermarkets show that only 3% of the environmental claims made on packaging were irrefutable, while only 5% of products that made environmental claims did not engage in greenwashing tactics. While environmental messages have a positive effect on consumers' perception and company's sales, greenwashing does not have positive outcomes in the long run. Government regulations should aid in preventing the surge of greenwashing tactics. (Brower 2016, 245-250.) However, as regulatory attempts have been non-binding guidelines (based largely on self-regulation), they do not protect effectively from the adverse effects of greenwashing (Urbanski & ul Haque 2020, 1-3).

#### 4.4.1 Practical case: greenwashing perception in three selected campaigns

The survey given to the participants contained three examples of products/campaigns with ecological/green claims. The campaigns as shown to the contestants are illustrated in Figure 16.



Figure 16. Campaigns shown to the participants. FIJI water (A) and Huggies (B) have been accused of greenwashing in several instances, while Organix (C) has been commended for having a strong CSR strategy.

The participants of this study had to identify which of these examples employed greenwashing strategies. Contestants could select more than one option. The reasons to select these campaigns has been explained in subchapter 3.3. Data collection method. In short—the first commercial (A) was from FIJI water, which has been accused of greenwashing multiple times; the second advertisement (B) was Huggies, who has been sued for misleading advertising on the ground of not being “pure nor natural”; finally, the third case (C) was an example of a company with good CSR: Organix. (MacDonald 2019; Gelles 2015; Guide ethical Australia 2013; Organix Sustainability.)

The results for this case study are shown in Figure 17. Campaigns A and B were correctly identified as greenwashing-positive by majority of participants: each of these examples was selected 107 times. Differently, campaign C was selected 65 times. These values are graphically represented in Figure 17.

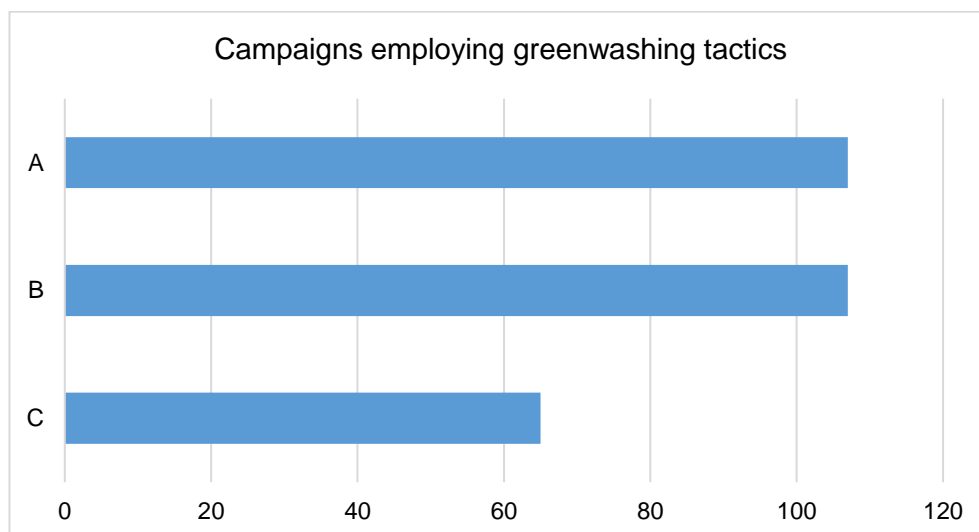


Figure 17. Number of times that each advertise was considered to employ greenwashing strategies.

Hence, 43% of the participants incorrectly marked campaign C as greenwashing-containing. Additionally, 17 participants (11% of the total) considered that only campaign C employed greenwashing techniques, and that commercials A and B were truly green and eco-friendly.

Overall, these results suggest that most participants were not always able to correctly identify greenwashing strategies, as they were avid to select the example from the company with a strong CRM strategy as greenwashing-positive. So, one could conclude that the participants were primed to identify greenwashing tactics, and, perhaps, they are not so vigilant in real-life. Furthermore, research shows that consumers often feel that “being made aware of greenwashing was important to their overall decision-making process” (Brower 2016, 245-248).

These results are in line with previous research that shows that population’s awareness about greenwashing is relatively low (Khandelwal & al. 2019, 611), and greenwashing only seems to exist when third-parties highlight the falsehood of a company’s claims (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-3). A recent study showed that consumers perceive usage of words such as “eco-friendly” and “natural” as the most frequently used greenwashing communication tactic. (Khandelwal & al. 2019, 611). However, this might change in the future, as research shows that “environmental beliefs may affect consumers’ perceptions of greenwashing”, which may lead to increased awareness (Szabo & Webster 2020). Additionally, other sources indicate that the general public is growing increasingly sceptical about the veracity of corporate environmental claims (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-3).

#### **4.4.2 Does greenwashing alter the buying behaviours of the customer?**

The lack of ability from the general population to perceive greenwashing can lead to companies abusing this strategy. Consistent with this, previous studies indicate that advertising employing greenwashing strategies increase consumers’ purchase intention and, if they cannot tell the difference between true and deceptive, the use of greenwashing will not affect the attitudes of consumers negatively (Szabo & Webster 2020; Krafft and Saito 2014, 27).

Interestingly, only two participants responded that they would buy products from a company that has been accused of greenwashing. The number of participants that claimed that they would not purchase from those companies again was similar to those that were hesitant (78 vs. 72 people). The results are graphically represented in Figure 18.

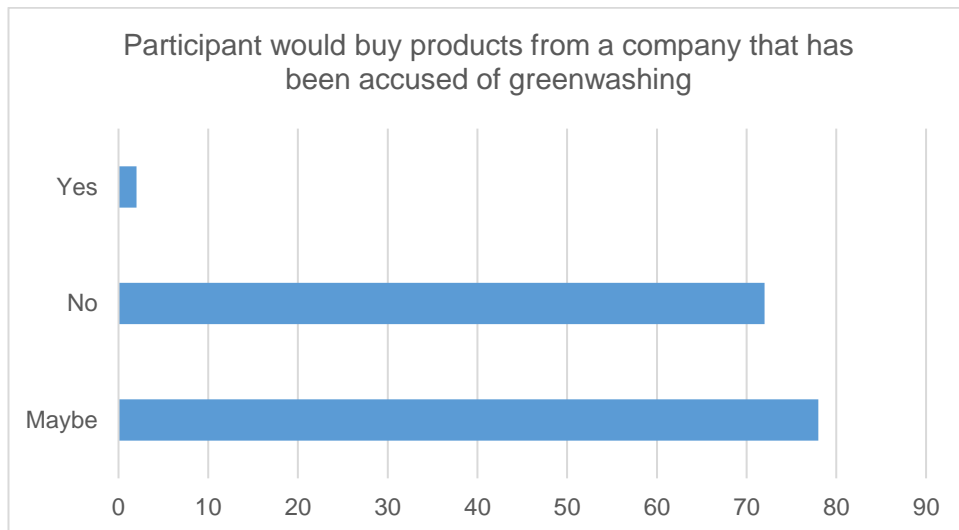


Figure 18. Number of participants that would, would not, or might buy products from a company that has been accused of greenwashing. N= 152.

This is in line with previous research that shows that about half of the surveyed participants would terminate any relationship with the company engaged in greenwashing (Khandelwal & al. 2019, 611). Similarly, perceived greenwashing has been linked with poor brand image, as it is considered a form of deceptive advertising (Szabo & Webster 2020).

Altogether, the results from this research and the pre-existing literature indicate that greenwashing tactics have a negative impact on a company, when discovered.

Additionally, the author wanted to understand why consumers would continue to purchase from a deceptive brand. Respondents that had admitted continuing to purchase greenwashed products were asked to select from several reasons to explain their behaviour. The most popular reasons are shown in Figure 19.

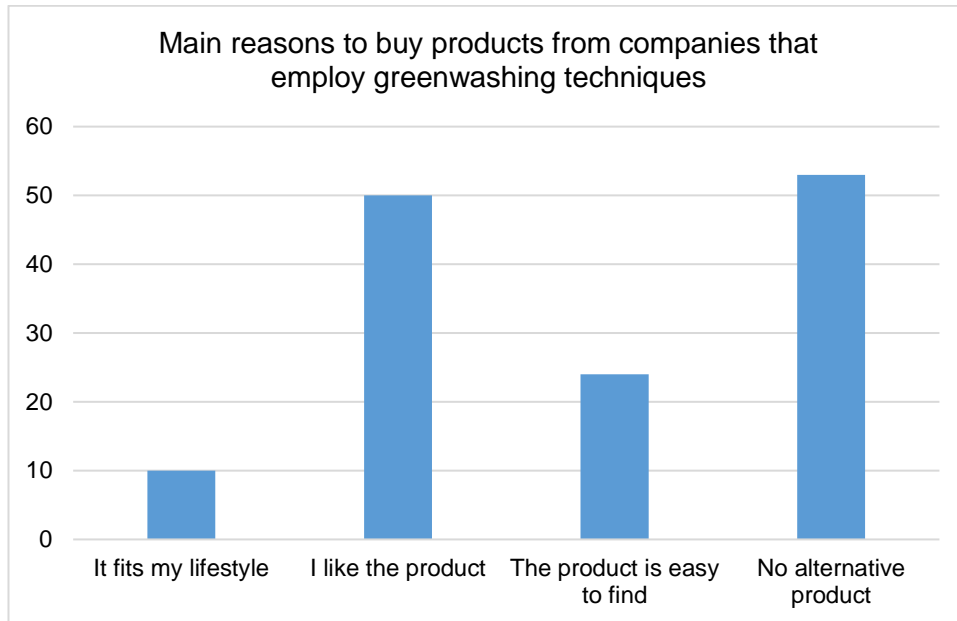


Figure 19. Number of times each reason to buy products from companies that employ greenwashing techniques was selected by the participants

The main reason for participants to maintain a relationship with a company that has engaged in greenwashing was the lack of alternative products (53 participants selected it), closely followed by them liking the product enough (50 participants selected it). Other popular reasons were that the product is easy to find (24 participants selected it) and that it fit the participant's lifestyle (10 participants selected it). Interestingly, one of the participants also mention the factor "price". This raises an interesting point that the author failed to include in the options, as Professor Gupta of Penn State University, a world expert in ethical behaviour indicates: "While people love to voice their idealism to survey companies, the cold facts are they almost always put their self-interest first". Hence, price is, indeed, a key player in consumer purchasing decisions. (Entine 2011.)

Interestingly, 13% of the participants in a Finnish study agreed that "affordability impacts purchasing decisions more than the negative impacts of the product that is being purchased" (Järvi 2010, 38-39). Additionally, majority of respondents in that study said demanded more information about eco-labelled products (Järvi 2010, 51-53).

Interestingly, a recent empirical across-country study showed that individuals that viewed themselves as green were unable to restrain from buying greenwashing products (Urban-ski & ul Haque 2020, 16-20).

## 5 Conclusions

This chapter contains the main findings regarding the effects of greenwashing on consumer perception. Based on these, recommendations for companies and future research are drafted. Finally, the reliability and validity are discussed, followed by the analysis of the author's own learning.

### 5.1 Key findings

Regarding the participant's reasons for buying green (IQ1), about half of the participants acknowledged to often purchase eco-labelled products, and this percentage increased by 33% when it came to first-need products in the supermarket. Interestingly, the main reason to buy eco-labelled products was the environment, followed by possible health-related benefits and the quality of the products. The research showed that personal conditions such as age and sex do not play a crucial role in the decision-making when it comes to purchasing ecological products. Differently, people living in Finland have a higher predisposition to purchase ecological products in general, even though they are not more prone to buy eco-labelled products in the supermarket when doing the groceries.

Concerning IQ2 about greenwashing awareness, majority of the participants were oblivious of the term greenwashing, regardless of their age, sex, and country of residence. In line with this, many of the participants were unable to correctly select the advertising campaigns containing greenwashing elements. In regards to how people's perception and trust are affected when they discover that a company has been using greenwashing tactics (IQ3), this research showed that about half of the participants agreed that they would not purchase from companies that have engaged in greenwashing practices. Those who might knowingly purchase greenwashed products would do it mostly because of the lack of a better alternative or because they truly liked and enjoyed the product.

Hence, the results of this research regarding the effects of greenwashing on consumer perception (RQ) are aligned with the pre-existing literature. Overall, this thesis indicates that population's awareness about greenwashing is relatively low, and they might require of third parties to highlight the falsehood of a company's claims (Gatti & al. 2019, 1-3; Khandelwal & al. 2019, 611). Additionally, it also confirms that self-interest overpowers green ideals when it comes to making purchasing decisions, and that those ideals do not restrain the consumers from buying greenwashed products (Järvi 2010, 51-53; Urbanski & ul Haque 2020, 16-20). However, greenwashing might not have positive outcome in the

long run due to the loss of trust in the brand, although more regulation at the governmental level is necessary to prevent the surge of greenwashing tactics. (Brower 2016, 245-250; Sheehy 2015, 634.)

## **5.2 Recommendations for companies and future research**

More research in the areas of ethical consumerism and greenwashing is necessary in order to better understand customer's needs and wants. Also, it would be highly useful to establish new regulations in order create a clear regulation across industries, both from the governmental and corporate perspectives.

From the perspective of companies, this and future research can help to understand how the employment of greenwashing tactics can damage their brand and business. This will be important to prevent them from engaging in such practices and promote strategies more positive for the environment and humankind.

## **5.3 Reliability and validity**

Errors related to sampling have been discussed in detail in subchapter 3.2. Sampling. Investigative questions were used to support the measurement questions, as stated in subchapter 3.3. Data collection method.

The non-sampling errors can originate from misinterpretation of the questions in the questionnaire by the participant. To minimise this risk, the survey questions were carefully worded, and translated into Spanish language for the Spanish participants.

## **5.4 Reflections on learning**

Through the writing of this thesis I became knowledgeable on greenwashing, and I also gained insight on ethical consumer behaviour. I have been interested in sustainable businesses and corporate responsibility and sustainability, so learning more about this has been highly valuable and rewarding. Also, as for the rest of my studies in Haaga-Helia, I have had to compile this thesis while working full time, so it has helped to greatly improve my organisational and time-management skills.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire questions

1 What is your country of residence?

- Spain
- Finland

2 Indicate your age group

- 21 or younger
- 22-30
- 30-40
- 50 or older

3 Select your gender

- Female
- Male
- Other/I rather not say

4 Do you usually buy ecological/green products in general?

- Yes
- No

5 Do you buy ecological products in the supermarket?

- Yes
- No

6 What are your reasons for buying green in the supermarket?

- Health-related benefits
- The environment
- The quality of the products
- Humanitarian reasons

7 Are you familiar with the term greenwashing?

- Yes
- No

8 If you answered YES, do you remember any examples of greenwashing?

- \_\_\_\_\_

9 If you answered NO:

**If you are not aware of the term greenwashing, it means that companies offer misleading information about how their products are more environmentally sound. In other words, companies take superficial action to address environmental concerns, often for public relationship-purposes.**

10 Do you think Greenwashing is a common marketing tactic?

11 Mark if you perceive that any of these companies are using greenwashing strategies?



12 Would you buy the products from a company that has been accused of greenwashing?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

13 If you selected maybe, please select one or more of the following:

- It fits my lifestyle
- I like the product
- The product is easy to find
- There are no other alternatives in the market
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_