

Master thesis Business Administration

Master Specialization: Strategic Management

Nijmegen School of Management

Radboud Universiteit



Organisational symbolism

The effectiveness of greenwashing as an organisational impression management strategy

Greenwashing in the fashion industry

Author:

Name: Anne van den Bos

Student number: s1026369

Adress:

Phone:

E-mail:

Nijmegen, 23 June 2023

Word count: 9998

Supervisor:

dr. S.C.J. Koornneef

2nd examiner:

prof. dr. ir. V.A.W.J. Marchau

Abstract

In this study, quantitative research is conducted into the question: What is the effect of consumer scepticism on the relationship between greenwashing and the reputation of the organisation? Greenwashing is examined as a form of impression management, in which people's perceptions are tried to regulate and controlled by information in social interaction. This research aimed to fill the existing gap in literature since it is unknown what specifically is the effect of sceptic consumers when organization try to create a better reputation in a manual way. To investigate this, 447 valid surveys were collected. In these surveys, the perceptions of the respondents were examined through advertisements from fashion organizations and information about whether the organizations live up to what they put out. This showed that advertising with green claims does not lead to a trustworthy green reputation. The moment you deal with an organization with sceptical consumers, this way of advertising seems even more problematic. Also, because consumers are becoming even more sceptical of organisations that have already been caught lying or distorting information about how sustainable they are in the past.

Keywords: impression management, organisational reputation, consumer scepticism, green scepticism

Table of contents

1. Introduction	5
1.3 Literature gap	6
1.1 Theoretical relevance	7
1.2 Practical relevance	7
1.4 Research Question	8
1.5 Structure	9
2. Theoretical framework	9
2.1 Impression management	9
2.1.1 Organisational impression management	10
2.2 Greenwashing as a form of impression management	11
2.3 Organisational reputation	12
2.3.1 Green reputation	13
2.4 Consumer scepticism	14
3. Method	16
3.1 Research method	16
3.1.1 Respondents	17
3.1.2 Statistical tests	17
3.2 Research design	18
3.3 Study field: Greenwashing in the fashion industry	19
3.4 Operationalisation	20
3.4.1 Greenwashing	20
3.4.2 Trustworthy green reputation	20
3.4.3 Consumer scepticism	21
3.5 Research ethics	21
4. Results	22
4.1 Factor Analysis	22
.....	24
4.2 Paired sample t-test	24
4.3 Proportionality test	26
4.4 Paired-sample t-test 2	27
4.5 Regression analysis	29
4.6 Extra results	32
5. Conclusion and discussion	33
5.1 Theoretical contributions	34
5.2 Practical implications and strategic recommendations	35
5.3 Limitations and future research	35
5.4 Personal reflection	36

Bibliography	37
Appendix A: Survey introduction	45
Appendix B: Format Survey	46
Appendix C: Survey applied to organisations	48

Tables and figures

TABLE 1: KMO AND BARLETT'S TEST	22
TABLE 2: TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED.....	23
TABLE 3: SCREE PLOT	23
TABLE 4: FACTOR MATRIX.....	24
TABLE 5: CRONBACH'S ALPHA	24
TABLE 6: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ORGANISATIONS.....	25
TABLE 7: PAIRED SAMPLES T-TEST	26
TABLE 8: PROPORTION TEST.....	27
TABLE 9: STATISTICS PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST.....	28
TABLE 10: PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST H2.....	29
TABLE 11: STATISTICS H3	30
TABLE 12: MODEL SUMMARY H&M.....	30
TABLE 13: MODEL SUMMARY BURBERRY	30
TABLE 14: ANOVA H&M.....	31
TABLE 15: ANOVA BURBERRY.....	31
TABLE 16: COEFFICIENTS H&M	31
TABLE 17: COEFFICIENTS BURBERRY	32
TABLE 18: SUPPORT EXTRA RESULTS	32
FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL MODEL.....	8
FIGURE 2: CONCEPTUAL MODEL INCLUDING HYPOTHESES.....	16
FIGURE 3: FREQUENCY IMPROVE ORGANISATIONAL REPUTATION	26

1. Introduction

Impression management has become important for organisations, since organisations using various tactics to shape the perceptions of their stakeholders positively (Allen & Caillouet, 1994). Not all impression management strategies are ethical or effective (Li et al., 2022). Greenwashing, for instance, is a form of impression management that involves making false or exaggerated claims about a product or service's environmental benefits to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers (Parguel et al., 2011). Greenwashing has become a prevalent issue, with many organisations using it to enhance their reputation towards customers (Li et al., 2022). At the same time organisations are facing growing consumer scepticism (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2015). Consumers who are sceptical are more likely to distrust all these green claims from organisations (Obermiller et al., 2005).

“Impression management is a goal-directed conscious or unconscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of other people about a person, object or event” (Tashmin, 2016, p. 95). The goal for individuals is to present themselves the way in which they would like to be thought of by the individual or group they are interacting with (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). By conveying particular impressions about abilities, attitudes, motives, and other characteristics, people can influence others to respond to them in desirable ways (Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Research by Whetten et al. (2009) describes that organisations can be held accountable for their actions just like individuals. According to Whetten et al. (2009), organisations, like individuals, have intentions in the actions they perform. Generally, organisations undertake impression management to achieve goals that require they have a desired organisational reputation (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Organisations are capable of deliberate, responsible, and self-regulatory actions, just like individuals (Whetten et al., 2009). This idea by Whetten et al. (2009) forms the basis for examining how organisations manage their reputation in the eyes of consumers and how they strive to make a positive impression.

Greenwashing is a type of impression management because it involves organisations attempting to influence their audience's perception of them by portraying themselves as environmentally friendly, even if their claims are misleading or exaggerated (Sun & Shi, 2022). The aim of greenwashing is to create a positive trustworthy green reputation of the organisation. Majeed and Kim (2022) describe greenwashing as: “the intentional act of misleading, cheating and confusing customers with fake eco-friendly activities, disclosing positive information about eco-friendly initiatives and hiding negative information regarding environmental performance to repair or improve the environmentally friendly image” (pp.

1130-1131). Organisations that engage in greenwashing engage in the deceptive practice of presenting a more positive reputation with regards to their climate impact than is actually warranted (Parguel et al., 2011). Organisations do this by concealing or distorting information in a way that the false green claims come across to consumers differently (Parguel et al., 2011).

Organisations engage in greenwashing to create the best possible green reputation (Parguel et al., 2011). If it becomes apparent that an organisation has a substantial detrimental impact on the environment, it can adversely affect the organisation's reputation. This occurs because consumers lose trust in that particular organisation. (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2015). An organisations reputation is an important asset for organisations because it determines how consumers perceive them (Highhouse et al., 2009). Organisational reputation is defined as: "It is the subjective perception of individual buyers regarding the seller's intangibles that reflects the affective or emotional evaluation of the organisation based on social perceptions, including financial aspects, sustainability, media attention and public sensitivity at a given time and overtime" (Behera et al., 2022, p. 15). A positive organisational reputation serves as a means of differentiation from competitors and can generate greater consumer satisfaction (Fombrun, 1996). It can also provide an organisation with a competitive advantage that can improve the organisational performance (Barney, 1991).

Consumers scepticism of greenwashing claims impacts their perceptions of organisations (Morrison & Beer, 2017). Consumer scepticism refers to "consumer distrust or disbelief of marketer actions" (Foreh & Grier, 2003, p. 350). Consumers are increasingly aware of environmental issues and are willing to pay a premium for products and services that are environmentally sustainable (Namkung & Jang, 2017). However, this also means that consumers are more sceptical of organisations that claim to be environmentally friendly without any real action to back it up (Namkung & Jang, 2017). If consumers believe that an organisation engage in greenwashing, they are likely to view its claims as insincere, and may not trust the organisation as a whole (Namkung & Jang, 2017). According to Ashforth and Gibbs (1990), greenwashing can make consumers increasingly sceptical about an organisation's motives once they notice that an organisation uses greenwashing to better present itself.

1.3 Literature gap

This study builds on the existing literature discussed above. Greenwashing as a form of impression management helps an organisation build a reputation that better matches the

desired reputation than the reputation associated with the organisation based on the actions they perform (Spear & Roper, 2013). According to the current literature, this effect would therefore be positive, but sceptic consumers have not been considered in earlier studies. The study by Aji and Sutikno, (2015) found that greenwashing has a positive association with green consumer scepticism. The positive effect of claims made by organisations to build a trustworthy green reputation through greenwashing as form of impression management could disappear through consumers scepticism, because consumers do no longer trust the organisation (Obermiller et al., 2005). This could mean that greenwashing has a different effect for organisations than previously thought. This can also negative affect organisational performance (Barney, 1991). This study therefore examines whether this consumer scepticism effects the relationship between impression management through greenwashing on the green reputation and finally the change the organisational reputation. The importance and vulnerability of organisational reputation has long been known. Warren Buffet, for example, already said in 1995: “It takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it” (Buffet, 1995 in Lange et al., 2011, p. 154).

1.1 Theoretical relevance

This study contributes to research in the field of organisational impression management by examining the influence of consumer scepticism. Little is known about the influence of sceptical consumers on organisations that seek to build a good reputation through information that is distorted through impression management (Bolino et al., 2008). This is relevant to study since the influence of consumer scepticism on this relationship has not yet been investigated in the current literature. It provides new insights into the mechanisms that play a role in shaping an organisation's reputation and how consumer scepticism can affect this. Professionals will benefit from this dissertation, as it gives them insight into consumer behaviour regarding reactions and perceptions of greenwashing as a form of impression management.

1.2 Practical relevance

Including greenwashing as a specific form of impression management can help managers better understand how organisations manipulate environmental claims to influence consumer perceptions and how these manipulations can influence consumer attitudes and behaviour. In addition, by understanding the motivations and strategies behind greenwashing, a manager can develop more effective interventions and policies. This research is also a contribution for

strategic managers who have to determine how the organisation presents itself with regard to climate claims and whether greenwashing is taking place. By portraying themselves as environmentally friendly, organisations can gain a competitive advantage over other organisations. (Sun & Shi, 2022).

1.4 Research Question

The following research question has been formulated as the basis for the rest of this study:

What effect does consumer scepticism have on the relation between greenwashing and the organisational reputation?

It can be read above that the most important relation of this study is the influence of greenwashing on the green reputation and finally the change in organisational reputation perception. Greenwashing has gained academic attention due to its increasing prevalence in recent years, which is attributed to the mounting pressure on organisations to demonstrate greater environmental responsibility. Subsequently, the effect of consumer scepticism on this relationship is examined. Consumer scepticism may decrease this effect, which may alter the effect on organisational reputation. See figure 1 below for the conceptual model.

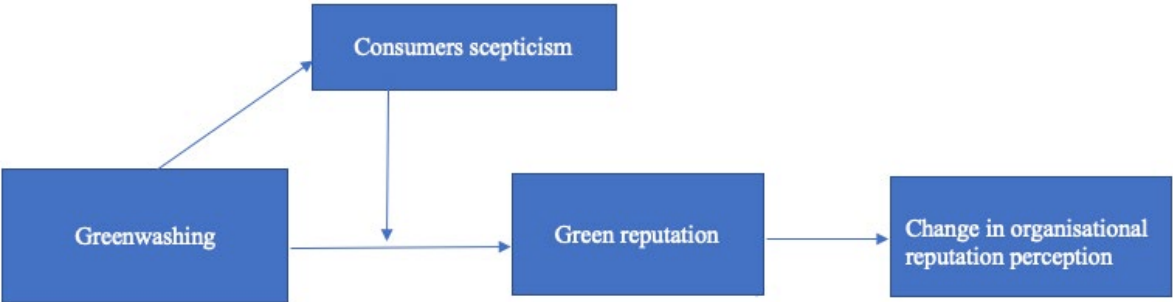


Figure 1: Conceptual model

A quantitative research study using surveys is conducted to investigate the effect of greenwashing on the organisational reputation, with a focus on the moderating effect of consumer scepticism. Surveys were used to collect numerical data that can be analysed using statistical methods. Because the research focuses on consumers perceptions, surveys are the best way to anonymously investigate the perceptions of those consumers on a large scale. The data is collected from 447 consumers. The findings will help to draw conclusions about the relationship between greenwashing, consumer scepticism, and organisational reputation.

1.5 Structure

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework, the existing theory on impression management, organisational reputation and consumer scepticism are further discussed. Based on this theory, the hypotheses are also presented in the theoretical framework. The method section further discusses the way in which this research is carried out. For example, how the hypotheses made are tested and which tests are used and why. In addition, the choices made are accounted for. The results of the research conducted can be found in the results. In the conclusion and discussion points for improvement are identified and an answer to the research question is formulated. Finally, both on a practical level for organisations and on a theoretical level, a number of recommendations are made for possible follow-up research and the limitations of this research are discussed.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Impression management

Impression management as it is initially developed by Goffman (1959) is about behaviours of persons as individuals. Goffman (1959) described impression management as a conscious or unconscious process by which people attempt to influence other people's perceptions of a person, object, or event by regulating and controlling information in social interaction. It is a two-way process that involves both managing one's own impression and interpreting the impressions of others (Goffman, 1959). Goffman found that individuals overcommunicate gestures that reinforce their desired self and under communicate gestures that detract from their desired self (Lewin & Reeves, 2011). Goffman (1959) contended that even seemingly innocuous actions might be designed to show a person in a favourable manner. He claimed that people are performers whose main task is to construct an identity (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's (1959) theory suggests that individuals engage in a continuous process of constructing and maintaining their identity, which is influenced by social norms, cultural expectations, and interpersonal interactions. The identities of individuals are not fixed, but rather are flexible and malleable, allowing individuals to adapt to different social contexts and demands (Goffman, 1959).

The impression management theory, originating from the field of social psychology, contributes to our understanding of the analysis of social interactions in everyday life. Goffman's (1959) work illustrates how individuals negotiate and affirm their identities during face-to-face interactions by deliberately shaping and constructing the perception others have of them. Goffman (1959) used the classic dramaturgical metaphor in his book, portraying individuals as actors who engage in performances in various settings before audiences

(Goffman, 1959; Spear & Roper, 2013). Consequently, individuals alter their behaviour to manage how others perceive them. Common impression management strategies include excuses, justifications, concessions, apologies, denials, and attacks, which individuals frequently employ in their daily lives to influence others' perception of them (Bansal & Clelland, 2004).

2.1.1 Organisational impression management

As discussed in the preceding text, impression management was initially developed in the context of individual behaviour. However, the application of this theory has since been extended to a wide range of social contexts. (Whetten et al., 2009). According to Whetten et al. (2009), the concept of treating organisations as living entities with predictable behaviours has been extended to viewing them as social actors possessing motives, drives, and intentions. This perspective enables the application of psychological phenomena to explain organisational behaviour, known as vertical theory borrowing (Whetten et al., 2009). This study by Whetten et al. (2009) is supported by the fact that modern society grants organisations sovereignty and holds them accountable for their actions. Whetten et al. (2009) argue that the idea that organisations must be accountable to society implies that they are capable of intentional, accountable, and self-regulated action, just like individuals. Bolino et al. (2008) referred to this as organisational impression management.

Impression management, as proposed by Goffman (1959), is a critical concept for organisations to consider in the context of strategic management. This concept is critical to organisations because by creating a favourable impression, organisations can gain the trust and support of consumers (Highhouse et al., 2009), which lead to better performance outcomes (Cable & Graham, 2000). Conversely, a negative impression can damage an organisation's reputation (Highhouse et al., 2009), leading to diminished trust, diminished support, and ultimately diminished performance. According to Gotsi and Wilson (2001) organisations can use impression management strategies to shape the perceptions of external stakeholders, such as consumers. This can help to build brand loyalty, attract new customers, and improve the organisation's reputation (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001).

Effective organisational impression management requires a deep understanding of the social dynamics that influence how people perceive others. This includes an awareness of the physical and verbal cues that people use to communicate, as well as an understanding of the social norms and expectations that shape interactions between organisations and individuals (Goffmann, 1959; Tedeschi, 2013). By developing strategies that take these factors into

account, organisations can build a strong organisational reputation and establish themselves as leaders in their respective industries (Tedeschi, 2013).

Research by García-Sánchez et al. (2019) shows that organisations with poor social or environmental performance tend to provide incomplete and ambiguous information in their sustainability reports to maintain their legitimacy. Organisations may use language that conveys a positive view of their performance, even if the reality is negative (García-Sánchez et al., 2019). This can result in a lack of quality and usefulness of the information provided to stakeholders (García-Sánchez et al., 2019). Organisations may also manipulate public perception through the use of more qualitative and complex content and an optimistic tone (Cho et al., 2012). This self-serving bias can lead to a positive assessment by stakeholders, but it may not accurately reflect the organisation's actual sustainability performance (Cho et al., 2012). In summary, impression management is a critical concept for organisations to consider in the context of strategic management. By understanding the social dynamics that influence how people perceive others and developing effective impression management strategies, organisations can improve their reputation, attract new customers, and establish themselves as leaders in their industry.

2.2 Greenwashing as a form of impression management

Greenwashing can be considered a specific form of impression management because it involves manipulating the public perception of an organisation's environmental commitments and performance (Sun & Shi, 2022). It is a deliberate attempt by organisations to create a favourable impression of their environmental and social responsibility. Greenwashing as a form of impression management can have a significant positive impact on an organisation (Sun & Shi, 2022). When an organisation engages in greenwashing, it exaggerates its environmental commitments and performance in environmental reports or social responsibility reports, with the aim of portraying itself as environmentally friendly and socially responsible (Sun & Shi, 2022). This can lead to a perception that the organisation is more environmentally conscious than it actually is, which positively influence consumer attitudes towards the organisation (Sun & Shi, 2022). Such exaggerations would involve claims that the organisation has implemented policies and strategies that promote energy efficiency and environmental protection, achieved cleaner production, reduced emissions, and fostered green innovation (Huang et al., 2022). Greenwashing is also the means by which organisations aim to fill the legal needs and comply with the environmental regulations put forth by the government (Huang et al., 2022). The organisation may also highlight its

compliance with national environmental regulations and optimistic prospects for development.

According to Sun and Shi (2022), greenwashing is used to improve the public image and reputation of the organisation. By portraying themselves as environmentally and socially responsible, organisations can appeal to consumers who are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues (Sun & Shi, 2022). This also happens when organisations show some green steps, but their overall production is absolutely not (Poliseno, 2022). Second, Sun and Shi (2022) describe how greenwashing can be used as a marketing tool to differentiate the organisation from its competitors. By portraying themselves as environmentally friendly, organisations can gain a competitive advantage over other organisations that do not practice greenwashing (Sun & Shi, 2022). Poliseno (2022) takes this further with advertising burst. This is when organisations exaggerate green claims in marketing communications and spend more money on advertising than on true green actions (Poliseno, 2022). Finally, Sun and Shi (2022) showed that greenwashing can be used to deflect criticism and negative publicity. By portraying themselves as environmentally friendly, organisations can deflect criticism and negative publicity and prevent possible reputational damage (Sun & Shi, 2022). Furthermore, it also happens that organisations communicate their environmental actions as virtues, even if they only comply with their legal requirements (Poliseno, 2022). In conclusion, organisations use greenwashing as a means of creating a favourable impression of environmental responsibility in the minds of consumers. By doing so, organisations aim to gain consumer trust and loyalty, which can lead to a competitive advantage (Sun & Shi, 2022).

2.3 Organisational reputation

Organisational reputation is becoming increasingly important to organisations (Highhouse et al., 2009). An organisations reputation is built over time (Hannington, 2011) through various strategic actions that the organisation takes to build a reputation (Dolphin, 2004). The reason for this is the increasing focus on organisational rankings, as well as media coverage given to events such as false claims scandals (Chun, 2005). Organisations today are more vulnerable to actions that consumers may perceive as inappropriate or unethical (Saldanha et al., 2022).

According to Shrum and Wuthnow (1988), reputational status becomes a critical resource for organisational managers and represents the outcome of a competitive process in which organisations signal their key characteristics to constituents in order to maximize their economic and non-economic status (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Based on Fombrun (1996) and Fombrun and Shanley (1990), a favourable organisational reputation may generate

several competitive advantages for a firm. This consist of (1) delaying rivals' mobility in the industry. (2) Charging premium prices, because consumers are willing to pay more if the consumer believe in an organisation's green reputation (Delmas & Burbano, 2011). (3) Attracting better applicants as well as investors. Dowling (1986) showed that corporate audiences routinely rely on the reputations of organisations in making investment decisions, career decisions, and product choices. (4) Enhancing its access to capital markets, for the same reason as point four. Last (5) building a strong morale among employees and (6) improving both economic and non-economic results. People nowadays find it important to be associated with organisations that do not have too bad a reputation for environmental impact (Sun et al., 2022). Partly because of the pressure of society (Sun et al., 2022). According to Lange et al. (2011) reputation is rooted in the organisation's historical behaviour and associations. This organisational reputation can abruptly be changed if new information about the organisation's past behaviour comes to light or if the organisation's latest behaviours or associations are jarring to observers (Lange et al., 2011).

A positive reputation can help to build trust and can lead to increased consumer loyalty (Fombrun, 1996). Moreover, the resource-based view theory emphasizes the strategic importance of intangible assets, such as reputation, in creating and sustaining a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Unlike tangible assets, such as equipment or facilities, intangible assets are difficult for competitors to replicate, making them a valuable source of sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). In addition, people appear to be particularly sensitive to the social and reputational aspects of retention and collaboration (Shin & Ki, 2019). The above shows that organisational reputation is an important aspect for consumers when considering entering into a relationship with an organisation. Partly due to pressure from society, consumers prefer to do this with organisations that have a good reputation, including in the field of the environment (Shin & Ki, 2019).

2.3.1 Green reputation

Green reputation refers to an organisation's reputation in relation to the environment (Shin & Ki, 2019). In this respect, green reputation entails a subset of the entire reputation of the organisational reputation. According to Guerci et al. (2013), a green reputation has a positive influence on the overall reputation of the organisation. Organisational green reputation is consumers' evaluation of an organisation formed over time by direct experiences with the organisation and any communications providing information about the organisation's actions related to the environment (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). Specifically, when green reputation is

worse, consumers may attribute the green advertisement as a strategic tool to make the organisation look environmentally friendly (external motivation) (Shin & Ki, 2019). When the green reputation more trustworthy, consumers consider the green advertising to represent the sincere environmentalism of the organisation creating the advertisement (internal motivation) (Shin & Ki, 2019).

Positive green organisation reputation can play a role as insurance to protect against reputational damage in a crisis situation (Coombs & Holladay, 2006). In addition, positive green reputation can influence economic performance in the long term (Tang et al., 2012). To improve green reputation, organisations often send green messages using various communication strategies, including promotion, advertising, sponsorship and public relations, while changing business policy, marketing strategy, products and services to be more pro-environment (Shin & Ki, 2019). Positive product-categorical green reputation indicates that consumers consider a product category to be relatively environmentally friendly, while a negative product-categorical green reputation indicates that the public perceives a product category to have a relatively negative impact on the environment.

There are some contradictions in the above text compared to the other literature. For example, with organisations that already have a bad green reputation, consumers attribute the green advertisement as a strategic tool (Shin & Ki, 2019). This is something to keep in mind, but the vast majority of the literature points to improving the organisational reputation by bringing out green communication, even if they are false. This is therefore assumed to be likely. Combining the concepts of impression management as a strategic tool and perceived organisational reputation, the following hypothesis emerged.

Hypothesis 1a: *Greenwashing will lead to a trustworthy green reputation by consumers.*

Hypothesis 1b: *A trustworthy green reputation leads to a positive change in the organisational reputation perception.*

2.4 Consumer scepticism

Organisations are facing growing consumer scepticism (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2015). There is widespread societal concern that organisations often distribute incomplete or false environmental information to deceive consumers and enhance their reputation (Parguel et al., 2011). The emergence of green consumer scepticism refers to the tendency of consumers to question the environmental benefits or performance of green products (Mohr et al., 1998;

Obermiller et al., 2005). This trend is mainly attributed to the increasing incidents of organisational malfeasance, and irresponsible environmental practices (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2015). The effect of consumer scepticism is further enhanced by the so-called halo/horn effect (Balzer & Sulsky, 1992). The halo/horns effect refers to a cognitive process by which an individual's general impression of an entity influences the individual's later attitudes toward the specific character or properties of the entity (Balzer & Sulsky, 1992). As soon as previous statements by an organisation are already not trusted by consumers, the mistrust of subsequent statements will only increase (Balzer & Sulsky, 1992).

According to Elvin (2013), consumers tend to be sceptical about corporate social responsibility (CSR) communications from organisations. When an organisation has a worse reputation, it may feel the need to increase its legitimacy, leading to efforts to improve its reputation (Elvin, 2013). However, this can create a vicious cycle where consumers become increasingly sceptical of the organisation's motives and view its CSR activities as self-serving and manipulative (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990). Additionally, an organisation with a worse reputation is more likely to face greater scepticism from consumers compared to an organisation with a more positive reputation (Elvin, 2013). In fact, a worse reputation can lead to negative and sceptical responses to all organisational activities (Elvin, 2013). The origin of green action is also important for consumers (Crane, 2018). When an organisation's actions are perceived as involuntary, consumer scepticism increases (Crane, 2018). Instead of acting voluntarily, there are times when organisations respond to public outrage or government intervention (Crane, 2018). This is therefore not because the organisation considers it important. As a result, sceptical consumers will experience more distrust of these organisations regarding green claims (Crane, 2018). Parguel et al. (2011) showed that consumers' perceived external motivation leads consumers to perceive the green advertisement as greenwashing. This shows that the greenwash practices of organisations can further reinforce consumers' scepticism (Parguel et al., 2011). This effect is described below in hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2: *Greenwashing increases consumer scepticism.*

Sceptical consumers pay less attention to advertisements and are not easily influenced by green advertising (Obermiller et al., 2005). Informational advertisements can come across as dry or manipulative, which could put off sceptical consumers (Obermiller et al., 2005). Scepticisms about an organisation's motives has a negative impact on both consumer intent to

purchase the organisation's products and their attitudes towards the organisation reputation (Elvin, 2013). In terms of environmental claims, unfavourable word of mouth leads to very unfavourable attitudes towards advertisements and products (Leonidou & Skarmeas, 2015). In conclusion, based on the theory, consumer scepticism leads to a reduction in the positive relationship between impression management and organisational reputation. In addition, organisations that greenwash have also been shown to increase consumer scepticism. This decreases the positive relationship between greenwashing and the green reputation of the organisation. Hypothesis 3 was formulated on this basis, which together with the other formulated hypotheses is shown in figure 2 of the conceptual model.

Hypothesis 3: *Consumer scepticism decreases the positive effect of greenwashing on the trustworthy green reputation.*

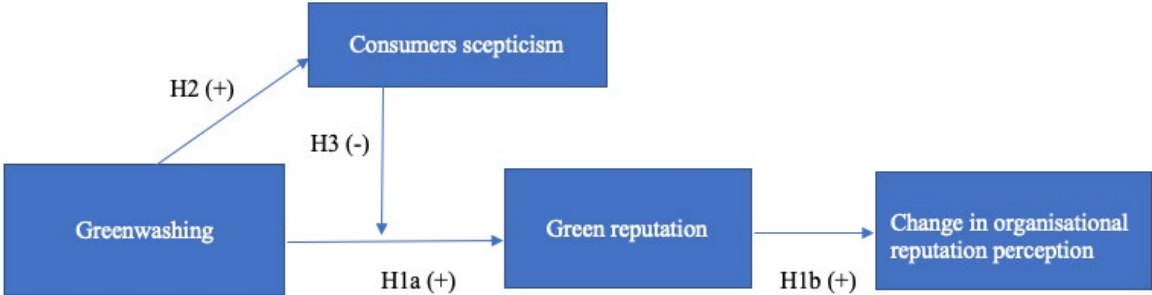


Figure 2: Conceptual model including hypotheses

3. Method

3.1 Research method

The hypotheses were tested by means of a quantitative study based on surveys. Quantitative research is a type of research in which numerical data is collected and analysed using statistical methods (Field, 2018). This study focused on the perceptions of the respondents of greenwashing practices of organisations. The method used is survey research, a form of quantitative research. Surveys have been used because it facilitates the collection of data from a large number of respondents in a limited time period (Vennix, 2016). The questions in the survey were answered on a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale provides a standardized way to measure respondents' perceptions and attitudes, increasing the comparability of answers (Vennix, 2016). Self-completed data was collected from the respondents by means of

an online survey. An advantage of the self-administered survey is that respondents can complete the survey at their own pace. Given the absence of researcher intervention, respondents may feel less afraid of judgment (Burns, 2006). This is relevant in the context of greenwashing, as individuals often face societal pressure to make environmentally friendly choices (Sun et al., 2022). The same survey was used for all participants, the survey can be found in appendix B.

Before completing the questionnaire, the survey was tested. The pilot consisted of a small group of people who completed the questionnaire, followed by a personal interview. This revealed minor ambiguities in the questions, which were subsequently corrected. This increases the validity, because it shows how well people understood the questions and whether they were able to answer them all (Vennix, 2016). The respondents in the pilot test were not invited to participate in the main study, as this could influence the results (Haralambos & Holborn, 2000). After the pilot tests, the survey was distributed through Prolific to access a large and diverse pool of participants (Aguinis et al., 2021). Prolific gives the option to choose which countries the survey will be distributed to. For this study, it was decided to use only European countries. This is because other parts of the world are sometimes less developed and issues such as sustainability are less important among those populations.

3.1.1 Respondents

This study uses a random sample population to obtain a diverse and representative group of potential consumers to reveal valid and generalizable insights into their preferences. To keep the age of the surveyed people in a generally accepted dome, respondents under the age of eighteen were excluded from the survey for certainty. Distortions based on a too young respondent who does not fully understand the concept of the environmental problem and the harmful impact of, have therefore been almost completely eliminated. Based on a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level with a population > 20 000, a sample of approximately 377 respondents is required.

3.1.2 Statistical tests

After the respondents had completed the surveys, the data was analysed by means of various tests in SPSS. Before the hypotheses were tested, the attention check answers were checked. If this question was not answered correctly, the respondent was removed from the dataset. This indicates that the respondent did not take the survey seriously. Subsequently, hypothesis

1a was tested by means of paired sample t-test, preceded by a factor analysis. The paired samples t-test is used when two (or more) means from one (participant) group are compared (Hair et al., 2019). Like a survey asking the same respondents before and after a certain condition (Hair et al., 2019). Hypothesis 1b was tested by means of a proportionality test. Hypothesis 2 was tested using the paired sample t-test again. By this way the answers of the respondents at two different times can be compared (Hair et al., 2019). Hypothesis 3 was tested by means of a regression analysis. This made it possible to test whether and to what extent consumer scepticism influences the green trust of consumers in the greenwash advertisements. A significance level of $p=0.05$ was used for all tests.

3.2 Research design

The survey was created with Qualtrics. Qualtrics was chosen because it is user-friendly and makes it possible to show or not show certain questions to a respondent based on the answer given. The research starts with an introduction in which it becomes clear to the respondent what the research is about and how much time it will take (Appendix A). The introduction is followed by four questions that test the extent to which the respondent is consciously looking for clothing that comes from an environmentally conscious organisation. These questions measure how sceptical the respondent considers himself to be. This is before the rest of the survey so that respondents are not dependent on their answers from the survey. To avoid biases. Finally, there is a fifth introduction question to test hypothesis 1b.

After this introduction questions, the survey moves on to the organisational questions. These are about H&M, Patagonia and Burberry for all three organisations the same questions are asked. H&M and Burberry are both examples of organisations that have been guilty of greenwashing. Patagonia is an organisation that also claims to be sustainable, but so far as known, they actually are. This organisation has been included in the questionnaire in order not to make it too predictable for the respondents. In addition, Patagonia is also used to investigate whether a trustworthy green reputation indeed leads to a positive change in organisational reputation perception by consumers (H1b).

The questions about the organisations consist of three parts. It starts with the logo of the organisation. This is followed by the question whether the respondent knows the organisation and whether they ever (considered) buying something there. Then the respondents saw the green advertisement of that organisation. Six questions are then asked. First five questions to measure the green trust based on the advertisement and a final question to see if the respondent would now want to buy from the organisation. Finally, the respondent

is shown a piece of text about the organisation and the way in which they live up to what they present themselves. At H&M and Burberry, it becomes clear to the respondent that they are not as green as they seem (Geels, 2018; Hendriks, 2017; Stern, 2022). Patagonia stands out in previous studies for their sustainable practices. They emphasize repairing garments to discourage excessive consumption and raise awareness among consumers about the environmental impact of excessive clothing purchases, even if the production is environmentally friendly (Demkes, 2020; Matthews, 2022). Additional details and the advertisements used in the surveys can be found in Appendix C. The first question after that information is whether the consumer was already aware of this information. If this is the case, the consumer will not be more sceptical after reading the piece of text. If the respondent does not know, questions follow to see what has changed in the respondents' perception of the organisation.

After all these questions, an attention check has been built in. This was done by asking which organisations passed by. Finally, demographic information was requested from the respondents. This was collected at the end of the survey to minimize the burden of answering complex questions in case they experienced survey fatigue (Bourque & Fielder, 2003). Survey fatigue may lead to less accurate answers to questions (Sinickas, 2007). Placing easier questions at the end made participants treat the earlier, more challenging questions with more seriousness (Sinickas, 2007).

3.3 Study field: Greenwashing in the fashion industry

As a result of the ongoing changes in the climate and our living conditions, consumers are increasingly mindful of the environmental impact of their consumption. The trend towards sustainability has gained mainstream popularity, with more people recognizing the adverse effects of their consumption habits (Alexa et al., 2021). Studies by Carlson et al. (1993) and Alexa et al. (2021) show that consumers are more inclined to choose an organisation over another if they believe the organisation will help the environment. They are also more inclined to act positively towards organisations that are perceived to be sensitive to environmental concerns (Alexa et al., 2021). In addition, consumer products organisations (including the fashion industry) are more likely to face higher consumer pressures to be environmentally friendly compared to non-consumer products industries and service industries (Poliseno, 2022). The fashion industry is the second largest polluter in the world after the oil industry (Niinimäki et al., 2020). 92 million tons of textile waste is estimated to be produced every year, on top of this the fashion industry is estimated to account for

nearly 10% of global carbon emissions (Poliseno, 2022). In addition, the fashion industry accounts for nearly 20% of global wastewater (Poliseno, 2022). The environmental damage increases as the industry grows (Sustain Your Style 2020). A study by the Changing Markets Foundation report (2021) studied green claims made by clothing organisations and found that about 60% were fraudulent. In particular, the study found that 96% of H&M's green and sustainable claims were unfounded (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020; Poliseno, 2022).

3.4 Operationalisation

3.4.1 Greenwashing

The independent variable in this study is greenwashing. TerraChoice (2010) designed a classification called the seven sins of greenwashing, which addresses the main ways organisations mislead consumers using environmental claims. These seven sins refer to claims at the product level, including clothes (Poliseno, 2022). For this study, the greenwash practices of H&M and Burberry are taken as an example. For the H&M the sin of the hidden trade-off is most applicable. This method refers to advertising a product as sustainable based on a limited number of properties, without considering other critical environmental concerns (TerraChoice, 2010). In the case of H&M, advertising sustainable materials and initiatives, such as organic cotton and recycled fibres, can be considered a limited aspect of sustainability. However, burning large quantities of unsold clothing, including potentially sustainably sourced clothing, undermines the organisation's broader sustainability claims. For Burberry's case, the sin of fibbing method is the basis of the greenwash practises. If Burberry burns clothing to maintain exclusivity and is unwilling to sell the clothing for less money, while at the same time making sustainability claims, this can be considered a false claim and therefore misleading (TerraChoice, 2010).

3.4.2 Trustworthy green reputation

The dependent variable of this research is the trustworthy green reputation of organisations. The validated questionnaire from the study by Chen (2010) was used to measure green trust based on organisations' advertisements. The questionnaire of Chen (2010) referred to Blau (1964), Ganesan (1994), and Schurr and Ozanne (1985) to measure green trust. The measurement of green trust includes five statements: (1) I feel that this product's environmental functions are generally reliable. (2) I feel that this product's environmental performance is generally dependent. (3) I feel that this product's environmental argument is generally trustworthy. (4) This product's environmental concern meets my expectations. (5)

This product keeps promises and commitments for environmental protection. The statements have been taken over with the only adjustment that the organisation names have been filled in at the places where the statements say, "that this product's".

3.4.3 Consumer scepticism

Consumer scepticism refers to the degree to which consumers tend to doubt the credibility of advertising claims made by organisations. Consumer scepticism was measured on the basis of the following questions: (1) I consider myself as environmentally conscious when purchasing clothing. (2) I give close attention if clothing is manufactured sustainably. (3) I notice when organisations green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably) are not entirely true. These questions are based on the studies by Skarmeas and Leonidou (2013) and Skarmeas et al. (2014). In that studies, doubt (q.1), questions (q.2) and disbelief (q.3) emerge as indicators of consumer scepticism.

The answers to these questions can be scored on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1 indicates not sceptical at all and 5 is very sceptical. Based on the scores of the respondents, they are then divided into the sceptical or non-sceptical group. An average score above 3 does make the respondent sceptical anything below that indicates not sceptical. Subsequently, before and after this information, it was measured whether there was trust in the organization and whether the respondents are still willing to buy from the organizations that are guilty of greenwashing.

3.5 Research ethics

The survey questions were designed to collect quantitative data on participants' perceptions of fashion organisations and their sustainability claims. The survey includes questions about participants' awareness of greenwashing and their understanding of sustainability in the context of the fashion industry. The introduction of the questionnaire clearly explains the purpose of the study (Appendix A). The participants could decide for themselves whether they wanted to participate in the study and could stop at any time. The surveys were distributed via Prolific. The survey turned out to take an average time of 07:21. The participants received an average of €1.34 for this, which amounts to €10.94 per hour. While completing the survey, a progress bar was present at the top of the survey, so that participants could see how far they were at any time. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants is guaranteed by not collecting any identifying data. All information from the research is treated confidentially and not shared with third parties. It was used exclusively for the

research and this was also explained to the participants beforehand. They must also agree that the data will be used for the research.

4. Results

A total of 466 people participated in the study. Not everyone had passed the attention check and there were a number of people who did not swipe to agree with the introductory text. These people have been removed from the study. This leaves a total of 447 respondents. Of these, 205 respondents identified as female, 233 as male, 7 respondents answered with different and 2 respondents did not want to say. The youngest respondent was 18 and the oldest 62. 82% of the respondents were 39 or younger.

4.1 Factor Analysis

To evaluate the validity of the questions that measure green trust, a factor analysis was first performed. By looking at the interdependence between the questions, it can be assessed whether the questions actually measure what they are intended to measure. Instead of looking at each question individually, the answers can be grouped into a smaller number of factors, making analysing and interpreting the data easier (Hair et al., 2019). The same set of questions has been asked 3 times only the organisation name has been changed. The FA has been carried out for all 3 organisations and gives almost the same results in all three. Below is the detailed analysis of the factor analysis conducted on the data from H&M. The results for Patagonia and Burberry can be found in Appendix D.

The adequacy of the sampling for analysis can be verified as the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin is above the threshold of 0.5 (KMO = 0.890), where the closer to 1 the better. Furthermore, the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicates that there is sufficient correlation for a factor analysis. The test resulted in a chi-squared value ($\chi^2= 1469,067$) with 10 degrees of freedom (df=10) and a significance level of $p < .001$.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.890
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1469.067
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's Test

After the requirements of a factor analysis have been met, the FA is carried out. Principal axis factoring was used for this. As can be seen in Table 2, there is one factor with an eigenvalue > 1. In addition, the cumulative here is >60%. The cumulative variance of 67.96% indicates that the extracted factors explain a significant portion of the variance in the original data, while an eigenvalue of 3,709 suggests that the corresponding factor contains substantial variance and carries more information than a single original variable (Hair et al., 2019). This is also confirmed by the scree plot (Table 3) which shows that the break point is at factor number two. This means that there is one factor above the cut point (Hair et al., 2019).

Total Variance Explained

Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
	1	3.709	74.184	74.184	3.398	67.963
2	.429	8.584	82.768			
3	.363	7.259	90.027			
4	.298	5.962	95.989			
5	.201	4.011	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 2: Total variance explained

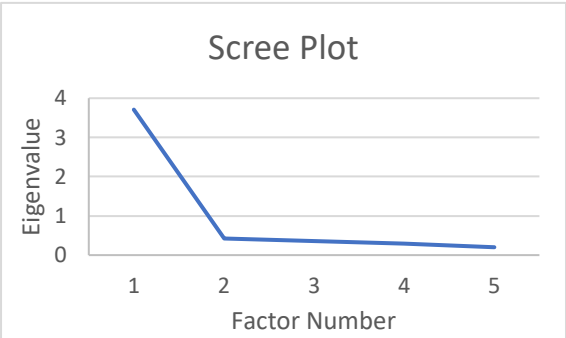


Table 3: Scree plot

Table 4 below shows the factor loadings. This shows that the lowest loading is 0.738. This is still very high. Above 0.7 falls below strong. The higher the factor loading, the stronger the contribution of the variable to the factor (hair et al., 2019). Since everything loads very heavily on factor 1, it makes no sense to look further to eliminate variables. In conclusion for this research, the factor is a good measure of the concept of green trust. To check reliability, the Cronbach's alpha is shown in Table 5 ($\alpha=0.912$). This is high because in general a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable, while values above 0.80

are considered good (Field, 2018). The Cronbach's alpha only goes down when deleting an item (Appendix D).

Factor Matrix^a

	Factor 1
I feel that H&M environmental commitments area unit usually reliable.	.860
I feel that H&M environmental performance is mostly dependable.	.738
I feel that H&M environmental argument is mostly trustworthy.	.892
H&M environmental concern meets my expectations.	.786
I feel H&M keeps guarantees and commitments for environmental protection.	.837

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 4: Factor Matrix

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.912	5

Table 5: Cronbach's Alpha

4.2 Paired sample t-test

To construct an answer to hypothesis 1a, a paired sample t-test was performed. The FA has shown that all variables measure the same thing, they have been combined into green trust. The descriptive statistics of the organisations can be read below (Table 6). H&M $\mu=3.05$, Patagonia $\mu= 3.50$ and Burberry $\mu=2.87$. Looking at the results, the average is around three, which indicates neutral green trust. At Burberry, the green trust is even more negative than positive. At first glance, greenwashing does not seem to lead to a trustworthy green reputation.

		Statistics		
		HMvertrouwen	Patagonia vertrouwen	Burberry vertrouwen
N	Valid	440	437	440
	Missing	7	10	7
Mean		3.0505	3.4979	2.8650
Median		3.2000	3.6000	3.0000
Mode		3.00	3.00	3.00
Std. Deviation		.81428	.73205	.80954
Variance		.663	.536	.655
Skewness		-.367	-.398	-.129
Std. Error of Skewness		.116	.117	.116
Kurtosis		-.397	1.253	.089
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.232	.233	.232

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics organisations

To test whether the trust of the greenwash advertisements (H&M and Burberry) differs significantly from the truly green advertisement of Patagonia, the averages of H&M and Burberry are both compared with those of Patagonia (Table 7). The paired sample t-test showed a significant difference between the mean scores on the green trust factor for H&M's greenwash advertisement ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .82$) and the Patagonia's truly green advertisement ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .72$), $t(429) = -10.57$, $p < .001$. The difference between Burberry ($M = 3.05$, $SD = .82$) and Patagonia ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .72$) is also significant $t(429) = -14.99$, $p < .001$. This result does not support the hypothesis 1a: greenwashing will lead to a trustworthy green reputation by consumers. Since the respondents have more trust in truly green advertisements. Furthermore, the average green trust score for H&M and Burberry combined does not surpass a mean of 3. This indicates that consumer trust in the greenwashing advertisements themselves is slightly below neutral trust.

		Paired Samples Test							Significance	
		Paired Differences							One-Sided	Two-Sided
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	p	p
					Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	HMyvertrouwen - Patagoniavertrouwen	-.45349	.88984	.04291	-.53783	-.36914	-10.568	429	<.001	<.001
Pair 2	Burberryvertrouwen - Patagoniavertrouwen	-.62465	.86423	.04168	-.70657	-.54273	-14.988	429	<.001	<.001

Table 7: Paired samples t-test

4.3 Proportionality test

To test hypothesis 1b, a trustworthy green reputation contributes to a positive change in organisational reputation perception, the general question was examined: When an organisation has a good sustainable reputation, that improves my view of the overall organisation reputation. First, a frequency table was made of the answers given. As shown in Figure 3 below. To test whether the percentage of respondents who answered agree or fully agree differs significantly from 50% and is significant, a proportion test was performed. This would make the group of respondents who (fully) agree with the statement so large that it would support hypothesis 1b.

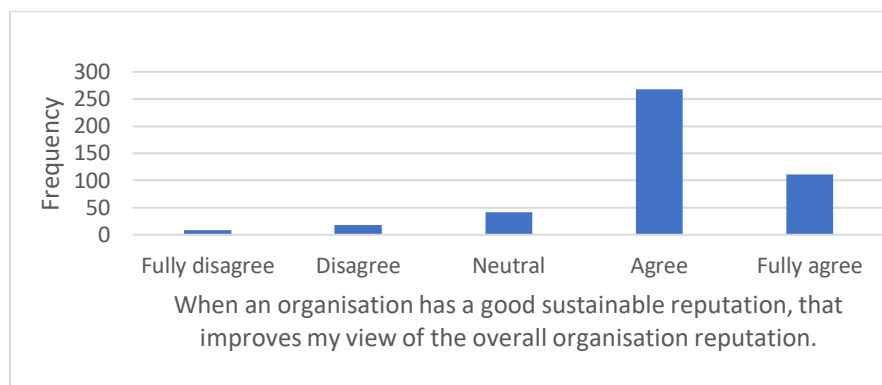


Figure 3: Frequency improve organisational reputation

The respondents were divided into two groups, group 0 consists of the respondents who answered fully disagree, disagree and neutral. Group 1 are the respondents who answered agree and fully agree. As can be read in the Table 8 , $p < .001$. As a result, the groups differ significantly from each other and a good sustainable reputation leads to a better overall

organisational reputation. The same test was then performed for the following question: After knowing this about Patagonia's green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably), my view of this organisation has changed. Since Patagonia is the only one of the three organisations with a trustworthy green reputation. The result (Table 8) is also significant here ($P < .001$). This shows that based on this results H1b can be supported. So, a trustworthy green reputation actually leads to a positive change in the perception of the reputation of the organisation.

Binomial Test

		Category	N	Observed Prop.	Test Prop.	Exact Sig. (2-tailed)
changereputation	Agree	1.0	379	.85	.50	<.001
	Not agree	.0	68	.15		
	Total		447	1.00		
changepatagonia	agree	1.0	255	.67	.50	<.001
	Not agree	.0	124	.33		
	Total		379	1.00		

Table 8: Proportion test

4.4 Paired-sample t-test 2

To test h2, which argues that greenwashing increases consumer scepticism, another paired-sample t-test was performed. Only the advertisements of H&M and Burberry were included in this test, because these are the two organisations that greenwash in the advertisements. At the beginning of the survey, the questions: I once bought something at the (organisation) and I once considered buying a clothing item from (organisation) were asked. The second question was only given to the respondents who had not answered agree or fully agree to the first. A new variable has been created from these questions in which these questions have been merged. For the respondents who answered the second question, the answers to the first question have been replaced by the second in the new variable. As a result, everyone who has ever bought something or has considered buying by that organisation has merged. The statistics from the paired sample t-test can be found in Table 9.

Paired Samples Statistics

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 CombinedH&M (considered) buying	4.50	477	.828	.044
Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by H&M.	3.26	447	1.002	.053
Pair 2 I feel that H&M environmental argument is mostly trustworthy.	3.01	446	1.002	.047
Next time I see a green advertisement from H&M, I'll trust it.	2.50	446	1.085	.051
Pair 3 CombinedBurberry (considered) buying	1.99	477	1.341	.069
Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by Burberry.	1.82	477	1.031	.053
Pair 4 I feel Burberry's environmental argument is mostly trustworthy.	2.82	440	.946	.045
Next time I see a green advertisement from Burberry, I'll trust it.	1.84	440	.995	.047

Table 9: Statistics paired sample t-test

The paired sample t-test showed a significant difference between the mean scores before and after greenwashing in all pairs. For H&M consider buying before greenwashing ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .83$) and after ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.00$), $t(354) = 22.992$, $p < 0.001$. For H&M organisational trust the results before are ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.00$) and after ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.09$), $t(445) = 10.443$, $p < .001$. For Burberry consider buying before greenwashing ($M = 1.99$, $SD = 1.34$) and after ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.03$), $t(378) = 2.505$, $p = .013$. Slightly less significant than the rest, but meets $p < .05$. For Burberry the organisational trust results are before ($M = 2.82$, $SD = .95$) and after ($M = 1.84$, $SD = 1.00$), $t(439) = 19.931$, $p < .001$. The 95% confidence interval also shows significance (Table 10), the zero falls outside the lower and upper range. Based on these results, H_2 : greenwashing increases consumer scepticism can be provisionally supported.

		Paired Samples Test								Significance	
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper					
Pair 1	CombinedHM (considered) buying- Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by H&M.	1.248	1.023	.054	1.141	1.355	22.992	354	<.001	<.001	
Pair 2	I feel that H&M environmental argument is mostly trustworthy. - Next time I see a green advertisement from H&M, I'll trust it.	.509	1.029	.049	.413	.605	10.443	445	<.001	<.001	
Pair 3	CombinedBurberry (considered) buying. - Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by Burberry.	.169	1.313	.067	.036	.301	2.505	378	.006	.013	
Pair 4	I feel Burberry's environmental argument is mostly trustworthy. - Next time I see a green advertisement from Burberry, I'll trust it.	.984	1.036	.049	.887	1.081	19.931	439	<.001	<.001	

Table 10: Paired sample t-test h2

4.5 Regression analysis

To test h3: Consumer scepticism decreases the positive effect of greenwashing on the trustworthy green reputation, a simple regression analysis is performed for H&M and Burberry. First the assumptions for simple regression analysis were tested. Both the dependent and independent variable are at an ordinal level for both organisations, which is suitable for a regression analysis. As in Table 11, the skewness and kurtosis of the variables are all within the acceptable range for normality of skewness and kurtosis ≤ 2 . This can also be observed visually in the histograms in Appendix F. In regression, the variance of the error term must be equal for all values of the explanatory variable. Thus, there should be no more or less spread in the error term for larger or lower values of the explanatory variable (Field, 2018). The results of the scatterplots can be found in Appendix F. This shows that they are both approximately the same and that the dots above and below the 0-axis are evenly distributed.

		Statistics		
		Sceptlevel	HMvertrouwen	Burberryvertrouwen
N	Valid	447	440	440
	Missing	0	7	7
Mean		.3490	3.0505	2.8650
Median		.0000	3.2000	3.0000
Std. Deviation		.47719	.81428	.80954
Variance		.228	.663	.655
Skewness		.636	-.367	-.129
Std. Error of Skewness		.115	.116	.116
Kurtosis		-1.603	-.397	.089
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.230	.232	.232

Table 11: Statistics h3

Subsequently, the regression analyses were performed. Table 12 and 13 shows that the R² is very low. This indicates that only 1,2% variance in the dependent variable is explained in the case of H&M. Burberry is slightly higher with 2,8% but still very low.

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.168 ^a	.028	.026	.79901	.028	12.650	1	438	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sceptlevel

b. Dependent Variable: Burberryvertrouwen

Table 12: Model summary H&M

Model Summary ^b									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.109 ^a	.012	.010	.81036	.012	5.259	1	438	.022

a. Predictors: (Constant), Sceptlevel

b. Dependent Variable: HMvertrouwen

Table 13: Model summary Burberry

The ANOVA table (14) shows for H&M $F(1, 438) = 5.26, p < .05$ and for Burberry (Table 15) $F(1, 438) = 12.65, p < .001$. This means that both regression models generally result in a significantly good prediction of the outcome variable.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.453	1	3.453	5.259	.022 ^b
	Residual	287.626	438	.657		
	Total	291.080	439			

a. Dependent Variable: HMvertrouwen

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sceptlevel

Table 14: ANOVA H&M

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.076	1	8.076	12.650	<.001 ^b
	Residual	279.625	438	.638		
	Total	287.701	439			

a. Dependent Variable: Burberryvertrouwen

b. Predictors: (Constant), Sceptlevel

Table 15: ANOVA Burberry

Table 16 and 17 provides information about the model parameters and the significance of these values. For H&M, $\beta_0 = 3.116$. This means that if level of scepticism is not known, the model predicts the green trust to be 3.116. Change in this outcome is associated with a change in the level of scepticism ($\beta_1 = -.185$). The green confidence therefore goes down at the moment the respondent considers himself more sceptical. The degree of scepticism is a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.116	.048		64.910	<.001
	Sceptlevel	-.185	.081	-.109	-2.293	.022

Table 16: Coefficients H&M

significant predictor of green trust based on the t-test of H&M ($\beta = -.168$; $t(438) = -2.293$; $p < .05$) and Burberry ($\beta = -.109$; $t(438) = -3.557$; $p < .001$). These results support h3 that states consumer scepticism decreases the positive effect of greenwashing on the trustworthy green reputation, even though the explanatory power is very small.

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.965	.047		62.645	<.001
	Sceptlevel	-.284	.080	-.168	-3.557	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Burberryvertrouwen

Table 17: Coefficients Burberry

4.6 Extra results

During the elaboration of the results, another striking phenomenon emerged (Table 18). The following question was asked: I deliberately buy clothes from stores that present themselves as environmentally conscious. About half of the respondents answered this question with yes and half with no. Of the 177 respondents who answered yes to this question, only 50 respondents (14.1%) answered the question: Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by H&M, with disagree or fully disagree. This is more than the 31 respondents (8.8%) who filled in no. But based on the questions you would expect a much bigger difference. As it stands, people say one thing, but their behaviour shows something else. The second question was asked after the respondents had been made aware of H&M's greenwash practices and only to those who indicated that they were not yet aware of this information.

		Crosstab		
		I deliberately buy clothes from stores that present themselves as environmentally conscious.		
		Yes	No	Total
Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by H&M.	Fully disagree	Count 10 2.8%	Count 12 3.4%	Count 22 6.2%
	Disagree	Count 40 11.3%	Count 19 5.4%	Count 59 16.6%
	Neutral	Count 53 14.9%	Count 46 13.0%	Count 99 27.9%
	Agree	Count 65 18.3%	Count 91 25.6%	Count 156 43.9%
	Fully agree	Count 9 2.5%	Count 10 2.8%	Count 19 5.4%
Total	Count 177 49.9%	Count 178 50.1%	Count 355 100.0%	

Table 18: Support extra results

5. Conclusion and discussion

The aim of this research was to find an answer to the research question: What effect does consumer scepticism have on the relation between greenwashing and the organisational reputation? To investigate this, hypotheses have been formulated based on the existing literature. The first hypothesis assumed that greenwashing will lead to a trustworthy green reputation by consumers. The results of this study did not support this. Organisations that advertise with greenwash advertisements have been compared to those of true green organisations. The respondents appeared to have significantly less trust in the organisations that practiced greenwashing. This differs from the current literature that states that greenwashing works to improve the reputation of organisations (Sun & Shi, 2022). As well as impression management in general would build consumer trust and support (Highhouse et al., 2009). This difference in outcome can possibly be explained by the way this research is conducted. To test the hypothesis, the organisations that greenwash have been compared with the real green organisation, but this does not necessarily mean that greenwashing contributes nothing at all to a trustworthy green reputation. This has not been investigated in this study, because it requires a different structure of the survey. Which required too many adjustments in the context of the rest of this study.

The second part of the first hypothesis that assumed that a trustworthy green reputation leads to a positive change in the perception of the reputation of the organisation was supported. This is in line with what was already known in the current literature. Since the organisational reputation is built up, among other things, with the green reputation of an organisation (Shin & Ki, 2019). The green reputation is also becoming increasingly important for the reputation of the entire organisation due to the social pressure to become more sustainable (Guerci et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2022).

The results of the tests support the third hypothesis, which indicates that greenwashing increases consumer scepticism. This is in line with the existing literature. However, this research is somewhat limited and mainly focuses on consumers' willingness to buy and the loss of trust when organisations engage in greenwashing. More evidence of this relationship is needed for a more convincing connection and deeper understanding.

The last hypothesis tests whether consumer scepticism decreases the positive effect of greenwashing on the trustworthy green reputation. In the literature it is described that if consumers do not have the idea that organisations do it of their own volition, sceptical consumers do not believe it and the trustworthy reputation is not strengthened (Crane, 2018). However, this is not convincing from the results. Although a significant relationship was

found between consumer scepticism and green trust in greenwash advertisements, the percentage of green trust explained by consumer scepticism is almost negligible at 1.2% and 2.8%. This is probably due to the way of testing. Respondents were classified as sceptical or not sceptical based on three questions they had to answer about themselves. There is a danger here that the respondents will judge themselves as more sceptical than they really are. This can be for several reasons, such as wanting to be sceptical to show the society you are making informed choices. It may also be the case that consumers genuinely think they are sceptical, but in the meantime, consumers do not realise that there are many greenwashing practices going on. In the future, it may give better results if the respondents are classified in a different way.

In conclusion, this study has not provided convincing evidence for the research question. There are indications, especially in the literature and partly in the results of this study, that consumer scepticism influences the effectiveness of greenwashing as a form of impression management for building a trustworthy (green) reputation. Further research should reveal exactly how these relationships work.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of organisational impression management. It has shown that impression management through manipulation on green activities does not seem to have the desired effect. Previous studies had not yet examined sceptical consumers in this context. This study tentatively showed that consumers scepticism further decreases the already not so positive relationship between greenwashing and building a trustworthy green reputation. Based on the results obtained, if an organisation wants to build up a trustworthy green reputation, they can do better by actually complying with the green actions. This can also be done through impression management as also the green actions that are actually adhered to can be used to improve other people's perceptions of an organisation by regulating and controlling information in social interaction. This research shows that if impression management switches too much into manipulating information instead of regulating and controlling information, the effect positive may disappear. Although this is only an example and the results are not very convincing, more research can be done to investigate how far organisations can go in impression management to maintain consumer trust.

5.2 Practical implications and strategic recommendations

As a result of these research results, there are important practical implications and strategic recommendations for organisations that would like to improve their organisational reputation by building a trustworthy green reputation. Nowadays it is necessary if an organisation wants to have a good reputation to present itself as environmentally friendly. At the same time, consumers are increasingly aware of the fact that organisations do not always do what they communicate. If the consumer suspects that the statements are unintentional or even not true at all, the green reputation can deteriorate. It is therefore advisable, when determining a green strategy, not to make statements that could be seen as manipulative by consumers. For example, organisations can respond to sceptical consumers by publishing evidence about the green actions of the organisation, so that the possible mistrust may decrease or otherwise at least not increase, as is the case with greenwashing.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Despite the insights gained from this study, several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results. First, survey responses can be influenced by social desirability, with participants providing answers they find socially acceptable rather than their true beliefs or behaviours (Field, 2018). While efforts have been made to reduce this bias by ensuring anonymity, this may have influenced the results to some extent.

Second, the sample of participants may not be fully representative of the target population, which could limit the generalizability of the findings (Field, 2018). While random selection was attempted through the use of the Prolific platform, participants had the freedom to choose which surveys to participate in. The observed percentage of respondents with a master's degree (22%) seems to deviate from the actual European population.

Third, surveys have inherent limitations due to predetermined questions and answer options, which can overlook important factors or nuances that can affect the results. This study does not consider other reasons for how respondents perceive advertisement trustworthiness, such as previous experiences with the organisation or specific design differences between the advertisements. Factors such as the use of colour in advertisements could potentially influence respondents' perceptions but were not included in this study. Future research could use a mixed method. Combining quantitative surveys with qualitative methods such as interviews to allow for a more comprehensive exploration of the factors influencing consumer perception and behaviour. This approach can provide insight into participants' personal experiences, their emotional connection to organisations.

Finally, an additional finding is described at the end of the results section. It was striking that the respondents said one thing, but in reality, often make a different choice in terms of sustainable procurement policy. This has not been statistically proven in this study, as the study was not aimed at this, but it is interesting to investigate in the future. For example, it can be examined whether consumers are aware of this and where this behaviour comes from.

5.4 Personal reflection

This study could have had more convincing results if other choices had been made during the research process. The main reason for this is the inexperience in conducting such a large study. In an attempt to oversee the complete research process, a number of choices may have been made too quickly. For example, the questions in the survey could sometimes have been better or more aligned with the goal, namely to obtain an answer to the hypothesis. Furthermore, the hypotheses could have been tested more extensively, but this was not always possible, partly due to the time for this research and the length that the survey would otherwise have been. The research process has provided many new insights that can be included in any subsequent research.

Bibliography

- Aguinis, H., Villamor, I., & Ramani, R. S. (2021). MTurk research: Review and recommendations. *Journal of Management*, 47 (4), 823 -837.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206320969787>
- Aji, H. M., & Sutikno, B. (2015). The extended consequence of Greenwashing: Perceived consumer skepticism. *International Journal of Business and Information*, 10(4), 433.
- Alexa, L., Apetrei, A., & Pîslaru, M. (2021). Fast Fashion – An Industry at the Intersection of Green Marketing with Greenwashing. *International Symposium Technical Textiles – Present and Future*, 263–268.
<https://doi.org/10.2478/9788366675735-042>
- Allen, M. W., & Caillouet, R. H. (1994). Legitimation endeavors: Impression Management strategies used by an organization in crisis. *Communications Monographs*, 61(1), 44-62.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03637759409376322>
- Ashforth, B. E., & Gibbs, B. W. (1990). The Double-Edge of Organisational Legitimation. *Organisation Science*, 1(2), 177–194.
<https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1.2.177>
- Balzer, W. K., & Sulsky, L. M. (1992). Halo and performance appraisal research: A critical examination. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 77(6), 975–985.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.77.6.975>
- Bansal, P., & Clelland, I. (2004). Talking Trash: Legitimacy, Impression Management, and Unsystematic Risk in the Context of the Natural Environment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(1), 93–103.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/20159562>
- Barney, J. (1991). Firm Resources and Sustained Competitive Advantage. *Journal of Management*, 17(1), 99–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/014920639101700108>
- Behera, R. K., Bala, P. K., Rana, N. P., & Kizgin, H. (2022). Cognitive computing based ethical principles for improving Organisational Reputation: A B2B digital marketing perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 141, 685–701.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2021.11.070>

- Bhardwaj, V., & Fairhurst, A. (2010). Fast fashion: response to changes in the Fashion Industry. *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 20(1), 165–173.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09593960903498300>
- Bourque, L. B., & Fielder, E. P. (2002). *The survey kit: How to conduct self-administered and mail surveys* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412984430>
- Bolino, M. C., Kacmar, K. M., Turnley, W. H., & Gilstrap, J. B. (2008). A Multi-Level Review of Impression Management Motives and Behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 34(6), 1080–1109.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308324325>
- Burns, A. C. (2006). *Principes van marktonderzoek. Toepassingen met SPSS*. (4th ed). Amsterdam: Pearson Benelux B.V.
- Cable, D. M., & Graham, M. E. (2000). The determinants of job seekers' Reputation perceptions. *Journal of organisational Behavior*, 21(8), 929-947.
[https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-1379\(200012\)21:8<929::AID-JOB63>3.0.CO;2-O](https://doi.org/10.1002/1099-1379(200012)21:8<929::AID-JOB63>3.0.CO;2-O)
- Carlson, L., Grove, S. J., & Kangun, N. (1993). A Content Analysis of Environmental Advertising Claims: A Matrix Method Approach. *Journal of Advertising*, 22(3), 27–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.1993.10673409>
- Chaudhary, V., Sharma, D., & Kalro, A. D. (2019). Consumer scepticism: A systematic review of literature. *The Marketing Review*, 19(3), 189–212.
<https://doi.org/10.1362/146934719x15774562877683>
- Chen, Y.S. (2010). Towards green loyalty: driving from green perceived value, green satisfaction, and green trust. *Sustainable Development*, 21(5), 294–308.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.500>
- Cho, C. H., Michelon, G., & Patten, D. M. (2012). Impression Management in Sustainability Reports: An Empirical Investigation of the Use of Graphs. *Accounting and the Public Interest*, 12(1), 16–37.
<https://doi.org/10.2308/apin-10249>
- Chun, R. (2005). Corporate reputation: Meaning and measurement. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 7(2), 91–109.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2370.2005.00109.x>

- Coombs, T. W., & Holladay, S. J. (2006). Unpacking the Halo effect: Reputation and Crisis Management. *Journal of Communication Management*, 10(2), 123–137.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13632540610664698>
- Crane, B. (2018). Revisiting Who, When, and Why stakeholders matter: Trust and stakeholder connectedness. *Business & Society*, 59(2), 263-286.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650318756983>
- De Freitas Netto, S. V., Sobral, M. F. F., Ribeiro, A. R. B., & Soares, G. R. D. L. (2020). Concepts and forms of Greenwashing: A systematic review. *Environmental Sciences Europe*, 32(1), 1-12.
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12302-020-0300-3>
- Delmas, M. A., & Burbano, V. C. (2011). The Drivers of Greenwashing. *California Management Review*, 54(1), 64–87.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/cmr.2011.54.1.64>
- Demkes, E. (2020, 28 april). *The more Patagonia rejects consumerism, the more the brand sells*. The Correspondent. From: <https://thecorrespondent.com/424/the-more-patagonia-rejects-consumerism-the-more-the-brand-sells>
- Dolphin, R. R. (2004). Corporate reputation – a value creating strategy. *Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society*, 4(3), 77–92.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/14720700410547521>
- Dowling, G. R. (1986). Managing your corporate images. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 15(2), 109–115.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0019-8501\(86\)90051-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/0019-8501(86)90051-9)
- Elving, W. J. L. (2013). Scepticism and Corporate Social Responsibility Communications: the Influence of fit and Reputation. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 19(4), 277–292.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13527266.2011.631569>
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Fombrun, C. J. (1996). *Reputation: Realizing value from the Corporate image*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/npr.4040150212>
- Fombrun, C. J. (2005). Corporate Reputations as Economic Assets. *The Blackwell Handbook of Strategic Management*, 285–308.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/b.9780631218616.2006.00011.x>

- Fombrun, C.J. and Shanley, M. (1990) 'What's in a name? Reputation building and corporate strategy', *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(2), 233–258.
<https://doi.org/10.5465/256324>
- Foreh, M. R., & Grier, S. (2003). When Is Honesty the Best Policy? The Effect of Stated Company Intent on Consumer Skepticism. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 13(3), 349–356. Portico.
https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp1303_15
- García-Sánchez, I. M., Suárez-Fernández, O., & Martínez-Ferrero, J. (2019). Female directors and impression management in sustainability reporting. *International Business Review*, 28(2), 359-374.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2018.10.007>
- Geels, M. (2018, 21 juli). Burberry vernietigde voor 31 miljoen euro aan producten. *NRC*.
 From: <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/07/21/burberry-vernietigde-voor-31-miljoen-euro-aan-producten-a1610791>
- Goffman, E. (1959). The presentation of self in everyday life: Selections.
- Gotsi, M., & Wilson, A. M. (2001). Corporate reputation: seeking a definition. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 6(1), 24–30.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/13563280110381189>
- Guerci, M., Shani, A. B., & Solari, L. (2013). A Stakeholder Perspective for Sustainable HRM. *Sustainability and Human Resource Management*, 205–223.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-37524-8_9
- Hair, J.F., Black, W.C., Babin, B.J. & Anderson, R.J. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Hannington, T. (2011). How to Measure and Manage Your Corporate Reputation. *Strategic Direction*, 27(8).
<https://doi.org/10.1108/sd.2011.05627haa.003>
- Haralambos, M., & Holborn, M. (2000). *Themes and perspectives* (8th ed.). Collins Educational.
- Hendriksz, V. (2021, 9 maart). H&M accused of burning 12 tonnes of new, unsold clothing per year. *FashionUnited*. From: <https://fashionunited.uk/news/fashion/h-m-accused-of-burning-12-tonnes-of-new-unsold-clothing-per-year/2017101726341>
- Highhouse, S., Brooks, M. E., & Gregarus, G. (2009). An Organisational Impression Management Perspective on the Formation of Corporate Reputations. *Journal of*

- Management*, 35(6), 1481–1493.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206309348788>
- Huang, R., Xie, X., & Zhou, H. (2022). ‘Isomorphic’ behavior of corporate greenwashing. *Chinese Journal of Population, Resources and Environment*, 20(1), 29–39.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cjpre.2022.03.004>
- Lange, D., Lee, P. M., & Dai, Y. (2011). Organisational Reputation: A review. *Journal of management*, 37(1), 153-184.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310390963>
- Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 107(1), 34–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.107.1>
- Lewin, S., & Reeves, S. (2011). Enacting ‘team’ and ‘teamwork’: using Goffman’s theory of Impression management to illuminate interprofessional practice on hospital wards. *Social Science & Medicine*, 72(10), 1595–1602.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2011.03.037>
- Li, M., Trencher, G., & Asuka, J. (2022). The clean energy claims of BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil and Shell: A mismatch between discourse, actions and investments. *PloS one*, 17(2), e0263596.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0263596>
- Majeed, S., & Kim, W. G. (2022). A reflection of Greenwashing practices in the hospitality Industry: a scoping review. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(3), 1125–1146.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/ijchm-04-2022-0495>
- Matthews, R. (2022). 10 Reasons Why Patagonia Is the World’s Most Responsible Company. *Change Oracle*. From: <https://changeoracle.com/2021/09/10/10-reasons-why-patagonia-is-worlds-most/>
- Mohr, L. A., Eroğlu, D., & Ellen, P. S. (1998). The development and testing of a measure of skepticism toward environmental claims in marketers' communications. *Journal of consumer affairs*, 32(1), 30-55.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-6606.1998.tb00399.x>
- Morrison, P. S., & Beer, B. (2017). Consumption and Environmental Awareness: Demographics of the European Experience. *Socioeconomic Environmental Policies and Evaluations in Regional Science*, 81–102.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-0099-7_5

- Naderer, B., Schmuck, D., & Matthes, J. (2017). Greenwashing: Disinformation through Green Advertising. *Commercial Communication in the Digital Age*, 105–120.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110416794-007>
- Namkung, Y., & Jang, S. (2017). Are consumers willing to pay more for green practices at restaurants?. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 41(3), 329-356.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1096348014525632>
- Niinimäki, K., Peters, G., Dahlbo, H., Perry, P., Rissanen, T., & Gwilt, A. (2020). The environmental price of fast fashion. *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment*, 1(4), 189-200.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s43017-020-0039-9>
- Obermiller, C., Spangenberg, E., & MacLachlan, D. L. (2005). Ad skepticism: The Consequences of Disbelief. *Journal of Advertising*, 34(3), 7–17.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2005.10639199>
- Papadopoulou, M., Papasolomou, I., & Thrassou, A. (2022). Exploring the level of sustainability awareness among consumers within the fast-fashion clothing industry: a dual business and consumer perspective. *Competitiveness Review: An International Business Journal*, 32(3), 350-375.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/cr-04-2021-0061>
- Parguel, B., Benoît-Moreau, F., & Larceneux, F. (2011). How Sustainability Ratings Might Deter ‘Greenwashing’: A Closer Look at Ethical Corporate Communication. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 102(1), 15–28.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0901-2>
- Peattie, K., Peattie, S., & Ponting, C. (2009). Climate change: a social and commercial marketing communications challenge. *Journal of Business*, 4(3), 270–286.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/14502190910992693>
- Poliseno, V. (2022). Greenwashing: a marketing strategy and its effects. Retrieved February 26, 2023, from: [Greenwashing: a marketing strategy and its effects - LuissThesis](#)
- Saldanha, N., Mulye, R., & Rahman, K. (2022). Cancel culture and the consumer: A strategic marketing perspective. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0965254x.2022.2040577>
- Schmuck, D., Matthes, J., & Naderer, B. (2018). Misleading Consumers with Green Advertising? An Affect–Reason–Involvement Account of Greenwashing Effects in Environmental Advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 47(2), 127–145.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2018.1452652>

- Shin, S., & Ki, E. J. (2019). The effects of congruency of Environmental Issue and Product category and Green Reputation on consumer responses toward Green Advertising. *Management Decision*, 57(3), 606–620.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/md-01-2017-0043>
- Shrum, W., & Wuthnow, R. (1988). Reputational Status of Organizations in Technical Systems. *American Journal of Sociology*, 93(4), 882–912.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/228828>
- Skarmeas, D., & Leonidou, C. N. (2013). When consumers doubt, Watch out! The role of CSR skepticism. *Journal of Business Research*, 66(10), 1831–1838.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.02.004>
- Skarmeas, D., Leonidou, C. N., & Saridakis, C. (2014). Examining the role of CSR skepticism using fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(9), 1796–1805.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.12.010>
- Sinickas, A. (2007). Finding a cure for survey fatigue. *Strategic Communication Management*, 11 (2), 11
- Spear, S., & Roper, S. (2013). Using Corporate stories to build the Corporate Brand: an impression management perspective. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(7), 491–501.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/jpbm-09-2013-0387>
- Stern, M. (2022, 13 juli). H&M Case Shows How Greenwashing Breaks Brand Promise. *Forbes*. From: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/retailwire/2022/07/13/hm-case-shows-how-greenwashing-breaks-brand-promise/?sh=5e78cf4c1171>
- Sun, Y., Li, T., & Wang, S. (2022). “I buy green products for my benefits or yours”: Understanding consumers' intention to purchase green products. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 34(8), 1721-1739.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/apjml-04-2021-0244>
- Sun, Y., & Shi, B. (2022). Impact of Greenwashing Perception on Consumers' Green Purchasing Intentions: A Moderated Mediation Model. *Sustainability*, 14(19), 12119.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su141912119>
- Sustain Your Style 2020. What is wrong with the fashion industry? Accessed: 15 February 2023, from: <https://www.sustainyourstyle.org/en/whats-wrong-with-the-fashion-industry#anchor-fast-fashion>

- Tang, A. K. Y., Lai, K., & Cheng, T. C. E. (2012). Environmental Governance of Enterprises and their Economic Upshot through Corporate Reputation and Customer Satisfaction. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 21(6), 401–411.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1733>
- Tashmin, N. (2016). Art of impression management on social media. *World Scientific News*, (30), 89-102.
- Tedeschi, J. T. (2013). *Impression management theory and social psychological research*. Academic Press.
- TerraChoice 2010, The sins of greenwashing: home and family edition. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from: <https://www.ul.com/insights/sins-greenwashing>.
- Urbański, M., & ul Haque, A. (2020). Are You Environmentally Conscious Enough to Differentiate between Greenwashed and Sustainable Items? A Global Consumers Perspective. *Sustainability*, 12(5), 1786.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051786>
- Vennix, J. A. M. (2016). *Onderzoeks-en interventiemethodologie*. Pearson.
- Wei, C., Chiang, C., Kou, T., & Lee, B. C. Y. (2017). Toward Sustainable Livelihoods: Investigating the Drivers of Purchase Behavior for Green Products. *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 26(5), 626–639. Portico.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1942>
- Whetten, D. A., Felin, T., & King, B. G. (2009). The Practice of Theory Borrowing in Organisational Studies: Current Issues and Future Directions. *Journal of Management*, 35(3), 537–563.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206308330556>
- Wijaya, B. S. (2013). Dimensions of brand image: A conceptual review from the perspective of brand communication. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(31).
From: [Dimensions_of_Brand_Image-libre.pdf \(d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net\)](https://www.cloudfront.net/d1wqtxts1xzle7)

Appendix A: Survey introduction

Dear Participant,

I am a master's student in Business Administration at Radboud University, specializing in Strategic Management. As part of my research, I am investigating the green reputation of fashion organisations. Your participation in this survey would greatly contribute to my graduation project.

The purpose of this survey is to gather valuable insights and opinions regarding the green reputation of fashion organisations. Your honest responses will help me gain a comprehensive understanding of this topic and its implications. It is important that there are no wrong answers, it is really about how you feel about something.

Rest assured that your participation is completely anonymous, and your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are also free to discontinue the survey at any point if you wish to do so.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the survey, please feel free to contact me at [X X]. the survey will take approximately 5 minutes of your time.

Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

[X X]

Master's Student in Business Administration
Radboud University

Appendix B: Format Survey

I deliberately buy clothes from stores that present themselves as environmentally conscious.

O yes O no

Statements

Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:

Fully disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	Fully agree
1	2	3	4	5.

- I consider myself as environmentally conscious when purchasing clothing.
- I give close attention if clothing is manufactured sustainably.
- I notice when organisations green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably) are not entirely true.
- I am willing to pay extra for clothes that are produced in an environmentally friendly way.
- When an organisation has a good sustainable reputation, that improves my view of the overall organisation reputation.

Logo organisation

- I'm familiar with (organisation).
- I once bought something at the (organisation)
- Yes? I regularly buy something at (organisation).
- No? I once considered buying a clothing item from (organisation).

Green advertisement organisation

- I feel (organisation) environmental commitments area unit usually reliable;
- I feel (organisation) environmental performance is mostly dependable;
- I feel (organisation) environmental argument is mostly trustworthy;
- (organisation) environmental concern meets my expectations;
- I feel (organisation) keeps guarantees and commitments for environmental protection
- looking at this advertisement I would (still) consider buying my clothes by (organisation).

Explain how/whether the organisation acts/greenwashes and see if respondents are more skeptical afterwards.

- I was already familiar with this information

- After knowing this about (organisation) green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably), my view of this organisation has changed.
- Next time I see a green advertisement from this (organisation), I'll trust it.
- Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by (organisation).

Control question: Which organisations have been mentioned in the previous questions?

Patagonia – H&M - Burberry

Nike – Zara – Chanel

General questions:

What is your age? ____

What gender do you identify yourself with?

Female

Male

Other

Prefer not to say

What is your highest level of education?

No degree

Primary education

High school degree

Secondary vocational education

Higher vocational education

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Other

Appendix C: Survey applied to organisations

Organisation 1: H&M

Statements

Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:



Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
1	2	3	4	5

- I'm familiar with H&M.
- I once bought something at the H&M
- Yes? I regularly buy something at H&M.
- No? I once considered buying a clothing item from H&M.



After seeing this advertisement from H&M:

- I feel that H&M's environmental commitments are usually reliable.
- I feel that H&M's environmental performance is mostly dependable.
- I feel that H&M's environmental argument is mostly trustworthy.
- H&M's environmental concern meets my expectations.
- I feel H&M keeps guarantees and commitments for environmental protection.
- Looking at this advertisement I would (still) consider buying my clothes by H&M.

Green actions H&M

H&M has taken several initiatives to improve sustainability. For example, they have committed to using sustainable materials, such as organic cotton and recycled fibres. In addition, programs have also been implemented to collect and recycle clothing. In 2017 it came to light that H&M burns new and unsold clothing in large quantities. A month after this discovery, the chain came under fire again after a second company reported to burn clothing from the brand. This time it would be about clothing that was not suitable to be worn.

- I was already familiar with this information.
- No? After knowing this about H&M's green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably), my view of this organisation has changed.
- No? Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by H&M.
- Next time I see a green advertisement from this H&M, I'll trust it.

Organisation 2: Patagonia

Statements

Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:



Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
1	2	3	4	5

- I'm familiar with Patagonia.
- I once bought something at Patagonia.
- Yes? I regularly buy something at Patagonia.
- No? I once considered buying a clothing item from Patagonia.



After seeing this advertisement from Patagonia:

- I feel Patagonia's environmental commitments are usually reliable.
- I feel Patagonia's environmental performance is mostly dependable.
- I feel Patagonia's environmental argument is mostly trustworthy.
- Patagonia's environmental concern meets my expectations.
- I feel Patagonia keeps guarantees and commitments for environmental protection.
- Looking at this advertisement I would (still) consider buying my clothes by Patagonia.

Green actions Patagonia

Patagonia has been using only organic cotton for its clothing line since 1996. Patagonia also takes back used polyester and nylon clothing to process it into new products that reuse the original raw materials. For example, Patagonia repairs garments with a broken zipper, so that they don't have to go. Patagonia donates 1% of its revenue annually to conservation (\$38 million to local environmentalists since 1985, ahead of 1,000 other companies doing the same now) and with the Environmental Internship Program, employees can work for an environmental organisation for two months work, while Patagonia continues to pay the salary.

- I was already familiar with this information.
- No? After knowing this about Patagonia's green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably), my view of this organisation has changed.
- No? Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by Patagonia.

- Next time I see a green advertisement from Patagonia, I'll trust it.

Organisation 3: Burberry

Statements

Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:



BURBERRY

L O N D O N

Fully disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Fully agree
1	2	3	4	5

- I'm familiar with Burberry.
- I once bought something at the Burberry.
- Yes? I regularly buy something at Burberry.
- No? I once considered buying a clothing item from Burberry.



After seeing this advertisement from Burberry:

- I feel Burberry's environmental commitments area unit usually reliable.
- I feel Burberry's environmental performance is mostly dependable.
- I feel Burberry's environmental argument is mostly trustworthy.
- Burberry's environmental concern meets my expectations.
- I feel Burberry's keeps guarantees and commitments for environmental protection.

- Looking at this advertisement I would (still) consider buying my clothes by Burberry's.

Green actions Burberry

In 2018, Burberry destroyed 33.8 million euros worth of finished products, including clothing, bags and perfume, before ending this practice after public backlash. This was done in an effort to keep the brand exclusive. Burberry wants to uphold an image. When products are left over, they burn them rather than sell them at a lower price.

- I was already familiar with this information.
- No? After knowing this about Burberry's green claims (statements with which organisations present themselves sustainably), my view of this organisation has changed.
- No? Knowing this I would (still) consider buying my clothes by Burberry.
- Next time I see a green advertisement from Burberry, I'll trust it.