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The effects of greenwashing on Italian
consumers

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RINGRAZIAMENTI

A Sara, che ha saputo darmi la forza che mi è mancata in certi momenti.

Ai miei genitori, che anche durante un periodo per loro molto difficile sono riusciti a sostenermi ed incoraggiarmi.

A mio nonno Orfeo mancato di recente, maestro di vita e fonte d'ispirazione.

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1 Introduction

More and more every day the humanity is realizing the effects that our way of life is causing to the planet and society, we live in an era in which the consequences of the changes we set in motion are visible to all. The constantly growing consciousness of environmental problems and the increasing attention citizens pays on sustainability matter, makes essential for any business to be more sustainable and socially responsible implementing activities aimed at reducing the impact of their activities. The engagement in responsibility activities also represents a way to create value and a source of competitive advantage and the number of firms engaging on this kind of activities has been growing in the last years. Unfortunately, hand in hand another phenomenon has developed, namely the tendency of some companies of trying to capitalize on their claims of sustainability while instead doing too little or nothing at all to reduce their impact. It therefore becomes crucial to study and understand how consumers perceives sustainability commitments from companies and their ability to distinguish the truthful from the fraudulent ones.

Although some studies have already successfully demonstrated the existence of a relationship between the practices of CSR and consumers appreciation of a brand, these kinds of researches are not numerous in Italy and the ones that have been taken are nowadays 10 years old.

The aim of the study is to gain an understanding of how consumers evaluate different green marketing messages and dig into the ability of consumers of distinguishing serious sustainable commitments from the so-called greenwashing. The research then wants to understand how greenwashing affects their perception and their purchase intention before and after disclosing the untruthful and misleading strategies.

Starting from a literature review trying to summarize the knowledge and the theories around the phenomenon of green marketing and greenwashing three main hypothesis are formulated and a questionnaire had been used to give them an answer. The questionnaire has been submitted to 220 Italian consumers divided in two groups to whom two different versions of the questions have been asked.

2 Business and sustainability

Business sustainability has been at the centre of debate for a long time now, with people gaining awareness of how our way of production and consumption impacts the planet and the society. The world's oceans are warming, rising and already filled with more plastic than fish. Air pollution is increasing, together with soil consumption and the loss of biodiversity. Our entire eco-system is seriously at risk of collapsing if we don't take quick action.

Big brands have been called to respond to this challenge and many of them have been looking at ways to re-think the way they operate. From developing 100% sustainable products thanks to the use biodegradable plastic, to use of renewable energies or again the reduction of toxic and polluting substances used in the productions of goods, there are many different initiatives that companies are implementing in order to make sustainability a priority. These activities together with those of a more social nature represents the so called corporate social responsibility or CSR.

Nowadays it is perfectly understandable why it is important to invest in sustainable business practices. What was previously considered just the commendable will of a company to do social good, is now become business imperative.

Today's companies don't have to choose between doing good or doing good business, in fact how it has been demonstrated, driving a positive change in the world by committing in sustainability and social activities, helps to create business value. A proof of this is readily discernible, Patagonia, Toms, seventh generations, these are just some of the many prosperous and growing companies that are at the same time, sustainable and socially committed.

2.1 The evolution of the concept CSR

It is during 1940's while the world was facing the impact the second World War that the first seeds of what we know today as CSR has been planted. In the first post-war

some big U.S. companies producing food as for example Hormel, started participating to a program side by side with the government in helping those families affected by war providing them free food, by doing so the road towards CSR had been opened. Hormel, by engaging in this seemingly no-return business, was able to convey a positive brand image and get great publicity. This helped the company develop their flagship product "Spam" which went from being Canned Necessity to an American Icon.

Through the 1950's in the period of the Cold War CSR started evolving into a form more familiar to us, is in fact in this decade and precisely in 1953 that the concept of corporate social responsibility is coined by Howard R. Bowen in his book: "Social responsibilities of the businessman". In the book he declares "*CSR refers to the obligation of businessman to pursue those policies which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society*" (Bowen ,1953)

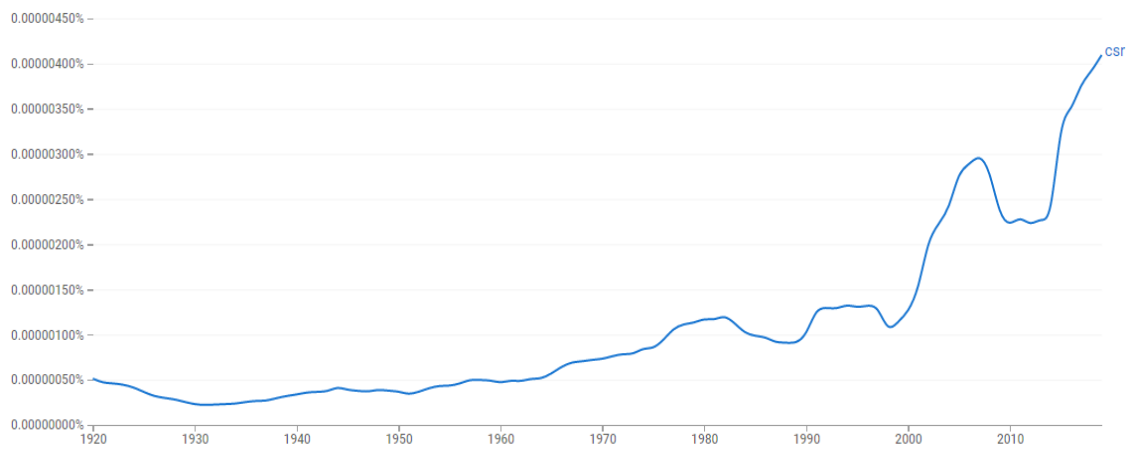
With the communism fear running rampant, American corporations started communicating their products defending the capitalistic way of life and convicting instead the communistic one, helping the government diffusing a propaganda against the communists. Beyond the political reasons, this was another step ahead in considering the companies able to pursuit their business goals while contributing to the ones of society (Latapí Agudelo et al, 2019).

In the 60's another important step ahead is taken framing the companies as able to protect civil rights and promoting a common social good. In 1964, the social conservatives refused to support an integrated dinner aimed at honouring Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Martin Luther King. Paul Austin, Jr. Coca-Cola's CEO, put its foot down threatening to dislocate the company out of Atlanta if the city did not honour Dr. King. This represented a turning point in Atlanta's history and in corporate responsibility. It was the first time that was highlighted the enormous power that a private business could have on a social issue such as racism. (Rogers and Kaplan, 2020).

At the beginning of the 1970's, the general context led to a low level of confidence towards the companies. They were considered not able to fulfil the needs and wants that society was starting to realize in that period.

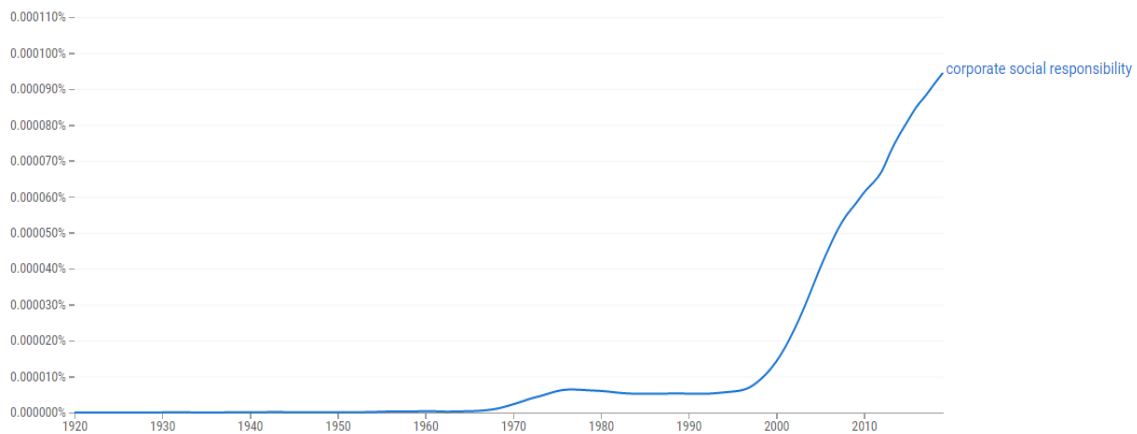
When in 1969 a huge oil spill destroyed the coast of Santa Barbara in California, the confidence reached its lower point. The images of that catastrophe went around the world and a massive protest across the USA begun. The protest continued for several days resulting in the creation of the Earth Day, celebrated for the first time in 1970. In the early 1970's two contributions coming from the Committee for economic devolvement of USA, responded to the social expectations of that time. The first publication "*A New Rationale for Corporate Social Policy*" (Baumol, 1970), explored the relationships between corporations and social problems. The second publication "*Social Responsibilities of Business Corporations*" by the Committee for Economic Development (1971), studied the social expectations on businesses. These publications and especially the second one, fomented the public debate around CSR by stating "*business functions by public consent, and its basic purpose is to serve constructively the needs of society – to the satisfaction of society*" (Committee for Economic Development, 1971, p. 11). These publications reflect a new rationale regarding the role and the responsibility of Companies, As Lee (2008) pointed out. During the 1970's the term Corporate social responsibility and CSR became increasingly popular.

Graph 2.1 – The evolution in the usage of the term CSR



Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

Graph 2.1 – The evolution in the usage of the term Corporate social responsibility.



Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

Through the 1980's many companies, mainly American ones, started implementing charitable actions related to the purchase of their products, they were intuiting the potential of engaging in philanthropic initiatives.

For example, the in 1982 the company "Newman's Own" was founded by Paul Newman, the company producing food products, was born with the intention, of donating all the company's profits after taxes to educational and charitable organizations. Newman's own was one of the first companies of this kind and it had a big success and it is still today operative.¹

Even if the period 1950-1980 have been essential to lay the foundations of corporate responsibility, it has been from the 1990's to the 2000's that CSR has begun to be taken seriously into accounts from companies, more organizations began incorporating social interests in their businesses, becoming more responsive to stakeholders.

It is during this decade that the concept of Corporate sustainability has gained international importance, perhaps thanks to the globalization process that was gaining momentum in that period. As explained in the article "*Corporate social responsibility: the centrepiece of competing and complementary frameworks*" by Archie B. Carroll (2015), during the 90's the globalization process made multinational companies face diverse foreign business environments. The challenge

¹ See company website in sitography.

for the companies was to identify and respond to social issues in new markets, using new policies and practices in the hosting nations. The public interests were the same but, many of them were more demanding because of the absence of a legal infrastructure and formalized protest groups in developing countries. For these global companies the globalization represented new opportunities but also a new global competition, and an increased reputational risk due to a growth in global visibility. This gave to the company a big incentive to plan carefully their sustainability initiatives.

With the beginning of the digital age and the consequent easiness of circulation and access to information, the population became more conscious of global issues, from the labour conditions in China and Africa to environmental degradation and catastrophic environmental disasters caused by companies all over the world.

The concept of company wasn't blurred anymore as it was in the past, and taking instead the connotations of a person, with its own ambitions and desires with a character and its own morale and ethic. This growing new dimension of a company allowed people to judge their operate in a different way, having a "personal" relationship with some brands and basing their opinions of the brand on their good or bad actions.

In 1991, a research called "*Corporate Social Performance Revisited*" by Donna J. Wood (1991), professor at the university of Pittsburgh, provided a framework for assessing the social impacts of CSR programs and the opportunity they represent for the society and for the company itself. For the first time the impact on consumers was defined and the attention that consumers put on sustainability from brands was confirmed.

In the same year, Archie B. Carrol (1991) professor at the University of Georgia published an article titled "*The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility*". With which he expanded on areas believed crucial when implementing CSR in a company. In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development prepared a document giving for the first time the definition of sustainable development as "*Development that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need*", this report known as the Brundtland

Report has been another important step towards widespread thinking on the need of constructing a more sustainable society (Brundtland Commission, 1987).

The effect of and increased morality from brands was evident, an increasing number of brands started publicizing their ethical efforts in order to increase their reputation.

In 1989 the ice cream seller Ben & Jerry's published its financial report that was supplemented by a greater view on the company's environmental impact, in the following years many other companies started implementing this method to externally publicized their efforts to become more sustainable. In 1998 even Shell has been the first company of this kind to make strong public claim of their efforts for the society by publishing an annual report of sustainability explaining to the public the various areas in which the company is being socially responsible.

With the increasing consideration of CSR that had already taken a centre spot the implementation of innovative new approaches to CSR strategy had been spurred. The European Union, wanting to offer a guide for the investments in sustainable development, published in the year 2001 a Green Paper on Corporate Social Responsibility defining CSR as: *"The voluntary integration of companies' social and ecological concerns into their business activities and their relationships with their stakeholders. Being socially responsible means not only fully satisfying the applicable legal obligations but also going beyond and investing 'more' in human capital, the environment, and stakeholder relations."* (Commission of the European communities, 2001).

From the early 2000's till nowadays, the concept of CSR has been defined more and more in depth, highlighting the role of corporations in society where they need to be responsive to the social expectations and therefor motivated by the research of sustainability.

With the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015, was created a new social contract where companies are expected to play an important part in the global efforts to achieve the SDGs. From that moment ahead,



the studies on CSR has concentrated on its implementation on specific performance areas, which can be linked to the SDGs.

2.2 CSR today and its impact

We live today in a world in which the richness of information available to the average person, allowed the community to become more conscious of the impacts that the products we use and consume have during their life cycles. The more and more obvious catastrophic consequences of our way of living, now for all to see, convinced even the more sceptical of the unsustainability of our society. As a result of this process the consumer buying behaviour has been naturally changing, as an increasingly number of people place a premium on working for or spending their money with a company that prioritize CSR.

The stiff feelings around irresponsible businesses culminated into a large movement towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) in the last decades. New technologies and media allowed people to express their outrage over those business practices considered unsustainable or unethical by the consumers and that made them so angry to desire revenge. A big group of consumers offended by the activity of a brand and eager to watch a business crumble, is something that can really put a company in bad water and is not for sure something that the company can overlook. This is the main reason why CSR should no longer be seen as an optional, not just as a tool to attract more customers, but as a necessity.

Good CSR strategies can benefit the company by making it gain the loyalty and adoration of their consumers and employees alike, allowing to attract new customers and fresh human capital by improving its brand reputation.

The core concept at the centre of CSR comes from the most basic duty of a company, the carrying on of its activity while guaranteeing its survival. The achievement of a stability that allows the company to survive through times, and ideally forever.

Different aspects could undermine the stability of a company that doesn't pay attention to its sustainability, from a shortage of the resources the company utilizes in its processes, to the social pressure and the bad reputation caused by the carelessness of the social and environmental issues to which the company is contributing.

But the social responsibility of a company is not only the key to guarantee the sustainability and the persistence over time of a company, it also positively impact the business by improving the brand image to the eyes of consumers, employees, investors and any kind of stakeholder.

With the expansion of CSR, it is becoming extremely important for companies to have a socially conscious image. Stakeholders are beginning holding corporations accountable for effecting social change with their business beliefs, practices and profits, and therefor preferring those companies that demonstrate a good corporate citizenship.

The data found out in a research by Cone Communications better illustrate how important social responsibility has become especially to the eyes of consumers. The results show how more than 60% of Americans hope businesses will drive a social and environmental change in the absence of government regulation, while 90% of surveyed consumers claimed they would buy a product because of the company commitment in supporting an issue they care about. More importantly, roughly 75% said they would refuse to purchase from a firm if they knew it supports an issue contrary to their own beliefs (Cone communications, 2017).

Not only consumers are influenced by the sustainability of the businesses, a social responsible company has also the power to attract human capital that may be interested to offer their work to the company because of their social commitments,

contributing in this way in the creation of their self-image as the one of a responsible citizen.

Indeed, according to a different Cone Communications research, “64% of the millennials interviewed won’t accept a job if a company that doesn’t have strong CSR values. 83% declared they would be more loyal to companies helping them contributing to social and environmental issues, and 88% said they would consider their job more fulfilling when providing opportunities to make a positive impact on social and environmental issue” (Cone communication, 2016).

Corporate social responsibility can even represent the foundation behind the creation of a brand and motivating the existence of the latter, naturally rising and developing inside a precise market made of people with a strong attitude towards sustainability and therefore different tastes desires and needs.

One of the most recognised outdoor sports brands in the world, Patagonia, appeals to all the lovers of the mountain and natural environments, and in general anyone else who appreciate the world we are living in and wants to preserve it. Patagonia is an example of a company that has based its entire strategy and reason of being around its social responsibility concepts. Patagonia has used its passion and commitments to the nature as a point of differentiation from its competitors. Patagonia has been able to insert itself in a niche of people who wants to buy high quality technical clothes but wants to respect the environment as well. To guarantee the success of Patagonia and even to show outside how they really care about what they do, Patagonia is very careful about who they hire or who they work with, to ensure to be surrounded by people that shares the values of the brand.

Thanks to this strategy that sees sustainability as top priority the company tripled its profit in the last years, with an annual growth in sales constantly increasing by 6% and gross margin 50-55%. They are an excellent example of how sustainability can benefit a brand and how it can be incorporated in company strategy. The more the company demonstrates its devotion to the preservation of natural environment the more loyalty from its clients is able to obtain, from customers that shares with them those values and beliefs (Forest et al, 2010). The sustainable image of the

brand is reflected through its products and it increments their value to the eyes of the consumer, who wears them as a demonstration of the lifestyle he has chosen.

In addition to a better company image, there are other ways in which CSR can have a positive impact on a business, it can lead for example to financial benefits, in the case of a reduction of costs. This could be due for example to the reduction of the packaging used in the products, the reduction of some pollutant substances used during the processing or again the energy used in the transformation of goods.

Furthermore, it is important to consider how the adoption of policies of sustainability is an important driver of innovation as it forces many companies to modify the business plan, questioning the way in which they operated until that moment. New materials, new way of producing and operating in order to obtain the same results with different inputs, these innovations can contribute sometimes to develop a competitive advantage.

2.3 Areas of Sustainability

Since the definition of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted in 2015 the efforts of companies to reach sustainability have been directed towards one or more of the 17 goals defined. There are mainly four major fields to which all the efforts from the companies can be traced back, four ways in which companies usually try to be more sustainable and socially responsible.

The first one is the environmental field that encompasses all those actions addressed to reduce the footprint of the activities of a company. Businesses, regardless of their size, can have huge footprints on the environment and any steps the firms can take to reduce the impact are considered good for both the company and society.

It is almost impossible for a company to have zero impact, usually the efforts are oriented towards those areas of sustainability in which the company has the major impact; production of plastics, water pollution, use of energy and so on. Many times though firms voluntarily point to different areas with the intention to divert the

attention of the public opinion from the real impact that the business is causing and appear as responsible company to the eyes of some stakeholders.

A second field of action is the Philanthropic one, when the business decides to embrace a determined cause donating money and products to non-profit organizations or in some cases starting itself an organization oriented to work towards the realization of that cause.

Another huge area in which many firms decide to act is the ethics of labour. Companies have understood the importance of treating its employees fairly, this allows them to demonstrate their social responsibility and at the same time to attract and retain human capital and obtaining from them better results.

Finally, companies often decide to show their social sentiment through volunteering. By attending volunteer events without asking anything in return demonstrates a certain sincerity from the company, that can express its concern to some issues and commitment to certain organizations.

For a company being socially responsible is not free, it costs in terms of time, money and resources, and it can even conceal many risks. Sometimes striving to be sustainable at all costs can backfire if what implemented it is not well done or it is not enough. The risk is obtaining nothing or even damage the brand image to the consumers.

2.4 Is it just about being good?

What is the main motivation behind the adoption of green choices, the advocating of a social cause or the engagement in philanthropic initiatives? Is the *raison d'être* of a company really changed pursuing a triple bottom line, or the ultimate destination is just profit and sustainability is just a different road?

While at the dawn of CSR the firm engaging in sustainability were moved by a sincere sentiment of duty, once the positive effects of this were visible to all, other firms began to move in that direction.

Nowadays for a business talking about sustainability and to adopting in that sense few changes here and there, has become a must. It may seem that some companies are acting just for the sake of going with the trend or just because obliged doing the minimum necessary to save their reputation and maintain customers.

Recently sustainability seems to be more and more at the centre of the marketing campaigns from the companies that want to inform consumers about what they're doing of good. If on one hand consumers deserve to share in the good feelings associated with doing the right thing, on the other, the fact that this would be used as a marketing message could represent a hint regarding the veracity of these intents.

Green marketing can help consumers make better-informed decisions regarding their purchases, but such a strong marketing tool may induce some companies to create product differentiation based on sustainability-related positioning, by doing in reality nothing or almost nothing trying to deceive consumers making them believe they are purchasing a "greener" product.

While many studies have demonstrated how consumers are inclined to purchase a sustainable green product over a conventional alternative, little we know about how and when consumers dig deeper into the socially responsible face of a company. In other words to which extent do consumers trust green claims from a company? And what do they do to understand to which extent the company is actually sustainable and its products greener.

3 Greenwashing

3.1 From Green marketing to greenwashing

Conscious of the huge benefits, many firms strive to improve their environmental positioning by showing to the public their environmental efforts. To do so, they use green marketing, developing green campaigns with the specific aim of gaining competitive advantage appealing to ecologically conscious consumers.

The notion of green advertising started in the 1970's, in those years a strong recession was hitting, and it was caused by the increasing of oil price and environmental damages that had been ignored until that moment. In a short period of time humanity had to face the fact that resources were limited and that their use also had drastic consequences for the environment. Companies tried to follow this trend and responded to the concerned society by initiating marketing campaigns soaked with green messages (Haytko and Matulich 2008).

From the late 1980's the green marketing rose exponentially, the companies has already well understood how much they could benefit from a socially responsible image of their brands, the communications about sustainability started being not only in forms of reports and official communications but more wide spread and aimed to a larger audience, being publicized on tv and magazine commercials, websites and on the packaging of the products.

This huge wave of green advertising came hand in hand with the birth of green consumerism that in those years started having a serious expansion. Groups of people started to adopt a way of living and buying that was putting more attention to its consequences, therefor avoiding brands perceived as unsustainable pollutant or socially unethical, preferring instead others, professing their attention towards those topics.

Together with the expansion of green marketing a parallel phenomenon started spreading, the so-called Greenwashing phenomenon. Companies now have a great desire of jumping on the bandwagon, so any company tries to find a way to

communicate its sustainable side, for what small and insignificant it may be. The result is often a deliberately fraudulent communication by some companies to the detriment of the consumer. This phenomenon unfortunately goes hand in hand with the with the increase, on the part of companies, of activities concerning corporate social responsibility and therefore the relative public display of the latter.

Aggarwal P. (2011) has demonstrated how the companies with a higher CSR score are even those more guilty of greenwashing.

The exaggeration of small actions taken by the company, the use of irrelevant information in order to deceive the consumer, or again the use of colors and images that communicate something that do not correspond to what the company really is. These are just some of the tactics used by companies to appear more ethical and “green” to the people.

It just takes a walk through the aisles of any supermarket to see how marketing, especially on the product level, is permeated and now saturated by the green communication, everything seems to be “green”, “organic”, “natural”, “ethical”, “Friend of the earth and people” and so on.

As defined by Banerjee et. al (1995), green advertising as any ad that meets one or more of the following criteria:

- 1) Explicitly or implicitly addresses the relationship between a product/service and the biophysical environment.
- 2) Promotes a green lifestyle with or without highlighting a product/service.
- 3) Presents a corporate image of environmental responsibility.

Pranee (2010) say that green advertising to be considered such must be honest and legal, so it must oblige to all environmental regulations and policies. If not, these green messages risk falling into the greenwashing category. In reality, companies often even not complying with all these statements still manages to follow the set of regulations regarding advertisement. According to a more recent definition by The American Marketing Association (2016), "green marketing is the marketing of products that are presumed to be environmentally safe."

Many different definitions of this term coexist, conceived by researchers or by marketing specialists. A point in common with all these definitions is the fact, that green marketing is kind of an holistic approach, which includes many aspects and that seeks the opportunity to satisfy needs of stakeholders reducing the negative impacts on the society and environment (Nadanyiova and Kliestikova, 2017).

According to a research by the European commission more than 70% of all the advertisements analyzed contained at least one green claim, and 78% of products contained at least one green claim on their packaging (European Commission, 2014).

As described in a paper by the Danish Consumer Ombudsman The environmental claims can be of 5 different categories (Danish Consumer Ombudsman, 2011).

1- General claims

Very general words are used regarding the sustainability. In this way the consumers, often confused by the genericity of these claims, are attracted by the positive sustainable impact of the product seeing them as gentle with the environment and free from any negative effect. It may be true but to use such claim the producer should have an analysis about the life cycle of the product and being able to demonstrate that the products actually has a smaller impact.

2- Environmental claim with explanations.

These are composed by some general indications and a brief explanation of the general part. For these kind of claims an analysis on the life cycle of the product is required but not sufficient, being a claim that gives different information to the consumers it has to be specified which factor (the main one) reduced the environmental impact and guarantee that the reduction is not generated by equally harmful activities.

3- Climate neutrality

This kind of claim subsists when the company declare to be neutral towards the environment and so to use the same amount of resources that are given back to the

environment. If used, it must be done in compliance with the Kyoto's protocol and with the methods recognized by the scientific community, a calculation of the total emissions of greenhouse gasses coming from the production of the products and its disposal, verifying that this is equal to zero.

4- Ethical claims

It is not easy to use claims of ethic excellence in a marketing campaign, too general claims of this kind used in regards of a product or an activity – without a further explanation of the actual benefits the claim refer to – may be considered misleading. An example: *"Make an ethical choice, buy our product"*

It must be always explained which characteristics or aspects makes the product or service ethical.

5- Ethical claims with explanation

A general ethical claim is sometimes supplemented by an explanatory statement, intended to explain the general part of the claim.

In this typology of claim analysis of the life cycle of the product are not required, it must instead well specified where the ethnicity occurs during the production of the good or service. The impact must be consistent and not marginal, and the analysis must be complete, or the claims may be considered misleading.

3.2 Definition of Greenwashing

The term "greenwashing" was coined for the first time in 1986 by Jay Westerveld. The environmentalist invented this term writing a critical and ironical essay regarding the "save the towel" movement carried on by many hotels in that time (Becker-Olsen and Potucek, 2013). As from him said, in that period he happened to spend the night in one of those hotels and he found in his room a card with written *"Save Our Planet: Every day, millions of gallons of water are used to wash towels that have only been used once. You make the choice: A towel on the rack means, I will use*

again. A towel on the floor means, 'Please replace'. Thank you for helping us conserve the Earth's vital resources." He found that card funny and a bit hypocritical considering that the hotels were polluting and wasting resources in many other ways, even worse than the water used to wash a towel, he didn't think the hotels were really worried about the environment but rather that they wanted to save money by not washing those towels. So, it is right from the scepticism of Jay Westerveld towards this communication that the term Greenwashing was born, it derives indeed from a word pun with the term white-washing that means covering up a scandalous fact by biasing the presentation of information.

Greenwashing then is generally described as the attempt of a company to capitalize on information that are totally or partially untrue or misleading, communicating a green and ethical image that don't correspond to the reality of the brand or products publicized.

Even if the term was coined in 1986, these tactics were used since before, when people used to capture information about companies and products uniquely from television, radio or newspapers, without having the possibility of fact-checking online as we are used to nowadays.

For example, in 1985, Chevron, an oil company decided to create a campaign entitled "People Do" diffused by television and print. The campaign had the aim to inform people about the environmental attention and dedication of the company by describing different activities they were carrying out to be more responsible.

The company, depicting a perfectly green oil company, had a discrete success, in 1990 it won an Effie advertising award, and the same year it even became a case study at Harvard Business school. Unfortunately, the truth came out soon, Indeed it was discovered later that the company was not acting voluntarily but because obliged, almost all the environmental programs that the company was carrying out were mandated by law. The company was even discovered violating the Clean Air Act, and accused and then condemned for "dumping 18 billion gallons of toxic wastewater into Ecuadorean rivers and spilling roughly 17 million gallons of crude oil into the ancestral territory of six indigenous tribes"(Cherry and Sneirson, 2012)(Watson 2016).

Another example is a campaign of the company DuPont in 1991 where the American chemical company was bragging about using double-hulled tankers to prevent oil spilling in the ocean, the company realized a television commercial in which, dolphins, seals and many other sea creatures are shown happily dancing in the clean water of their environment. Unfortunately, the reality is different and, in some cases, even the opposite. That same year the company was accused to pollute the waters near their productive sites and resulted being the most polluting company in all the U.S.A. (Watson 2016).

These cases are still nowadays depicted as the first examples of greenwashing being publicly discovered, the companies claimed to be responsible but demonstrated the opposite with the fact and this raised a controversy that heavily damaged the image of the company.

Besides these two examples, the greenwashing wasn't a tactic used just by oil and chemical companies but was instead well spread among companies of any sector.

One sector in which environmental ads containing greenwashing are very present is the category of consumer goods.

One fourth of all household products marketed around Earth Day advertised themselves as being green and environmentally friendly. (Kangun et al., 1991).

In 1991, a study published in the Journal of Public Policy and Marketing (American Marketing Association) found that 58% of environmental ads had at least one confusing or deceptive claim (AMA, 1991).

From the late 1990's throughout the first decade of the new millennium the use of greenwashing by companies had constantly been growing. With the increasing attention that had been paid to this phenomenon, greenwashing has been studied by environmentalists and marketing experts and the concept had been better defined.

In the traditional literature the phenomenon of greenwashing is defined as the set of the tactics used by some firms to hide the negative effects of a product, inventing or communicating other factors instead positive.

Research regard the real meaning of the term greenwashing indicates that there are different explanations of the concept that may be ambiguous and problematic. In the

early research and studies on the phenomenon, the concept was simple, unique and straightforward. Greenwashing was seen as a deceiving communicational behaviour aimed at tricking stakeholders.

Lauffer (2003) and Ramus and Montiel (2005), described greenwashing as “corporate disinformation.” Delmas and Burbano (2011) described instead greenwashing in this way “the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of organizations (firm-level greenwashing) or the environmental benefits of a product or service (product-level greenwashing)”, in this way the authors identified a distinction between two different tactics of greenwashing.

All the interpretations of the term greenwashing until the one of Laufer and Ramus and Montiel were describing greenwashing as a company with a bad environmental performance claiming instead good environmental performances.

Different authors have said instead that this straightforward conception is too simple. Lyon and Montgomery (2015) shows how in this way a wide variety of potentially misleading behaviours would risk being not comprehend in the definition of greenwashing.

Several theorists had than focus on more specific forms of greenwashing helping to describe this phenomenon as broader than as initially conceived. Waller and Conaway (2011) studied for example how the framing of a message could deceive the consumers, and they demonstrated how Nike has used these tactics to defend from the accusations of unethical work conditions and managed even to improve its CSR image. The authors Parguel, Benoît- Moreau, and Russell (2015), focused instead on the nature-evoking elements in advertising and they coined the term “executional greenwashing” to describe those instances where an organization even if not making explicit “green” statements is suggesting to be environmental friendly just by using cues such as images brand colours and symbols and so on.

The types of activities that goes under the umbrella of greenwashing are more than initially conceived; a good resume of the most used ones is offered by company Terrachoice (2010) an advertising consultancy company, in their iconic paper “The sins of greenwashing – Home and family edition”. In this research paper of 2010, the

organization wanted to update the state of knowledge of environmental claims and greenwashing tactics, in this study they focused in particular on home and family products.

The organization Terrachoice evaluates each year more than 19,000 kinds of products, from more than 66,000 producers. They analyse any kind of environmental claim made by a company about its products, the nature of this claims, the information at support and any references offered reference to get further information. They then test the claims their nature and sources, detecting the false claims and classifying them in categories.

Thanks to this study Terrachoice was able to draw up a list of seven of the most used types of “tricks” used in deceptive claims.

The “tricks” or “sins” as described in this paper are the following:

1- Sin of the hidden trade-off:

This kind of sin is committed when suggesting a product is “green” or “ethic” just considering a narrow set of attributes. You cannot say for example that a product is sustainable just because it doesn’t use plastic, there are other factors that you must take into consideration. How is it produced, how much energy it absorbs? And from which source? How much CO₂ is generated during the production?

Considering just one element is not enough and a deception may be hidden.

2- Sin of no proof:

This trick happens when an environmental or ethical claim is made but there’s no proof at support of it. The affirmation cannot be demonstrated true by data or by a third-party certification and so it results an end in itself and deceptive.

3- Sin of vagueness:

Committed when the claim is so vague to be meaningless. This kind of claims are especially formulated in a way to be misunderstood by consumers. A perfect example are those products or commercials on which we read “all natural” or “friend of the environment”, phrases that are totally senseless.

4- Sin of irrelevance:

A claim is considered irrelevant when notwithstanding its potential truthfulness this is unimportant in order to consider a product more sustainable than others. A lot of products for example especially in cosmetic industry claim to be “free” of certain substance such parabens, already banned in many countries Italy included.

5- Sin of lesser of two evils:

This kind of sin stand in the facts that the claim may be true inside the category of a certain product, but it distracts the consumer from the big unsustainability of the category as a whole. A perfect example of this are for example organic cigarettes or again recycled plastics, if it's true that between plastic and recycled one the latter is the best choice, the real eco-friendly alternative remains no plastic at-all.

6- Sin of fibbing:

Another commonly used trick is using environmental or ethical claims that are very simply not true. In some categories of products such as imitation of in general low-quality products coming from countries like china or India, this is often used, exploiting of the scarce investigations from the authorities and customers as well.

7- Sin of worshipping false labels:

The last but important sin is the one of reproducing a fake version of the eco-labels that in many countries has been introduced to help consumers identify the ecologic end ethical products on the shelves. In many products we can find this kind of tricks, phrases such as the ones of the sin of vagueness are shaped in a logo that voluntarily reminds those of the authentic certifications. This kind of symbols are often at the borderline with legality, these are at the end simple symbols depicting a leaf or planet earth often correlated with a slogan such as “natural” or 100% friendly. These labels are meaningless but they're often able to deceive consumers in the time of purchase.

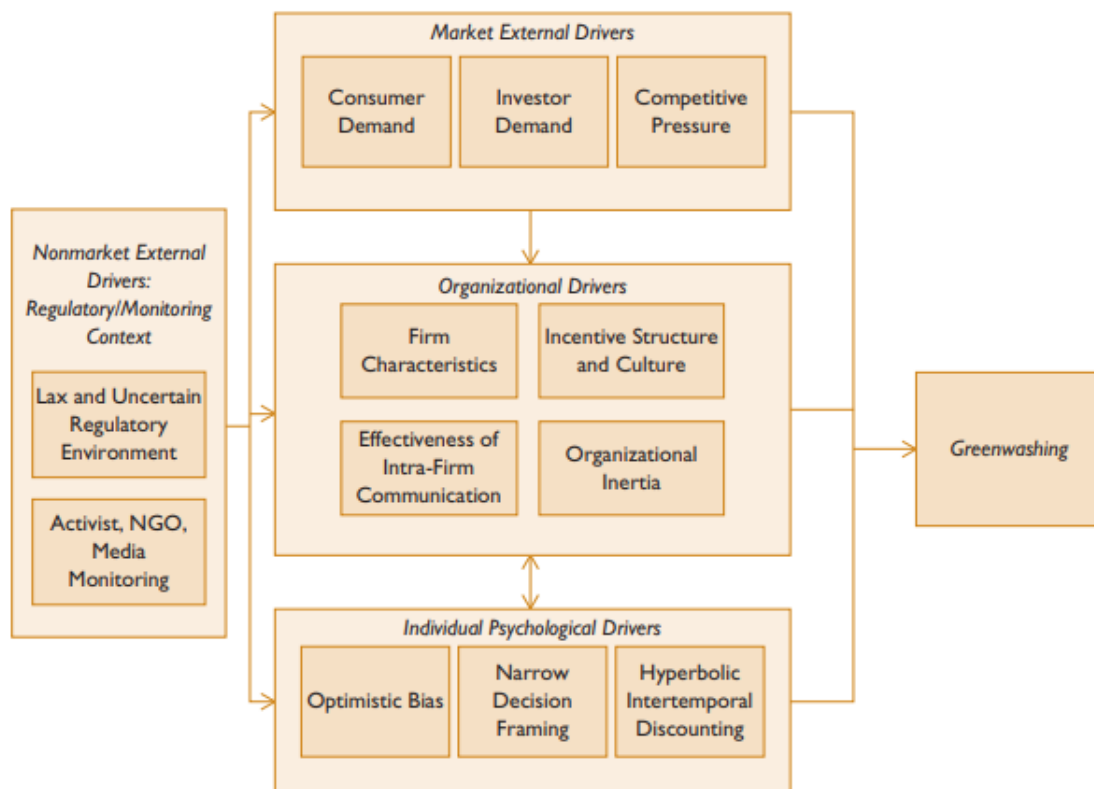
This kind of tricks are commonly increasing and especially in the family products sector, the same research has found that the “green” products in USA had been constantly increasing by roughly 70% each year between 2008 and 2010.

Analysing then these products they also found how only 5% of all the products claiming to be green were actually “greener” and not simply guilty of at least one of these “sins” of greenwashing (Terrachoice, 2010).

3.3 The drivers of greenwashing

The motivations, or better drivers, of the greenwashing are different and they influence the firms and their moves. As described by Delmas and Burbano (2011), the main drivers can be sub-divided in three sub-levels: external, organizational and individual reasons.

Scheme 3.1 – drivers of greenwashing



Source: Delmas and Burbano (2011)

A) External drivers:

a) Market external drivers:

1a - Uncertain and fallacious legislation.

In many countries even among the most developed ones, a regulation for the environmental claims still doesn't exist and in those countries in which a regulation subsists, these are various and often confused. The regulatory standards are different from country to country, the variations concern the regulations, and even the legal practices to which companies are subjected. This creates uncertain regulatory environment, especially regarding the multinational companies. In some cases, as in the case of US there isn't any kind of imposition by the government to the company of making known their environmental practices, giving to the company more chances to use greenwashing.

2a- Media, NGO and activist pressure.

Given to non-stringent regulatory pressure a determinant role in the society is carried out by groups of activists, media and ONG that detect the greenwashing cases in the market.

The main activity of these entities is the set-up of campaign against those firms faulty of committing greenwashing in their opinion, and the disclosure of the relative information. Greenpeace for example has a section of their websites dedicated to this, where they explain the phenomenon of greenwashing and disclose information about some companies who use it. These campaigns can be very effective and dangerous for the guilty company, thanks to the mediatic impact of some big groups of activists, they may persuade consumers to join the fight against this brand and sabotage the company by not buying anymore any of their products. This can be a strong dissuasion for some companies to use false environmental claims in their marketing campaigns. Forever the regulatory contest, plays as a double edge sword, if on one hand these campaigns can strongly harm the reputation of the brand, on the other the company knows that they cannot suffer serious legal consequences.

b) *Internal to the market*

1b- The role of consumers, competitors and investors

The companies feel a lot of pressure from the consumers and investors that push for a positive communication of their environmental performances, seen as a factor of success.

The bigger is the pressure exerted the bigger is the possibility that the business fall back in the temptation of using green washing to satisfy their stakeholders expectations. The competitive environment is another important point, in fact the follower companies tend to follow the moves of the leader companies, when these are able to reach a fair success thanks to the use of a green campaign, the follower may want to imitate them with the fear of remain set behind. When though the following company is not able to guarantee the environmental performances of the leader they may lie or exaggerate, falling in the range of greenwashing.

Sometimes companies are really committing to be sustainable in some small way, they have noble intentions and they are on the right direction, and this is good. But the strong pressure exercised by stakeholders often push those companies to magnify their efforts, portraying themselves in the eyes of consumers as an already perfectly sustainable company, and this is wrong.

B) Organizational drivers

When combined the external drivers creates an environment that push companies to use greenwashing, at an organizational level instead, the drivers influence and mediate the way in which the companies react to external drivers. These organizational drivers are:

1- Company characteristics

The size of the company, the sector in which it operates, the resources and the competencies influence the strategies that an enterprise can put in place and the costs and benefits obtained.

The same is for a company that does greenwashing, a company will receive a bigger pressure in terms of preoccupation to seem eco-friendly depending on the size – the

bigger the company the more the stakeholders – and the sector in which it works that may be more or less attentive to the topic, as said earlier consumer product sector is impregnated with greenwashing, we can image that a firm in that sector would receive a stringer push.

Considering the costs even here we find a substantial variation based on the characteristics of the company.

The companies of consumer products are subjected to more constraints and controls by the media and activists, the same treatment is reserved for the big companies, because given their big notoriety they may reach a lot of consumers. The same is for those companies which. Obviously when a company is big and powerful it has probably a bigger economic availability and so is more able to resist to the shocks generated by the ONG, activists and media, compared to a smaller company.

2- Structure of incentives and ethical climate.

These two organizational drivers determine the ethical behaviour inside of a company. If a company keep an unethical behaviour, it would fall into immorality and illegality, independently causing some damage.

As for the incentives assigned to managers, if these were granted following the achievement of arbitrarily established objectives (including those for communication), companies would be pushing the managers to exploit greenwashing. They could prefer to take shortcuts to hastily reach these goals, damaging the truth of the message.

An ethical climate is instead the set of behaviours, perceptions and feelings shared among the members of a company, and which plays an important role regarding the decision-making process. This concerns both the satisfaction of the personal interests of the managers, both his want of maximizing his general well-being and to adhere to internal ethical codes and external standards. When on the contrary the selfish aspect prevails, and the managers aim at the persecution of personal interests, it is more probable that the company will engage in unethical behaviours. Greenwashing, being a behaviour that does not comply with ethical principles, is much more likely to happen in an environment where the self-seeking side

dominates. If in the ethical codes that are applied, there are rules against greenwashing, the probability of this occurring decreases.

If we think at the example of Patagonia made before we can see how the brand, that was born with precise intentions and attention to sustainability, is very cautious regarding the inclusions of new members and indeed it does all the necessary to create and maintain an ethical climate inside the company.

3- Organizational inertia

Organizational inertia is a factor that hinders the implementation of changes of the strategy inside a company. It is usually found in a large and established company rather than in new and small one. Inertia explains why in some cases there is a delay between the claims being made, and the consequent implementation, due indeed to a delay between the decisions of the top management to give the company a “greener” face and the modification of processes and structures for a real implementation of what has been established.

4- The efficacy of the internal communication

Transferring skills or information from one part of the company to a different one is always critical, moreover, can be cause of a lower innovative capacity, and also of greenwashing. The lack of a good communication between departments or subunits, doesn't allow to have correct information flow on the sustainability level of a product (for example, if the marketing and communication sector did not have precise or not enough information regarding the way the good its produced or packaged, they could overestimate the level of green of that product, with greenwashing as result). As for the incentives and the ethical climate, if there were a more stringent regulatory context, internal communication would work better, reducing the chance greenwashing.

C) Individual drivers

1- The restricted decision-making framework.

Also known as “narrow bracketing”, refers to the tendency of making decisions in an isolated way. This can lead to greenwashing when a decision is taken in the short term without making the adequate adjustments for the long term, focusing just on immediate benefits, when referred to sustainability for example, the decision makers in a company may decide today to communicate about the sustainability of their products but without adequately considering how to implement this in the future. Only with a specific structure of incentives this trend can be mitigated.

2- Hyperbolic intertemporal discount.

The discount function, as demonstrated by various studies, is hyperbolic. So, the discount rate is high for short horizons, while it is relatively low for long ones. This function was also used in the analysing savings and consumption decisions, and it was found that business executives and managers usually choose to meet their short-term objectives by undermining the implementation of long-term plans. Thus, in the context of green marketing, it could be decided to communicate on the sustainability of the company, and to incur these costs in the future, which will may not actually be incurred.

3- Optimistic biases

If we look only at future scenarios and we do not consider the historical analysis, we could overestimate the chance of some positive events to occur and underestimate that of some negative events.

The optimistic prejudices can assume three connotations: unrealistically positive self-assessment, unrealistic optimism about future events and plans and finally, illusion of control.

The average probability of success of a company is 59% compared to 80% of managers' expectations. These managers may overestimate the possibility of success of greenwashing strategy, overestimating the probability to the occurrence of events such as greater investments or gaining greater market shares, and giving a low probability to negative consequences, such as the attention of the media or NGOs and the impact that this could have. This may make fall into temptation of

sinning of greenwashing by showing to the decision maker a more favourable option than it really is.

After having analysed the various drivers / causes of greenwashing, in the next paragraph we will see the consequences of this phenomenon on consumers.

3.4 The effect of greenwashing on consumers.

The analysis in this field are still poor and not very consistent, but from what seems to emerge though we can distinguish the effect of greenwashing in two main categories: a macro-level one and a micro-level one, the former encloses the financial side and so the relation between the phenomenon and the financial performance, the latter instead regards the effect on consumers of messages tainted by falsehood and deceit (De Jong et al. 2017).

Omitting the analysis of macro-level analysis and concentrating on the micro-level one we can notice how the research has demonstrated that the consumers are lured to buy products perceived as greener, and how just the presence of some “green” signals seems to be enough to have this effect, independently by their format, modality and quantity.

These positive effects are in part mitigated by the presence of greenwashing, this in fact confuse and negatively affects consumer confidence, towards the entire category of green products that are perceived risky, generating dissatisfaction and negative word of mouth.

There’s a tendency on the part of consumers to prefer to believe to information coming from third parties, or in general from unofficial sources rather than from the company for which there’s a general lack of confidence. These consumers thus, when becoming aware from a third party of information contrasting with those communicated by the company, will probably consider the company lying.

However, it has been shown that an organization affected by greenwashing is anyway perceived in a better way than so-called “silent brown organizations”,

namely, a company that doesn't greenwash but that is not involved at all on the environmental side either (De Jong et al. 2017).

Consumers seem to evaluate better a company that communicates its concerns about environmental issues, even when their claims of sustainability are not true or not entirely.

The moral integrity of a company as perceived by consumers is anyway affected in a negative way by the greenwashing when discovered, since it generates a negative link between the phenomenon and the scepticism towards the CSR actions communicated by the company.

In summary, we can say that greenwashing generates a series of different and sometimes contrasting effects. If, on one side, the initially communicated environmental performance, generates a greater interest of consumers in the organization, on the other side, this is a short-term effect, destined to disappear once the phenomenon is discovered. Over time, this generates a reduction in the interest of consumers, who become sceptical of the moral integrity of the company and take greater caution in future purchases of green products. These effects undermine the company's foundations, both towards CSR and the various environmental initiatives launched, and towards the company's financial performance, since greenwashing decreases the purchase intentions of consumers on the long run, putting at risk the company's success.

At the market level, greenwashing generates a saturation: it can make being green as a meaningless attribute and undermine the efforts of those companies really committed to change towards a greener future.

3.5 The Italian legislation about greenwashing and labelling

Until 2014 in Italy there was no clear legislative reference to the phenomenon of greenwashing, it was the Antitrust Authority (as it is now too) to check and, if necessary, sanction any false or inaccurate statements produced for the sole purpose of selling.

Until 2014, greenwashing was part of the discipline of "misleading advertising", introduced for the first time in 1992 thanks to the European directive 84/450/EC then incorporated into the Consumer Code in the chapter dedicated to unfair commercial practices (articles 20-23) thanks to the legislative decree number 206 of September 6 2005.

With regard to the specific phenomenon of greenwashing, in March 2014 the IAP (Advertising Self-Regulatory Institute) published the 58th edition of the Corporate Governance Code of Commercial Communication, where art.12 proposes a first reference to the abuse of terms that recall environmental protection:

“Commercial communication that declares or evokes benefits of an environmental or ecological nature must be based on truthful, relevant and scientifically verifiable data. This communication must make it possible to clearly understand which aspect of the advertised product or activity the benefits claimed refer to.” (IAP, 2014).

The UNI EN ISO 14026: 2018 that the Italian national unification body issued in December 2018 is the most recent of the regulations in this field.

The UNI EN ISO 14026: 2018 standard provides the key concepts relating to the communication of the environmental footprint of products in B2B (business-to-business) and B2C (business-to-consumer) contexts in terms of principles, communication requirements and methods use of data in support, program requirements and associated verifications.

The general information to be provided must be easily accessible and readable (for example: labels, manuals, catalogues, advertisements, websites, etc.) and can be summarized in the following points:

1. Clear indication of the reference area (e.g. carbon or water);
2. Functional unit;
3. Phases of the life cycle under study;
4. Reference to accessing support information (e.g. QR code).

In addition to the control of the IAP and Antitrust, to help Italian consumers in their choice, marking and labelling tools often intervene aimed at demonstrating the

belonging of producers to specific energy saving regimes, environmental protection or the commitment to guarantee the ethics throughout the production chain. These tools help consumers to easily identify sustainable products, indirectly fighting greenwashing.

This system is known as the environmental and ethical certification system.

The environmental certifications to which more extensive reference is made are divided into process and product certifications.

In the first category we find the EMAS and ISO 140001 standard certifications.

EMAS concerns a European standard and consists of a certification managed by a public authority (Ecolabel-Ecoaudit Committee) which is attributed once an "environmental declaration" is published that verifies consumption, emissions, waste production, etc.

ISO 140001, is a standard published in 1996 by the International Standardization Organization. This reference dictates at an international level the minimum requirements and guidelines for the assignment of a certification certifying the introduction of a system to improve the environmental performance and control of the impacts of an organization.

Ecological labelling is instead a labelling system used for consumer products, packaging and services, which aims to make consumers choose products that tries to minimize their impact on the environment throughout the production cycle. The law requires the use of certain marks (for example, the CE mark, the energy label or the toxic or hazardous product mark) which indicate that it meets the standards defined and certified by law. Others, on the other hand, are obtained after producers have voluntarily launched investigations, in order to verify their excellence in environmental matters.

Voluntary eco-labels are divided into:

Type I environmental label: regulated by ISO 14024, assigned by an independent public or private organization according to a transparent and predetermined operational plan, and taking into account all phases of the product life cycle (from procurement of raw materials to disposal).

Type II environmental label (or environmental self-declaration): regulated by ISO 14021, it usually refers to the single characteristics or production phases of the product. While there is no third-party designation, they must meet a number of consumer and competitor reliability and severity requirements (they must not be misleading, specific and verifiable).

Type III environmental labels (or Environmental Product Declarations): regulated by the ISO 14025 standard, the DAPs are documents that collect all the information relating to the environmental performance of the entire production cycle, with the aim of giving the consumer the data and tools that are used to make a comparison between services and / or products with the same functions, orienting one's choice towards the most sustainable one.

To these international standards of ecological labelling is added the Ecolabel which is the only voluntary type I label recognized by the European Union. According to regulation 2010/66/EC, which intervened to regulate the discipline, the Ecolabel must be awarded on the basis of ecological criteria that respect the shared environmental principles, therefore established by a commission that involves all the interested parties: companies, consumer associations, environmental associations.



Today, eco-labels can be assigned to 21 product groups, corresponding to 6 production departments and to a service activity (tourist accommodation activity). The list also lists dozens of other ecological quality labels, which can be characterized according to the geographical area (single state or geographical area) used, the type of product and the particularity of the characteristics of environmental value to be highlighted (camera di commercio di Ancona and Emas, 2010).

In addition to the certification systems indicated above, there are others also linked to the implementation of environmental sustainability. These are developed by non-

organizations governmental and non-profit organizations that have developed third party certification standards independent and internationally valid. One example is the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), which is based on the definition of Principles and Criteria to be adopted for sustainable management of fish stocks, and FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) which defines standards for the use of wood from renewable sources. To request the certifications, it is required that the organization that wants to be certified to reach levels of performance predefined according to reference standard. These certifiers are however subject to the ISO / IEC 17065: 2012 standard, which dictates the compliance requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services. Besides these two examples many other certifiers exist with their own related certifications.



The afore mentioned labels regard mainly the environmental side, the ethical and social commitment then can be certified by the international standard SA8000. This is based on eight social requirements linked to fundamental human and workers' rights. The SA standard works on a voluntary base and it is applicable to any product sector, this standard aims at giving a competitive advantage to those firms whose guarantee ethics of their production chain and cycle.

The guarantee of the ethics of organizations is expressed in the evaluation of



compliance with the standard's CSR requirements, visible through the certification issued by an independent third party with a mechanism like that used for ISO norms.

Once the SA8000 has been issued, the companies have to guarantee to:

- do not use child labour;
- do not use forced labour;
- not to take advantage of a context of racial or sexual discrimination;
- guarantee health and safety in the workplace;

- guarantee the freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and fair remuneration;
 - adopt adequate and correct management systems;
 - comply with laws and industry standards applicable to working hours;
 - guarantee an adequate salary a satisfy basic needs.
- (camera di commercio di Ancona and Emas, 2010).

Each of these tools is placed in the hands of consumers, to guide them in their choices and to dissuade them from purchasing certain products that are not environmentally friendly. Relying on these marking systems, combined with timely and accurate information in this regard, can represent an effective method for dealing with the practice of greenwashing, a phenomenon that is increasingly widespread and harmful to the environment and to the market.

However, the system of certification labels and in general regulatory system about greenwashing and against fraudulent green claims of any kind, does not seem to have produced a great effect. This is partly due to the too often general nature of the claims and partly to the fact that greenwashing is a very subtle and difficult to identify phenomenon. In many cases, a statement in itself would not turn out to be greenwashing if what is written were true, but this implies a thorough check, difficult to implement on the huge number of products that today use green claims as sale technique. Moreover, it is very often large companies that are kept under closer surveillance while smaller ones often escape the eye of the law.

Another big factor of confusion concerns the labels, as we have seen these are numerous and of different value, some act nationally and therefore differs from country to country while others are common, some are mandatory while others are at the discretion of the producer.

All this creates a great confusion in consumers who, as shown by more researches, are increasingly confused and fail to recognize many of the existing eco-labels or confuse them with each other (Atkinson, 2014) (Urbanski and ul Haque, 2020). What's more, many companies create a sort of fake label which, while not

communicating anything, exploits this confusion and induces consumers to buy that particular product. As we have seen previously, in fact, one of the main "sins" of greenwashing is the falsification or imitation of eco-labels on products.

The result is that this regulation does not work very well and despite the great abuse of greenwashing even in the Italian and European market, there are still few cases of antitrust sanctions for the use of greenwashing practices in Italy.

One of the most famous cases of recent years is that of Eni, which was fined 5 million euros for having conducted a deceptive advertising campaign for its product "Eni Diesel +". According to the antitrust authority, the 4% reduction in consumption and 40% gaseous emissions that Eni had advertised as a slogan to promote the so-called "green diesel" are unfounded. The logic behind the decision is that diesel is a highly polluting product and therefore in no case can it be defined as "green". This fine is the only one of this magnitude, two others of the most famous cases in Italy have decidedly different dimensions. In 2010, for example, San Benedetto was fined 70,000 euros for having presented his plastic bottle as a "friend of the environment" in advertising messages. Despite the fact that the company had also made agreements with the Ministry of the Environment on how to save Co2 in compliance with the Kyoto protocols, San Benedetto has never carried out studies to prove the veracity of the environmental claims and, according to the antitrust, the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions and energy savings thanks to the new bottles was not actually calculated.

Finally, another famous case is that of Sant'Anna water, which in 2012 was fined 30,000 euros because in the advertising promoting the eco-friendly "Bio Bottle" eco-bottle, environmental values far higher than the real ones were reported.

As previously mentioned, it is often only large companies that end up in the antitrust crosshairs while a large number of false green claims by smaller companies escape the law. Even in those cases discovered and punished then, the fines that are given, are often not so high as to act as a deterrent. It is clear that the real fight against greenwashing must therefore be fought with the consumers, informing and educating them and providing clear and simple tools so that they can distinguish the real "green" from greenwashing.

4 Research and hypothesis

Greenwashing has evolved in the years and it is now well spread and well camouflaged in between real and honest green advertisements. Not a single sector of the economy has been spared from this phenomenon, and the result is that consumers are always more confused, and they feel betrayed, and even the most noble intention of many of them are intercepted and lured into the trap.

While many researches demonstrate that people all over the world are paying more and more attention to sustainability, other studies seems to show how for consumers and even for the “greener” ones is becoming difficult to distinguish honest brands with good sustainable intention from those just leveraging the green wave to capitalize.

For example, a study from Urbanski and ul Haque (2020) seems to prove this. The study has been conducted on a sample of 768 participants from UK, Canada and Pakistan, and the aim of the study was to determine perspectives of consumers regarding subjects including awareness, trust, and effectiveness about greenwashed labelled products.

The researchers found out that those participants ranking themselves as “High” environmentalists compared to those defining themes self as “low” despite a bigger initial scepticism fall into the trap of greenwashing, identifying those products as sustainable, even more than the other category of participants. “Green” consumers have been found to be vulnerable and, despite their theoretical more acute attention to some topics, failing in distinguish what is green and what is greenwashing.

This suggest that the phenomenon of greenwashing, although it is nothing new, still has a strong effect on consumers, their perceptions and attitudes towards the products.

Based on these constructs the first hypothesis has been formulated, where indeed is supposed that consumers would not recognize greenwashing and would evaluate the products containing those green claims in a positive way.

H1: Consumers subjected to greenwashing will evaluate better the product publicized than those subjected to neutral ads.

On the basis of what suggested by Urbanski and ul Haque the hypothesis h1.1 has been formulated.

H1.1: The greenwashing has a strong effect even on those consumers considering themselves “greener”.

How do people react once they discover what greenwashing is? How do they react when becoming aware they have been scammed by a greenwashing ad? In my experiment, as it will be explained better in the following chapters, to a certain part of the respondents a series of images are shown, these were ads or images of products containing greenwashing. After that to these people is explained what greenwashing is and how this was present in those ads.

The purpose is to evaluate their reaction to this.

Numerous researches have demonstrated how greenwashing once discovered influences the perception of the product or service publicized in a negative way (Braga Junior et al., 2019) (De Jong et al., 2020). In particular, has been demonstrated how the reputation of the brand is strongly affected and how the consumers tend to distrust even all the possible future claims made by the brand (Majláth, 2017). Two are the main reasons of this, the first is because the consumers lose the trust in the message, they receive so they reassess it in a negative way, often worse than it actually is, and the main and second reason is because they feel a sense of betrayal.

To explain this sense of betrayal consumers feels when facing greenwashing, De Jong et al. (2018) proposed a framework based on the concept of cognitive dissonance. As explained way back by Festinger (1957), the cognitive dissonance theory says that we have, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously, the tendency to hold all our attitudes and behaviour in harmony among each other to avoid disharmony or the so-called dissonance. We are always in search of a sort of

cognitive consistency, and when instead there's an inconsistency, so when a behaviour goes out of our sphere of beliefs ideas and values the subject, as a way to protect himself, tries to change something to eliminate the dissonance.

In this case the framework proposed by Jong et al. is based on the premise that the green claims, initially perceived truthful, are then confronted with contradictory third-party revelation and this will result in a sense of cognitive dissonance. The subject would then want to restore the balance between the conflicting pieces of information. Following the theory, to resolve the conflict the subject can act in three different ways: by rejecting the information coming from the third-party, by rejecting the environmental claims made by the organization, or by seeking an halfway position that reconsiders the organization's environmental intentions but rejects the disputed claims.

Other studies have instead demonstrated how consumers indeed may use other strategies to resolve dissonance, for example by find an excuse for themselves to justify their choice as the only possible, or by justifying themselves on the basis of their being green in other fields (McDonald et al., 2015).

Greenwashing exploits those consumers who have a genuine concern for the environment and generates problems as it limits their ability to make actual environmentally friendly decisions and being in line with their beliefs.

It generates confusion and scepticism towards all the green labelled products including those that are genuine and more environmentally friendly.

Greenwashing has a huge societal cost, because it gradually unravels the trust that some green and trustful brands spend years to build-up and putting at risk the progress of real improvements to sustainability.

Given, as demonstrated, the negative effect that the revelation of greenwashing has on trust build-up, and the growing confusion that consumers are experiencing in distinguishing the real from the fake green here I postulate the second hypothesis.

I believe that people that are exposed to greenwashing generate in time a sort of "spill-over" of distrust from the greenwashing ads to the whole category of green marketing.

H2: Once greenwashing is explained to people, especially if they have been victim of it, they will feel betrayed and this will generate in them a sense of distrust to all green ads. The consumers subjected of greenwashing will evaluate worse the last and common product, than the other category of consumers.

To this point another factor must be taken into consideration, as different papers have demonstrated, the scepticism towards ads in general and especially the scepticism towards green ads plays an important role on how consumers respond to greenwashing (Nguyen, 2019).

Comprehensibly a consumer that becomes aware of greenwashing without even knowing what this means before, would react worse than someone that was already aware of the existence of such techniques and therefore was already considering the idea of being duped.

Here I decided to take as an assumption that people already aware of the phenomenon of greenwashing would have developed a sense of scepticism towards green ads.

H2.1: The effect of the sense of betrayal given by the explanation of greenwashing is moderated by the knowledge of the phenomenon.

Terrachoice defined the falsification of the green labels as one of the most important kind of greenwashing, as described by their paper of 2010:

“The sin of worshipping fake labels is committed by a product that, through either words or images, gives the impression of third-party endorsement where no such endorsement actually exists; fake labels, in other words.” (Terrachoice, 2010).

This kind of “scam” is particularly diffused, in the same research they found how 32% out of the thousands of products analysed, carried such label.

Producers and companies are increasingly labelling their goods or services as “green”, “ethical” or “sustainable” and they are doing it in a way to resemble actual certifications.

Despite the above data are referred to US and Canadian market the same problem also concerns the Italian market.

According to the ISO survey 2018, our country, with quite 15 thousand certifications, is the third within the world for the amount of ISO 14001 certificates; the primary nation for the amount of Epd certified products and the third for Ecolabels and Emas, (ISO, 2018). This brings out a serious problem with important economic implications, as long as environmental and ethical certifications today represent a competitive advantage for products, because they assist the standard and innovation of companies, increase exports, turnover and employment of companies. From the latest report "certifica per competere" in English "Certify to compete" by the Symbola foundation and Cloros, we can notice how between 2009 and 2013, "environmentally friendly" companies saw their turnover increase on the average by 3.5%, compared to the 2% of those not certified. Even better in employment, where certified companies saw employees grow by 4%, the others by 0.2%. On the export front, then, companies with environmental certification export in 86% of cases, while non-certified in 57% (Cloros and Symbola foundation, 2016). These figures can on one side seems something positive, as the use of such labels should be an instrument against greenwashing, but on the other hand this can be dangerous. The high and constantly increasing number of different certifications is causing more and more confusion in the head of consumers, and in this confusion greenwashing can easily permeate.

The definition of what constitutes "ethical" or "green" products has been reinterpreted from many different viewpoints, and from many different countries and legislators obfuscating industry-wide standards. Just a few of the labels are common in all the countries many of them are national and known only inside that nation. The Ecolabel Index, that is an independent global directory of ecolabels and environmental certifications, counted 463 ecolabels across 25 different industry sectors as we can see from their website². This huge number of ethical and green

² See sitography.

labels circulating the industry makes it difficult for the consumer to understand who and what to trust.

I think most of Italian consumers knows just a few of the eco/ethical labels, and most of the time they just trust their instinct.

For major part of categories of products, consumers don't have a big repertoire of known brands that are acceptable, they spend little time thinking about purchase decisions, and usually they rely on their habits and sometimes on instinct. Their lives are already full of commitments, kids, work or other activities, and the majority of people don't have the time or energy to engage with brands in any meaningful way and those that do are a minimum part.

The same happens when consumers are buying and trying to be "greener" in their purchases, because of the level of complication that this activity have reached, this is indeed something that requires time, time that many people don't have and so again they make purchase decisions based on simple habit or "instinct" and in the average 13 seconds that takes to buy a product at a store most of people just buy what seems to be greener, so the product that has a certification or presumed so (Beard, 2015). I'm convinced that some people don't really care if then the product is really green or not, they just tried to be greener ad if they fail is not their fault. I expect to find a difference between having or not a green label on the product, but not such difference from having a false label than a real one.

Based on this assumption I formulate the third Hypothesis.

H3: People will evaluate better the products with a certification compared to those without it, but they will not be able to distinguish truthful green labels from fake ones and the effects these have on consumers is pretty much the same.

If this hypothesis were confirmed this could symptom of a serious and worrying problem, because it means that what should have been a tool against greenwashing has become instead a vehicle of the latter.

One last aim of this research is to analyse how the average Italian consumer is capable to avoid falling in the trap of greenwashing. Besides the results of the test I ran, that will be better explain later, this capability of distinguish and avoid greenwashing can be read through the set of attitudes, behaviours and habits that consumers have at the time of purchase.

To spot a greenwashing ad may be tricky sometimes, but in many cases is instead pretty easy and it require just a minimum effort from us. As described by different associations, following some easy steps can help us in identify some greenwashing products (Robbins, 2019).

Searching information about the brand or the product online, reading the label bypassing the packaging without trusting simple slogans and verify the truthfulness of the alleged eco labels, these are some of the useful tips that can help better understand what the product or brand really stands for, gaining important information about the alleged veracity of the statements made.

As aforementioned though, the time dedicated to purchase a good is limited, and the confusion about the clues that makes a product eligible from a sustainability point of view is big, for these reasons I aspect to find little percentage of the interviewees that are used to this useful habits during their purchases routine.

5 Research methodology

Once explained the hypothesis proposed and their formulation, in this chapter is explained the methodology adopted to verify them.

5.1 Methodological approach

For the purpose of this research both qualitative and quantitative data were collected, while quantitative data have been used in most part of the research and constitutes the most important part of the work, a small set of qualitative data have been collected as well in order to strengthen the validity of the quantitative data. For the different aim of various research questions, qualitative data were very useful, even if not necessary, to sustain what demonstrated thanks to quantitative data.

In specific for the first and third hypothesis only quantitative data were used while instead for the second hypothesis a more personal contribution has been asked to respondents, that, instead of responding just by a number were asked to express their opinion writing a few line of text.

Having to measure the reaction of consumers to greenwashing and the consequent revelation of the latter, this study had to be performed at consumers, where in fact data in primary form were obtained.

Obviously in the first part of the work, data from secondary sources were also used, which helped lay the foundations for formulating the research hypotheses.

5.2 Method of data collection

The main tool use to collect primary data in this research is a survey, that has been distributed between 220 people of different age, gender and regions of Italy. This questionnaire was created using Google forms and it was initially distributed

through the chat group of my university, among my friends and relatives and through some Facebook group of green consumers, solidarity buying groups and simple groups of students. Given the average young age of this first group of people I reached, together with the survey a message were delivered to the respondents, where it was explained my intention to get to different age groups, and where I encouraged to submit the survey to their relatives. Once I elaborated the data the numbers confirmed that a wider age group was reached.

Given the origin of my university friends from different regions of Italy it was also possible to come to a people from different parts of the country giving to the sample more capability to represent the target population.

The survey is structured as a quasi-experiment, this kind of research design consists in an empirical interventional study similar to the traditional experimental design or the so called randomized controlled trial, but in this case it doesn't have a fully random assignment to control or treatment. As said by Bryman and Bell (2011), this kind of research design is the most suitable when trying to investigate the impact of an "intervention" on target population.

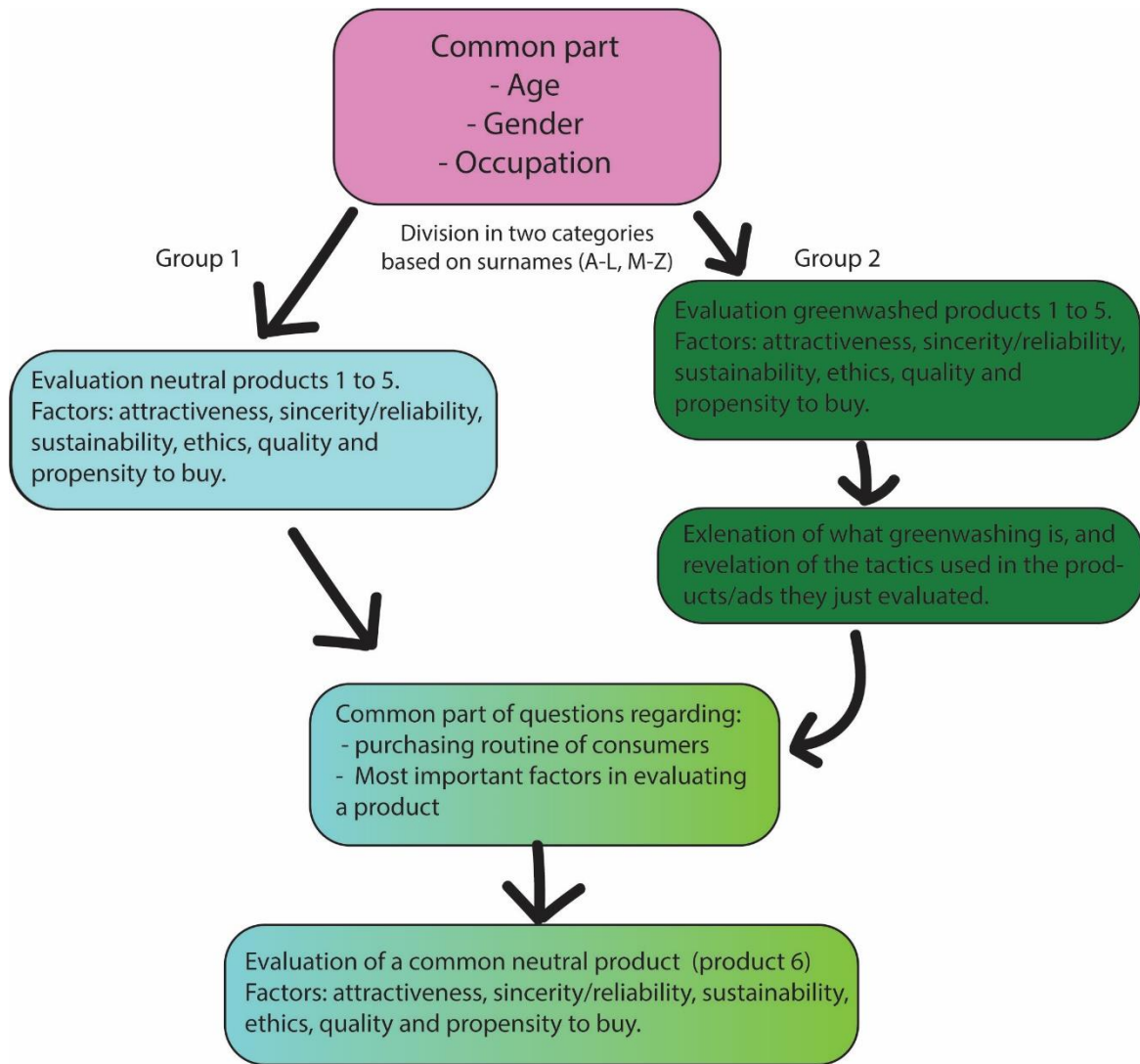
The structure of the survey can be better understood by looking at the image 5.1.

In the first part of the survey a set of general questions is asked in order to create a profile of the respondent, in particular the age and gender are asked, together with the occupation of the subject.

After this part the respondents are divided in two groups, the division is made based on the initials of their surnames, (group1 A-L, group2 M-Z). This has been done for two reasons, the first to have two groups equally populated, and then to guarantee a randomness in dividing the respondents.

After the division in groups, a part of the survey that is different for the two groups begins, it is then initially shown a message, common to both groups, in which is explained the intention of the survey. It is explained that they will have to evaluate a series of existing mock-ups of products and advertising tests, from different points of view. In reality the purpose is not strictly the one here declared but this is made not to influence the respondents.

Scheme 5.1 -The structure of the survey



After this part a series of 5 images is shown to the respondents and it's asked them to evaluate what they see, taking into consideration any element they have available. They are asked to evaluate the product regarding 6 different factors, namely: attractiveness, sincerity/reliability, sustainability, ethics, quality and sense of value. To the respondents is asked to express how they consider the product/message they see giving a value on 5-point scale that goes from 1 (not at all) and 5 (very much). After this, the following question is asked, "Would you consider buying this product if you found it in the shelves your supermarket?" and the response had to be given again a vlue on a 5-point scale, from 1 (never) to 5 (absolutely).

This sequence of passages has been repeated five times for five different products, both the groups evaluated the same kind of ads but in a different form. While the first group visualized the first, second and third image containing a neutral and basic form of ads, to the second group has been shown a different version of the same product/ad containing tactics of greenwashing, at a level of message, colours, background images and logos. The intention here was to measure the effect that such tactics have on Italian consumers, measuring the differences of evaluation between the two groups. Again the third and fifth ad shown to the two groups were slightly different, here the aim was to evaluate the effects that eco and ethical labels have on consumers, so in the third image to the first group has been shown the ad of a product claiming to be green and presenting a series of real and recognizable labels, while the second group visualized the same product but without the aforesaid labels. Finally, the fifth image has been shown to the first group with real eco and ethic labels while it has been shown to the second group with a fake version of these labels.

The two versions of the ads/products can better be seen in the appendix at the end of the thesis.

The products and the brands are fruit of the imagination not wanting to influence the perception of the respondents with already existing preconceptions and perceptions of the brand.

After the evaluation of the products, to the group number 2 (the one who has been shown the images containing greenwashing ads), is asked if they already knew the meaning of the term greenwashing and to express their familiarity with this term on a scale from 1 (never heard before), to 5 (profound knowledge), after this they're asked if they think to be victim of this phenomenon or not, answering yes, no or I don't know.

Afterwards a message is displayed where is explained to the readers what greenwashing means and what it is, the message is the following:

"Greenwashing indicates the communication strategy of certain companies aimed at building a deceptively positive self-image in terms of environmental or ethical impact.

The images you have just seen are an example, images and colours that evoke nature are often used to communicate greater sustainability as well as meaningless slogans and symbols.”

Subsequently, using a series of images, is explained more in detail how the products/ads they previously evaluated were tainted by this phenomenon, the images can be seen in the appendix at the end of the thesis.

After this series of inputs is shown to the group number two, the two groups converge again together in the two final, common parts of the survey.

In the first part the aim was to understand what role sustainability played in the purchasing routine, and what were the measures people takes to assess the sustainability of a product before buying it.

During this part a series of statements are made, and it's asked to the respondents in which degree they agree or disagree, giving a vote on a five-point scale that goes from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

It is also asked in this part, for those who wanted, to describe in a few words what they think about ecological and / or ethical advertising messages. This as aforementioned has been done to collect some qualitative data to confront then with the quantitative one to have a more detailed picture.

After this session of questions, the final part begins, the same product/ad is shown to both groups and it has been asked them to evaluate it in the same way they did before.

This ad does not contain greenwashing messages and the green labels used are truthful and recognisable. The aim of the survey here is to investigate if people that have been shown messages of greenwashing before and to whom the phenomenon has been then explained, evaluate in a different way from the other group this last product, that for what they have been explained, does not contain evident forms of greenwashing.

After this last part the survey is concluded, and a simple message of thanksgiving is shown to the respondents.

5.3 Method of data analysis

Once collected the data from the survey these were collected in an excel file, the same software has been used to elaborate them.

Fortunately dealing with a limited amount of data the initial process of data cleaning was minimum. All the incomplete questionnaire were not saved in the database automatically by the software used (Google forms), so all I had to do was to delete the data collected during the test of the questionnaire and three rows of answers that were presenting a problem. The latter in fact had all identical values, this is usually sign of a series of responses given with little attention, for this reason it was decided to exclude these responses, so they didn't pollute the data.

After this process of control and data cleaning, the part of data elaboration started. Since the purpose was to compare the differences between the answers given by one group and the other, the averages of all the answers for each question and for both groups had been calculated, and the averages were then compared and ordered in a table that better shows the differences.

To verify how significant the differences between groups were a t-student test was conducted, using the formula:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{(s^2(\frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2}))}}$$

To verify the first hypothesis (h1), expecting a higher average of the second group, a right-side tale test had been run, the significance level α was chosen equal to 0,05 and the critical value was 1,645. To verify instead the second Hypothesis in the first part (h2) was used a left-side tale test using a critical value of -1,645 since we were expecting this time a lower average from the group number two.

On the third Hypothesis finally, wanting to verify a general difference between the two averages a bilateral test was used, so using a critical value of +/- 1,96. Here again as for the first and second hypothesis a level of α equal to 0,05 was chosen.

In the survey as mentioned before at certain point the respondents are asked to say in a sentence or two what they think about the ads of ecological / ethical nature.

This allowed to collect a certain amount of qualitative data, which purpose was to help sustaining the second hypothesis, in which as explained in the previous chapter a sort of sense of offense and distrust is generated in the respondents subjected to greenwashing, which extends to the entire category of green / ethical products.

The answers were elaborated and in particular they were subjected to a sentiment analysis. To do so it has been used a free online software called Azure text analytics from Microsoft. First of all, all the answers were merged together in an unique text file, then the text has been cleaned using the software. The text was purified from anything that was not text (punctuation, symbols and numbers) and from the so called stop words (the, is, at, and, which, and so on..).

After the text was purified it was analysed by the software that checked for the presence of a series of words and expressions that generally classify a sentence as positive or negative. The sentences were elaborated divided in the two groups and both the texts once elaborated were returned by the software with the percentage of positive, neutral and negative words.

With the text already depurated even a different test has been done, this more of a visual kind. With the texts indeed two different word clouds were generated, this allowed to better visualize what were the most used words in the answers from the two groups, confirming what found with the sentiment analysis.

6 Results

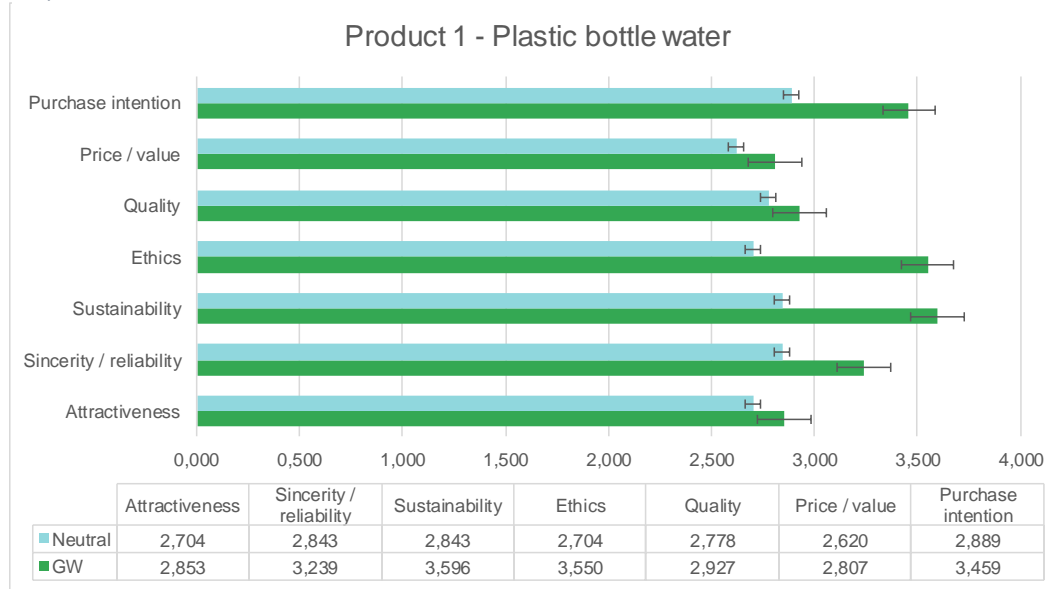
In this chapter I will describe the results of the elaboration of the data, I will start by describing better the sample of respondents that took the test. The survey had been in total submitted to 220 people, as mentioned in the previous chapter three of the respondents “straight-lined” through the survey giving thus non reliable answers that had to be deleted taking the total of analysed surveys to 217.

The sample was well assorted, it was composed for the 53% by women and for 47% by men and the average age was around 33,9 years. The occupations of the respondents were 41% Students, 33,2% employees, 12,4% self-employed, 4,1% unemployed, 2,3% entrepreneurs. The remaining ones are divided between other working categories.

Even the following division in the two sub-groups worked pretty well. This worked based on the surnames of the participants, and it led to the creation of two groups of 110 and 107 people.

The data regarding the evaluation of the products by the two groups have been elaborated and put in a graph form for each product. How it can be seen, has been found a profound difference between the groups in some cases and no difference at all in others. Under the graph are reported in a table the averages of the two groups.

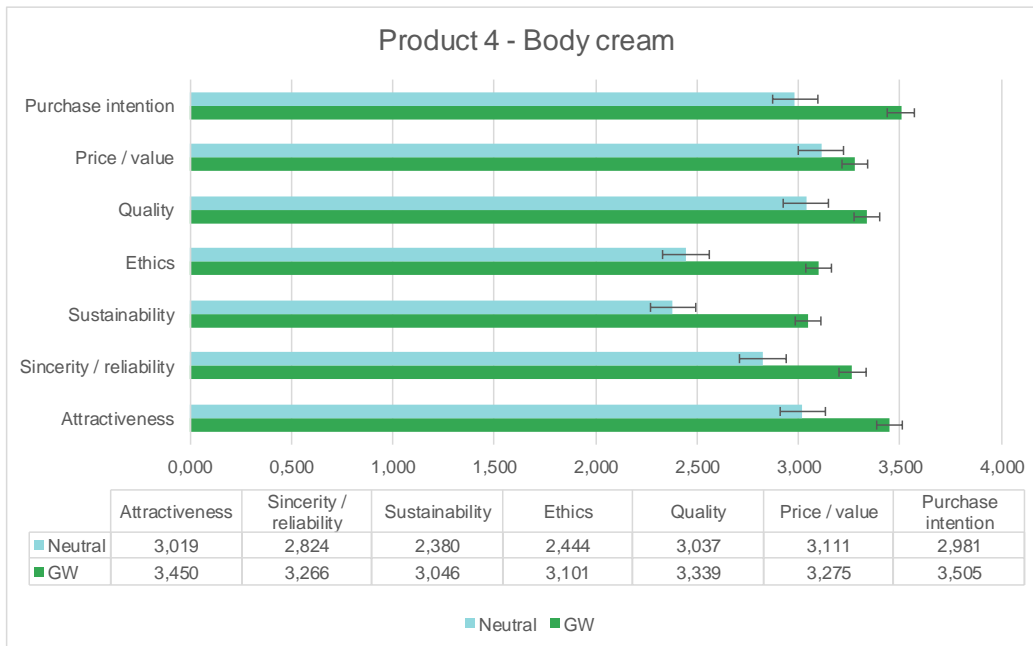
Graph 6.1 – Product 1



Graph 6.2 – Product 2



Graph 6.3 – product 4

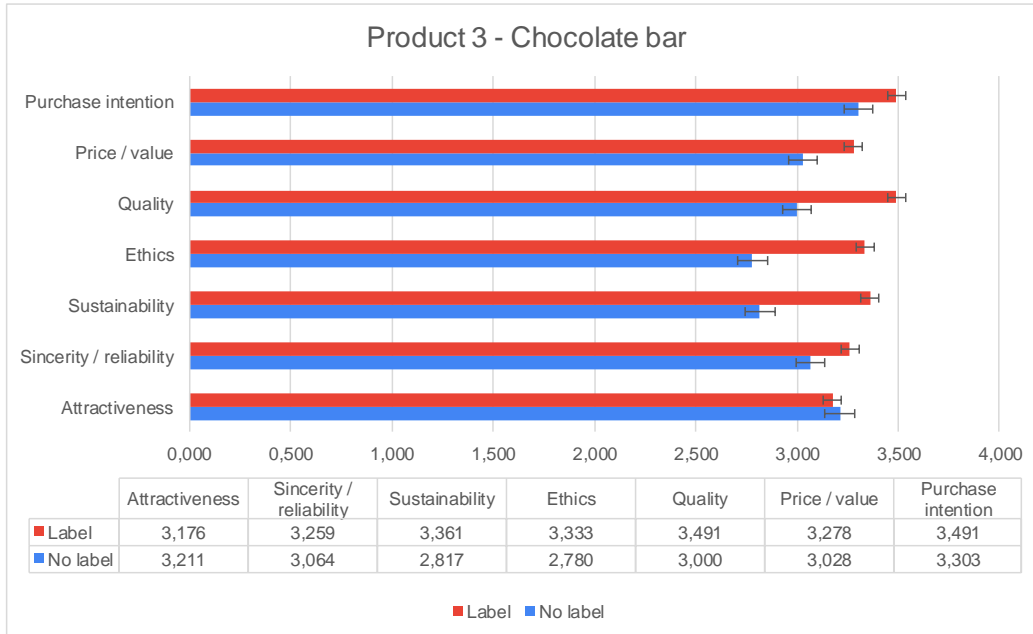


From these first three graphs we can see how there’s a substantial difference between the evaluation of the products containing greenwashing and those containing the neutral version of the ad. There seems to be a tendency to evaluate better messages containing greenwashing and not to see them as deceptive.

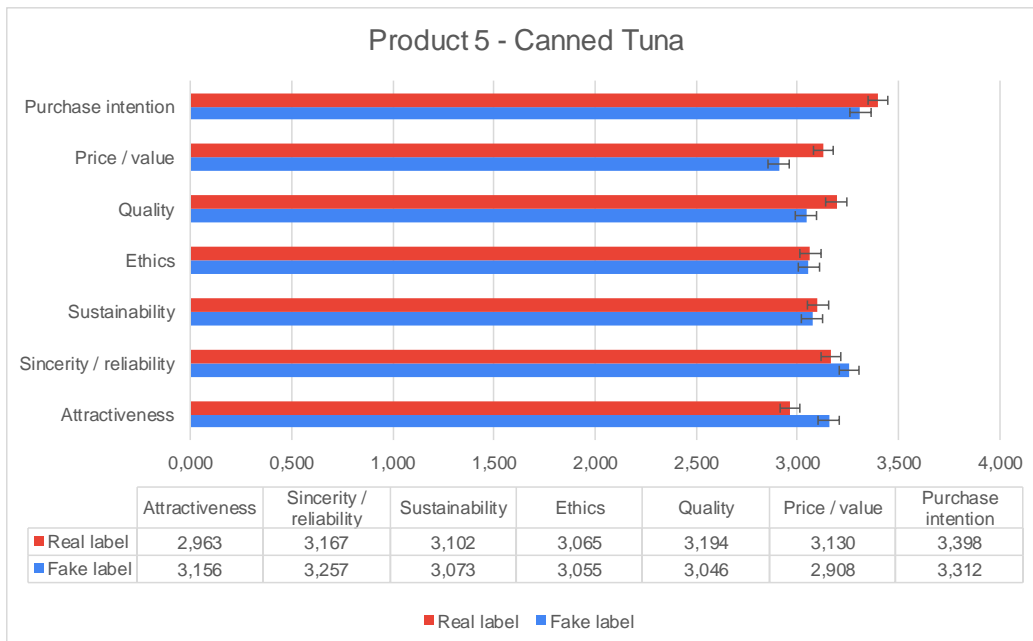
The results highlighted also the big effect that the presence of green/ethic labels has on the perception of the product. As we can see from the following graphs, while

there's a big difference between having or not such label on the packaging, there seems to be almost no difference between using real, recognized eco/ethic labels and fake or resembling ones.

Graph 6.4 – Product 3



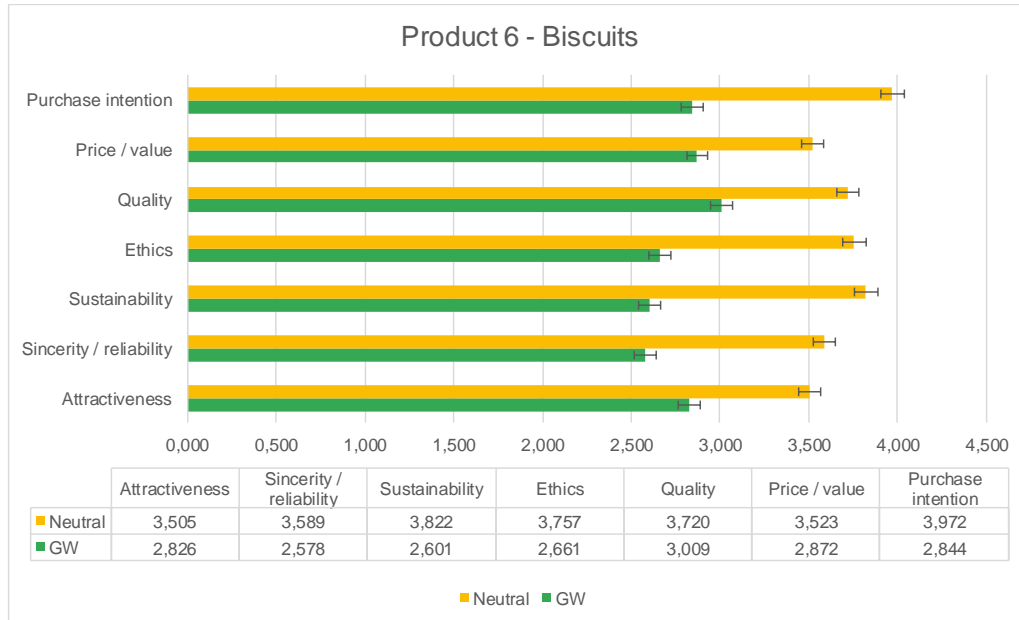
Graph 6.5 – Product 5



Finally, the analysis of the data, from the last image shown to the respondent, highlights a difference between the averages of the two groups but going in the

different direction than before. The group that has seen the greenwashed ads and to which it was then explained, seems to evaluate worse the last product than the other group.

Graph 6.6 – Product 6 (common to both groups)



The elaborated data has been shown on this form to highlight the differences between the averages at glance. A more detailed table, containing even the standard deviations is offered below.

Table 6.1 – Averages and standard deviations

PRODUCT 1		Plastic bottle water						
	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention	
GW	2,853	3,239	3,596	3,550	2,927	2,807	3,459	
St. deviation	1,145245308	1,169829701	1,139519604	1,101230276	1,006519691	0,985797893	1,126549222	
Neutral	2,704	2,843	2,843	2,704	2,778	2,620	2,889	
St. deviation	1,191194321	1,149453675	1,101497403	1,006649162	1,07728231	1,111332976	1,095379502	
PRODUCT 2		Disposable razor						
	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention	
GW	2,890	3,046	3,367	3,330	2,725	2,725	3,275	
St. deviation	1,133165425	1,149761015	1,159985237	1,217579915	1,044133165	1,052963715	1,145616118	
Neutral	2,130	2,278	1,667	1,880	2,028	1,750	2,306	
St. deviation	1,023943199	1,021574132	0,917126761	0,893565708	1,008916633	0,844166348	1,226333593	
PRODUCT 3		Chocolate LABEL VS NO LABEL						
	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention	
No label	3,211	3,064	2,817	2,780	3,000	3,028	3,303	
St. deviation	1,163275982	1,099454657	1,139892276	1,149539345	1,027402334	0,947303342	1,040873806	
Label	3,176	3,259	3,361	3,333	3,491	3,278	3,491	
St. deviation	1,062713909	1,149090236	1,204412481	1,244481659	1,138411731	1,0133613	1,074302447	
PRODUCT 4		Body cream						
	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention	
GW	3,450	3,266	3,046	3,101	3,339	3,275	3,505	
St. deviation	1,163275982	1,099454657	1,139892276	1,149539345	1,027402334	0,947303342	1,040873806	
Neutral	3,019	2,824	2,380	2,444	3,037	3,111	2,981	
St. deviation	1,000698387	0,930932536	0,902340405	0,909507472	1,035573705	1,023143226	1,060657618	
PRODUCT 5		Canned tuna FAKE LABEL vs REAL LABEL						
	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention	
Fake label	3,156	3,257	3,073	3,055	3,046	2,908	3,312	
St. deviation	0,937749853	1,068420449	1,227654502	1,231868155	1,029384781	0,961013736	1,09395522	
Real label	2,963	3,167	3,102	3,065	3,194	3,130	3,398	
St. deviation	1,058352855	1,147935978	1,191400768	1,255069333	1,045312933	0,957924085	1,101738769	
PRODUCT 6		Biscuits						
	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention	
GW	2,826	2,578	2,601	2,661	3,009	2,872	2,844	
St. deviation	0,970338207	0,993437522	0,974618425	1,107384167	1,031857484	1,05497865	1,187701733	
Neutral	3,505	3,589	3,822	3,757	3,720	3,523	3,972	
St. deviation	0,994075201	1,054668606	1,079946575	1,053664956	0,939634539	1,012616584	0,915876155	

The averages, as have been already said, have been tested with a t-test to see if the differences between the two groups were significantly different.

On the table below we can read the t values calculated for each product.

Table 6.2 – t values for each difference

Attractiveness	Sincerity/reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase int.
PRODUCT 1						
0,940054651	2,509006932	4,94298226	5,90015826	1,048694611	1,307182084	3,769073562
PRODUCT 2						
5,175546411	5,192504143	11,96165542	9,995384573	4,989329561	7,513404784	6,002614894
PRODUCT 3						
0,231485352	-1,274188945	-3,411887729	-3,39399114	-3,324022918	-1,874156243	-1,305795291
PRODUCT 4						
2,921021557	3,190611307	4,767367514	4,658979656	2,154241979	1,222713018	3,65767158
PRODUCT 5						
1,417588745	0,59761235	-0,172889459	-0,057721096	-1,05232362	-1,69542048	-0,577078974
PRODUCT 6						
-5,078730336	-7,247836932	-8,719630675	-7,45592884	-5,292501879	-4,63288543	-7,82430835

The colour green or red of the cells indicates respectively when the null hypothesis has been rejected or accepted. Since the hypothesis are different from each other even the criterion to accept or reject changes.

The following table where we can read the criterion of each hypothesis, helps to better understand the data in table 6.2.

Table 6.3 – acceptance or rejection criteria

First hypothesis	$h_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$	$h_1 \mu_1 > \mu_2$	$\alpha = 0,05$	val crit. = 1.645
Second hypothesis	$h_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$	$h_2 \mu_1 < \mu_2$	$\alpha = 0,05$	val crit. = - 1.645
Third hypothesis	$h_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$	$h_3 \mu_1 < \mu_2$	$\alpha = 0,05$	val crit. = - 1.645
	$h_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$	$h_{3.1} \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$	$\alpha = 0,05$	val crit. = +/- 1,96

The first Hypothesis results therefore confirmed, the averages of the group number two results significantly higher than the group number one, in particular regarding the perception of sustainability, ethics and sincerity and reliability (this, taking in consideration the product 1, 2 and 4 showing greenwashing to a group and neutral ads to the other). Even the purchase intention is increased when greenwashing is present. The second part of the first hypothesis also seems to be confirmed, as we can see from the following table there is no significant differences between the evaluations of the products made by the “greener” consumers and the less green.

The table 6.4 in fact compares, inside the group number two, the averages of those consumers considering themselves “paying attention to sustainability” on a degree of five out of five and those answering just one. Greenwashing seems to have pretty much the same effect on the two categories.

Table 6.4 – “green” consumers vs not green

Greenness	Product 1	Bottiglietta d'acqua	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention
5	Attractiveness	3,25	3,5	3,875	3,875	3,25	2,625	4,125
1		2,25	3,25	4	3,5	2,75	2	3,75
Greenness	Product 2	Rasoi usa e getta	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention
5	Attractiveness	3,5	3,875	3,875	3,25	2,625	4,125	2,875
1		3,25	4	3,5	2,75	2	3,75	3,25
Greenness	Product 3	Cioccolato	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention
5	Attractiveness	3,875	3,875	3,25	2,625	4,125	2,875	3,5
1		4	3,5	2,75	2	3,75	3,25	3,5
Greenness	Product 4	Crema	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention
5	Attractiveness	3,875	3,25	2,625	4,125	2,875	3,5	3,625
1		3,5	2,75	2	3,75	3,25	3,5	4
Greenness	Product 5	Tonno	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase intention
5	Attractiveness	3,25	2,625	4,125	2,875	3,5	3,625	3,875
1		2,75	2	3,75	3,25	3,5	4	4

From the data elaboration even the second Hypothesis results confirmed, looking at the product number six we can see how, as it was expected, the respondents to which greenwashing ads were shown and to which later the phenomenon was explained, gives a worse evaluation of the product compared to the other group to which instead neutral ads were shown.

Here using a critical value of -1,645 we can see how the averages are all significantly different. In this case the second part of the hypothesis (h2.1 “*The effect of the sense of betrayal given by the explanation of greenwashing is moderated by the knowledge of the phenomenon.*”) seems to be just in part validated.

The table 6.5 compares the averages of the answers between the group of people that knew the phenomenon of greenwashing and the one of people who do not.

The first group is composed by the respondents who answered 4 or 5 to the question “Do you know what greenwashing means?” on a scale from 1 to five. The second group is composed by the respondents who answered 1 or 2.

Table 6.5 – greenwashing knowledge vs no knowledge

Evaluation product 6	Attractiveness	Sincerity / reliability	Sustainability	Ethics	Quality	Price / value	Purchase int.
GW knowledge (1 e 2)	2,84126984	2,49206349	2,50793651	2,66666667	3,20634921	2,90476190	2,79365079
st. dev	1,05554050	1,14555827	1,20739174	1,19013838	0,99527911	1,09337679	1,15861457
GW knowledge (4 e 5)	2,76923077	3,00000000	3,11538462	3,03846154	3,07692308	2,92307692	3,50000000
st. dev	0,90808336	0,74833148	0,71144490	0,91567545	0,97665048	0,74420841	0,98994949
t values	0,324115345	-2,467669323	-2,942851994	-1,589222172	0,565347319	-0,091259045	-2,907992443

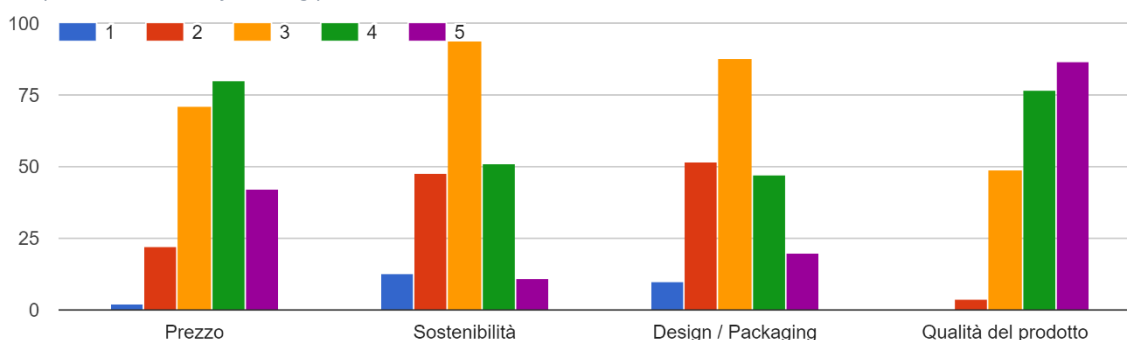
As we can notice the averages are significantly higher for the group 2 (high knowledge of greenwashing), for what concern sincerity/reliability, sustainability and purchase intention while, using a critical value of -1,645, the t values of the averages of ethics falls nearly inside the acceptance region.

Finally, even the third hypothesis seems to be confirmed in both its parts, looking at product 3 (labels vs no labels) in the table 6.2, and table 6.5 it is possible to see how the averages of the group 1 are significantly higher than those of group 2, that is that products with eco/ethics labels are seen more sustainable and ethic because of the presence of the labels.

By looking instead at product number five where the real eco/ethic labels were tested against the fake ones, we can instead notice how the averages are very similar and how the null hypothesis ($H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$) is accepted for all the variables. In other words, there's almost no difference at all between the use of fake and real labels, a very important data but that we will deepen in the next chapter.

We pass now to the last part of the survey that was common to the two groups, the chart below shown the responses to the questions “How much do the following characteristics influence your choice of a product?”

Graph 6.7 – Factors influencing purchases



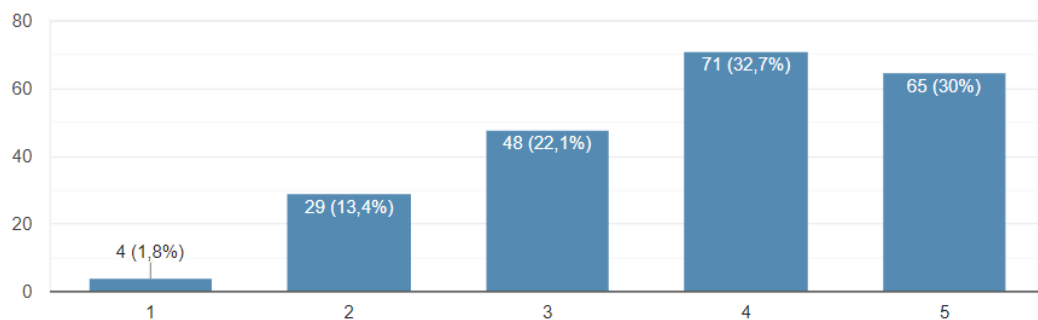
The characteristics of the products were: price, sustainability of the product, design/packaging and quality of the product. As we can see the quality of the product, with an average of 4,12 out of five, seems to be the factor that influences the consumers the most when in front of the shelf. The price is the second one with an average of 3,62 followed by the design and packaging of the product with 3,06 and lastly the sustainability, that with an average of 2,98 results being the least influencing factor when choosing a product.

Below the answers to the other questions are shown, where the respondents were asked to express their agreement or not with the statements made.

1) I often read the label of a product before buying it

Graph 6.7

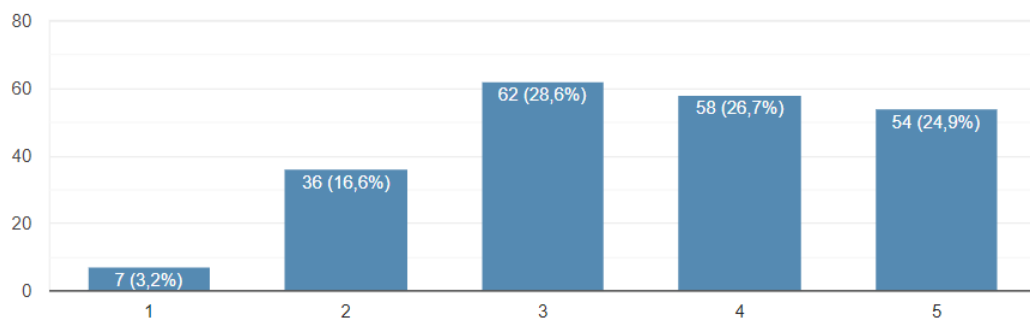
217 risposte



2) I often analyze the packaging of products before buying them

Graph 6.8

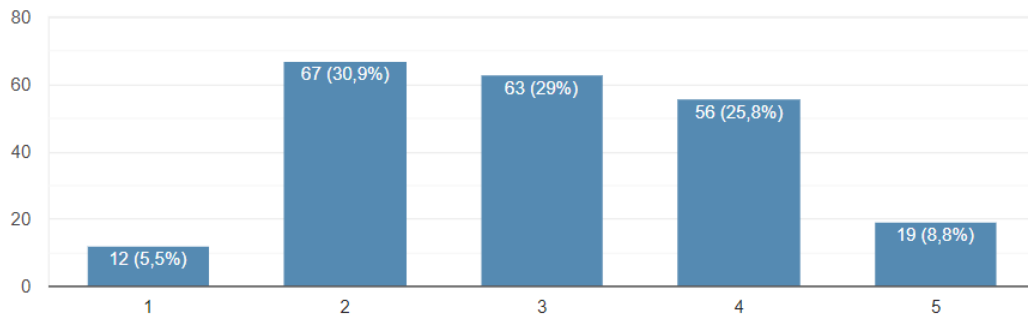
217 risposte



3) I base my choice on the sustainability of the products

Graph 6.9

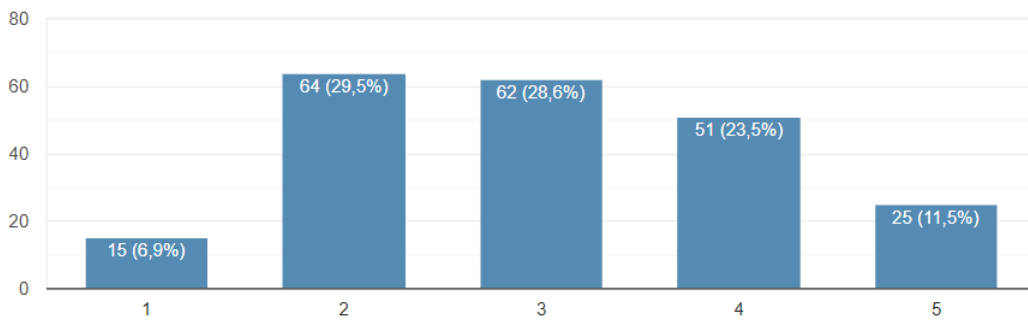
217 risposte



4) I often look for a more sustainable alternative to the products I need

Graph 6.10

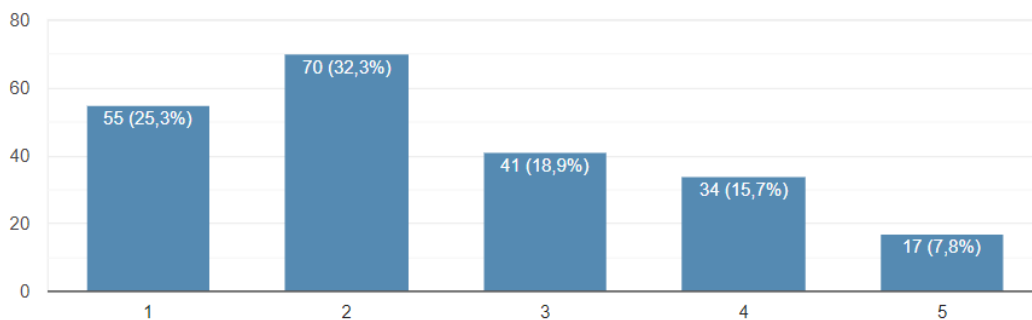
217 risposte



5) I often search online for more detailed information about the sustainability of certain products / brands.

Graph 6.11

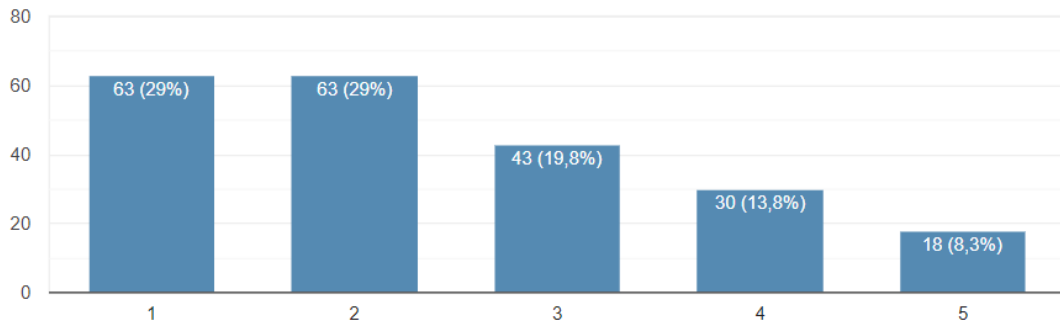
217 risposte



6) It happened to me recently to suspend the purchase of a product because it is not sustainable

Graph 6.12

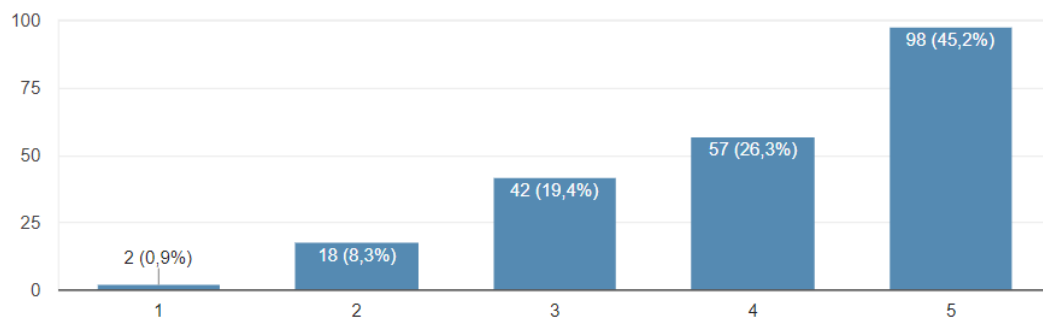
217 risposte



7) It is right to buy products that are as sustainable as possible

Graph 6.13

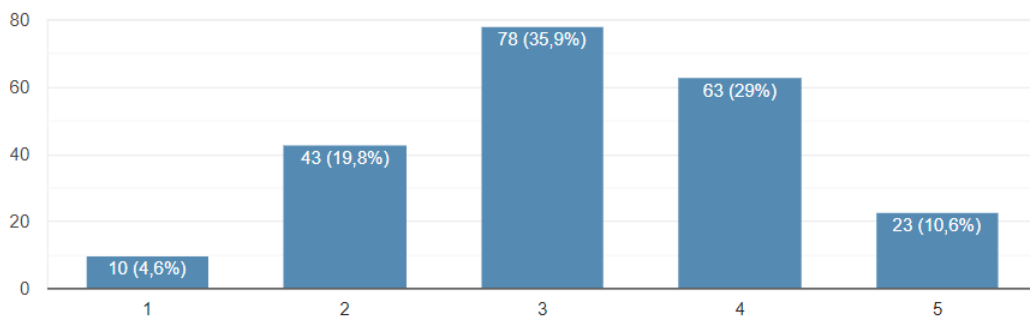
217 risposte



8) I define myself as a person attentive to sustainability

Graph 6.14

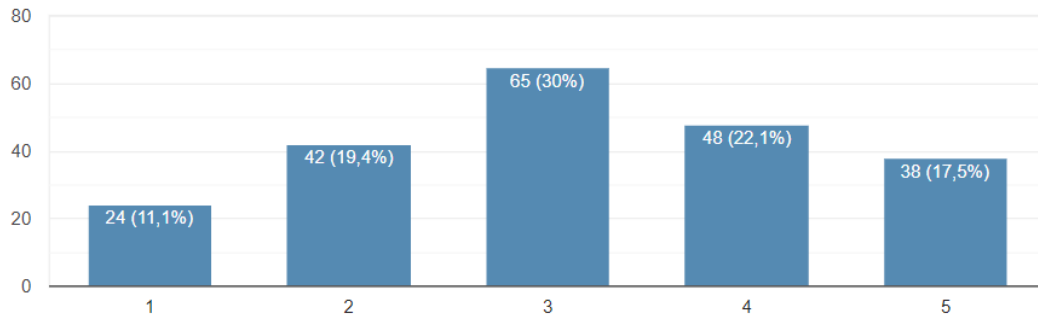
217 risposte



9) Many companies are serious about making their products more sustainable

Graph 6.15

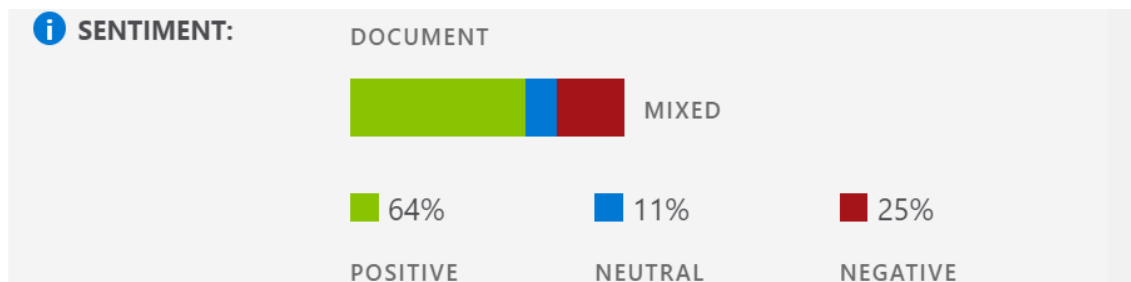
217 risposte



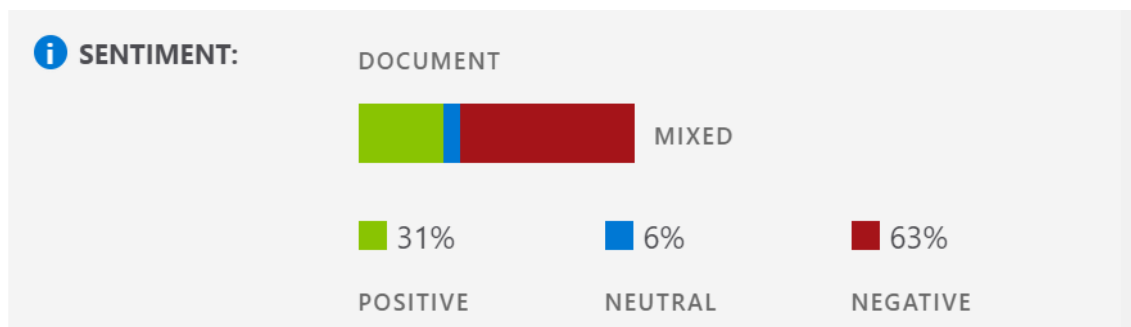
Even the qualitative data collected were elaborated, as described in the chapter 5.3. The results of the sentiment analysis are reported right after, and they highlight a substantial difference between the sentiments expressed by the members of group 1 and group 2.

The members of the second group (exposed to greenwashing) seem to have a worse opinion regarding advertising messages of an ecological and / or ethical nature.

Graph 6.16



Graph 6.17



With the merged text two wordclouds were also created, this was done in support of sentiment analysis and in order to display the most used words in the comments.

Graph 6.18



Graph 6.19



In this chapter the results have been presented without giving any interpretation of them. In the next chapter instead the results are analysed and discussed looking at the research questions and hypothesis presented in the chapters before.

7 Discussion

The present study presents interesting results regarding greenwashing and its use and effects in advertising. In part it confirms some expected results validating some pre-existing hypothesis and strengthening the knowledge around those arguments and concepts, while in part it discovers new aspects and dynamics of this vast and intricate topic.

First of all, thanks to this study, it is confirmed once again the strong effects that the use of tactics such as greenwashing have on consumers. Even though this kind of effects were already known, tested and proved, this kind of study have been rarely conducted inside the Italian community or not recently at least.

The test that have been done by showing to the two groups different images confirmed the propensity of consumers to prefer products that contains green messages and claims, and in particular to evaluate better this products even when this messages and claims are not verified, when no proof or further explanation is made or when the “greenness” of products is left to be intended from the colours and images used, in other words when greenwashing is used.

The results show that consumers cannot identify greenwashed ad claims or design as deceptive, instead in the majority of cases the ads are seen as more sincere and reliable when greenwashing is used.

If on one hand we can partly understand these differences in the perception of sustainability and ethics of a products, as due to the claims that are present only (or in larger quantities) on the products presented to the second group. On the other hand the large gap between the two groups and even more the fact that consumers seems to have no doubts regarding the veracity of such claims and towards the fact that those products are actually sustainable, makes us understand how, in this case, the greenwashing played his game obtaining its best result.

The data also demonstrated how there's no significant difference between people declaring themselves as attentive to sustainability and those who don't. Both the categories seem to evaluate the greenwashed products alike. In some cases, the presumed green consumers seem to evaluate those products even better, and

because in their mind those products represent what they're seeking as green consumers. This expected result explains the attitude-behaviour gap that blocks many green consumers from being concurrent with their attitudes and beliefs doing often quite the opposite of what they wanted. It explains how, even if more and more citizens express their preoccupation towards the future of the planet and its environment the purchasing behaviour for true green products is at a low level (Witek, 2019), (Johnstone, Tan, 2015).

The implications of this are that marketing departments can still benefit from these techniques. Especially for products being part of the low involvement consumer goods category, using greenwashed ads can in fact increase sales.

The data obtained from this survey highlight even another important result, by confirming the second hypothesis, it can be concluded the existence of what was defined as a sort of "spillover" between the bad sensations aroused by greenwashing products and the whole category of green product.

As shown by the data, when people are exposed to greenwashing and then this is explained to them, they then tend to give a bad rating to a general green product even when this does not contain greenwashing. The reason of this, as it was supposed in this thesis, is a sense of betrayal and offense people feel when "scammed" by this kind of ads. This is generated by the fact that people when choosing a certain product are convinced to do something good, they are often moved by a true sentiment of benevolence. They are often people worried, in different degrees, about the sustainability of our society, and they're probably already implementing sustainable behaviours in other fields. These people buy such products to act in accordance with their beliefs and behaviours, so when people realize to be fooled by this kind of ads/products they perceive a sensation of cognitive dissonance because they're not obtaining the results they planned to obtain with their actions, and even worse they are doing instead quite the opposite, playing the game of those who deceived them and that don't really care about sustainability. This sense of offense is recognizable from the bad rates that the population of group number two gives to the last product compared to the rates

given by the other group, but even from the comments respondents left regarding ads of ethical / green nature. The analysis of the answers helps to build the idea of offense and distrust established in the mind of the respondents. The comments from group 1 have expressed 25% of negative opinions, 11% neutral and 64% positive, while group number two has expressed 63% of negative opinions, 6% neutral and 31% positive. From the word clouds (graph 6.18 and 6.19) it is possible to see how the most used words that emerge from the first group are: useful, necessary, just, beautiful, convincing, sustainability and so on, from the second group instead the words emerging are: deceptive, misleading, scam, hoax, misleading, false and so on. Obviously in this occasion the respondents were confronted with the reality regarding greenwashing and they were called to analyse a green product right after so they were probably biased and they had a stronger reaction, in the real world the process happens in a different way.

But this study may indicate that consumers once they become aware of these kinds of tactics, they start with time losing faith in green and ethics ads and in all the companies that are committed to being sustainable, avoiding buying such products fearing being duped again. A hint on this verse is offered by the answer to the claim *"I believe that many companies are seriously committed making their products more sustainable"*, the respondents being part of the group confronted with greenwashing, gave significantly lower values expressing the degree to which they agreed to this claim, the average of answers (on a scale from 1 to 5) was 3,52 for group 1 and 2,79 for group 2.

It has been also partially demonstrating how the knowledge of greenwashing seems to have a moderating role on this bad feeling that flows from the discover of the scam. This data seems to suggest how on the long run greenwashing is coming processed and accepted by the consumers that sees it as something normal and not as the serious fact that it is. This seems to be confirmed by a lot of comments from the respondents that assert the normality of this and how this is for them *"just simple marketing.."* this fact is really worrying because it makes the sensitive consumers lose faith regarding the importance of their purchase decisions and this could lead to a setback of the important green change that has been taking place in these years.

One of the most important results of this research is represented by the verification of the third hypothesis where the eco/ethic labels were tested. I want to remember that at first the eco/ethic labels were tested by contrasting products having such labels against products without them, while subsequently the products with labels were tested against products having fake versions of these labels.

The labels have been created as tools against greenwashing and they have initially demonstrated to be an effective measure. The products having such labels have been indeed considered by the respondents more sustainable, ethic and it increase even the sense of quality and value conveyed by the product (Graph 6.4).

When though the real eco/ethic from real certifications labels have been tested against fake ones resembling the real certifications, almost no difference at all has been measured in the attitudes of consumers towards the two ads (Graph 6.5).

This is one of the few researches on this specific issue, the only researches available sometimes present conflicting results, many of these are now dated and in any case none of these refer to the community of Italian consumers (Chen and Chang, 2013)(Ikonen et al. 2020)(Gillespie, 2018).

Findings of this study regarding this topic seems to suggest that consumers are not able to distinguish the real certification labels from fake or simply unreal ones.

In the moment of purchase that as we said lasts only few seconds, especially for commodities, consumers seems to just trust the labels associating to that product an higher value of sustainability, ethics or quality just for the presence of such labels, without further investigating its validity.

This issue is serious as it means that what would be an instrument against greenwashing can be turned instead into a vehicle of the latter.

If on one hand is positive that with time consumers have learnt to pay attention to the certifications that a product has and to prefer them to other products not having them, on the other hand they still haven't learnt how to do it well, this could be due to the big number of different labels existing in the market, or due to the scarce attention people pays when buying low engagements products such as groceries, but a label indicating a certification obtained thanks to serious efforts by the

company may result not so different from a simple green stamp with 100% natural writing on it.

Another fact resulted important, when the respondents were called to give an evaluation of the last product they have been shown an image that did not contain evident messages of greenwashing, to the people being part of group 2 (greenwashing), it had been explain right before why the previous messages claims and images they had seen previously were containing greenwashing, it was also explained how greenwashing consisted even in creating logos symbols and slogans resembling those of the real certification, and it was showed to them a series of fake and real certification labels.

Despite in the last product were present the eco/ethic labels explained to them as truthful right before, they gave mostly bad ratings on almost all the features of the product. This may be symptom of the fact that such labels are not strong enough to moderate the growing sentiment of distrust towards green products in general, and it could mean that with time the certifications may lose importance and people will start to see them just as another marketing message, in that case all that has been achieved so far would be lost.

Regarding consumer habits of Italian consumers nothing stunning have been discovered, but even here is rather a confirmation of trends and pre-existing hypothesis.

Italian consumers care about sustainability and ethics but the characteristics they seek for when they shop are mainly quality and cheapness.

Many researches have demonstrated how there's a growing purchasing sensitivity on the part of consumers, and that Italy is one of the leading countries in Europe for this trend. Depside this though are still too little the consumers that put in practice all the measures to avoid being lured to buy falsely green products, and to little are the consumers that actively take action stopping the purchase of non-sustainable products and look for a more green alternative.

8 Limitations

This research obviously presents some limitations, first of all it is a quasi-experiment, and this form of research has its advantages and disadvantages, on one side it allows to make direct inferences in a controlled environment, but on the other side a controlled environment presupposes the elimination of certain influencing factors that inevitably distance us from the real context.

First of all the fact that respondents know to be in an experiment it always a factor that influences them, they tend to pay more attention to the stimuli shown to them and to focus on different details than those in which they would focus in reality.

An important limitation is given by the fact that the product is shown in an image and in form of an ad, this imitates the capability of measuring in a totally efficient way the perception of the product by the consumers and specially to measure purchase intentions.

It happens often in reality that the first point of contact between the brand or product and the consumer happens through an ad, it is there that the first opinion of the brand is built, but from that moment and the actual purchase of the products a lot can happen. In the particular case of low involvement products such as groceries, in most of the cases people do not leave home towards the supermarket with the precise idea of what to buy, it is between the aisles that people really decides which product to purchase.

Sometimes it is the memory of an advertisement seen days before that attracts consumers to buy a product, other times it is the impetus of the moment of purchase that makes them buy a product that they did not know and of which they became aware for the first time right among the shelves.

Without having the products in front of the respondents and being able to have them in their hands, it is difficult to replicate in an experiment that set of factors and influences that lead a consumer to choose one product rather than another.

Another limitation is given by the time in which the events happen.

The participants to this survey were confronted with a third-party explanation of what greenwashing was, right after having evaluated different products, and subsequently they were asked to evaluate another green product.

In reality, quite a longer time passes between one phase to the other, a longer time between the activities might lead to a different result.

The third main limitation is given by the choice of using fake brands on the products images used as stimuli. The choice was taken not to influence the respondents with their previous perception of that given brand, if on this side using fake ones presents an advantage, it has a downside as well. Consumers in fact usually do not trust brands they don't know, this is the reason why people prefer to buy stuff from known brand, because they trust them more. This mistrust is accentuated when companies are doing green claims, a fear that only biggest and most recognized brands managed to defeat completely (Davis, 1994).

This means that all the products may be considered worse that would have been if their brands were well known.

Lastly another limit is given by the limited number of participants to this test, 220 is a number big enough to give sense to a study like this, but a bigger number would have given more validity to the results and it could have led to slightly different results.

9 Future research

The suggestion for future researches here described have been initially developed starting from the limitations of this very research.

As said before, ideally this experiment should have been done in person, so as to be able to put the stimulus directly into one's own hands and being able to capture a greater amount of qualitative data from the participants and to be able to better measure their reactions. This was the initial idea but, the unfortunate period that saw the development of a pandemic hampered this modality.

Future researches should consider a different research approach, a qualitative research approach may help to shed light on hidden mechanisms regarding the purchase of green products and greenwashing, on this direction an ethnographic research may be indicated to study some dynamics of the phenomenon that can be studied only in real life environment.

Future studies should also focus on the influence of time on this phenomenon, the survey could be split in two parts for example, dislocated in two different time spans. A first set of questions could be asked to respondents and at the end of the survey greenwashing may be well explained giving many examples to ensure that is remembered. The same respondents could be then contacted again after a certain period of time, to make them participate to the second part of the survey in which they are called to evaluate some green products. This would bring us maybe a little closer to reality, in which the moment of discovery and the moment of purchase may not be close to each other.

Another option is then to make the entire survey in one time, giving the information and make people evaluate the products right after, but then repeat the test after a long period of time to evaluate how the influence of those information lasts in time. Another interesting point for future researches may be to study the influence of brands on this phenomenon, it would be interesting for example to understand how people react to greenwashing when it comes from a loved brand and how if it come instead from an unknown one.

Furthermore, future researches should use a greater sample of people and equally distributed around all the country, to better represent how Italian consumers react to greenwashing.

Finally, I strongly encourage to continue the research around the topic of the use of certification labels and fake, similar ones and to investigate further the confusions that this has caused among the consumers. More studies on this topic may corroborate the hypothesis about it presented in this thesis and push national and international organizations to act about it.

10 Conclusions

In conclusion what emerges from this wide study seems to suggest that greenwashing in 2020 is still a powerful tool in the hands of the companies, and through its use they are able to formulate a greener image on the heads of consumers and this helps them to increase sales.

In order to stop this phenomenon which puts at risk the whole movement of green products that have evolved in recent years, and to prevent companies to free ride on the green train, there are basically two ways.

You can act on the legislative side, where a change in national and international legislation is needed. But how the past has demonstrated, companies, especially big ones are able to find a way to bypass legislations, and national governments and international organizations can little against them.

A clear sign of this are for example certifications that, borne to be a tool to certify the good environmental performance of a company, offered instead a hint to greenwashing companies to communicate their fake greenness.

If a stricter legislation doesn't seem to bear fruit an alternative or complementary way to solve the problem is to work on promoting a better understanding of what is green and what is greenwashing.

This is in my opinion the route to follow together with a stricter legislation. When consumers have the capability to recognize greenwashing in advertisements it is less likely that they would buy those products.

As has been demonstrated, many consumers feel deceived and betrayed when buying products believed to be green but being instead just greenwashing. This is the sentiment on which to leverage to change things, if consumers were informed through awareness campaigns, we could hope to tackle the problem from the demand side. A mobilization of consumers against such marketing tactics would lead to a lower demand for products containing greenwashing messages and this would push more companies to act concretely or at least to advertise themselves for what they really are and suffer the consequences on the sales side.

Obviously, however, we should act in such a way that the distrust of green products does not extend to deserving and seriously committed ones. On this front, as previously mentioned, action should be taken in a complementary manner to an advancement and improvement of the laws and regulations regarding green claims and labels. Eco/ethic labels for certifications have proven to be a useful tool to draw the attention of consumers to important factors, but their large number and the poor explanation that is made about the latter confounds consumers and helps companies that do greenwashing to make their own game. The system of certification labels should undergo a simplification and a reduction in number, some of the existing labels could perhaps be merged and an internationally accepted labelling system should be established.

Furthermore, action should also be taken here as long as consumers are informed about the meaning of these labels and are able to recognize them. This, combined with more severe sanctions against the falsification of certifications, their imitation and any other form of false green claim, could lead to important changes and would place companies that do greenwashing or that do not commit to the environmental and ethical side in a position of disadvantage therefore forcing them to cease this harmful activity.

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Sitography:

Newman's own website: <https://www.newmansown.com/100-percent-profits-to-charity/>

Microsoft Azure text analytics: <https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/services/cognitive-services/text-analytics/>

Google Ngram viewer: <https://books.google.com/ngrams>

Appendix

1) First part of the questionnaire.

Abitudini di consumo

Ti ringrazio per aver scelto di partecipare a questa ricerca.
Cerca di essere il più obiettivo e sincero possibile i dati verranno raccolti in maniera anonima ed utilizzati solamente a puro scopo accademico.
Il completamento del questionario richiederà solo 5 minuti!
(per una migliore visualizzazione dei contenuti che ti verranno mostrati è consigliabile l'utilizzo di un PC o di un device dotato di uno schermo più ampio, qualora non ti fosse possibile procedi pure con il tuo smartphone!)

*Campo obbligatorio

<p>Sesso *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> M</p> <p><input type="radio"/> F</p>	<p>Occupazione *</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Lavoratore Autonomo</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Lavoratore dipendente</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Imprenditore</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Studente</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Disoccupato</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Altro: _____</p>
<p>Età *</p> <p>La tua risposta _____</p>	

Scegli la tua categoria *

- Cognomi dalla lettera "A" alla lettera "L"
- Cognomi dalla lettera "M" alla lettera "Z"

2) Message before the products evaluation.

VALUTA I SEGUENTI MESSAGGI PUBBLICITARI.

Ti saranno ora mostrate diverse bozze di annunci pubblicitari di vari prodotti. Ti verrà chiesto di analizzarli e valutarli sotto vari punti di vista.
Cerca di essere il più obiettivo e sincero possibile, prendendo in considerazione tutti gli elementi a tua disposizione!

3) General evaluation table for each product.

In base a ciò che percepisci da quest'immagine valuta questo prodotto da 1 a 5 riguardo alle seguenti caratteristiche. In che misura consideri questo prodotto: *

1 (per niente) 5 (moltissimo)

	1	2	3	4	5
Attraiante	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sincero / Affidabile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sostenibile	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Etico	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Di qualità	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Costoso	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Valuteresti l'acquisto di questo prodotto se lo trovassi nel tuo supermercato? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Assolutamente NO	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Assolutamente Sì

4) Products in the two versions.

- Plastic bottle water



- Disposable razors

Nuovi rasoi usa e getta Best Shave. Più precisione. Più maneggevolezza. Mai più irritazione. Mai più senza.

Da oggi risparmia grazie alla maxi confezione da 100 pezzi!

Nuovi rasoi usa e getta Best Shave. Più precisione. Più maneggevolezza.

Best shave rispetta l'ambiente e pianta un albero per ogni confezione di rasoi venduti in modo da annullare le proprie emissioni di CO2. Raditi con Best shave e salva l'ambiente.

- Chocolate bar

Assaggia il cioccolato al massimo della sua bontà e naturalezza

Calcio
Vitamina B
Proteine

Assaggia il cioccolato al massimo della sua bontà e naturalezza

+ Proteine
+ Vitamina B
+ Calcio

- Beauty cream

Dopo la doccia nutri e purifica il tuo corpo con la nuova crema EVE. Scoprila nelle farmacie e nei punti vendita autorizzati.

Dopo la doccia nutri e purifica il tuo corpo con la nuova crema EVE. Scoprila nelle farmacie e nei punti vendita autorizzati.

- Canned tuna



4) Explanation of greenwashing for group number 2.

GREENWASHING

Greenwashing indica la strategia di comunicazione di certe aziende finalizzata a costruire un'immagine di sé ingannevolmente positiva sotto il profilo dell'impatto ambientale o etico. Le immagini che hai appena visto ne sono un esempio, immagini e colori che rievocano la natura vengono spesso utilizzati per comunicare una maggior sostenibilità così come slogan privi di significato e simboli.



Best shave rispetta l'ambiente e pianta un albero per ogni confezione di rasoi venduti in modo da annullare le proprie emissioni di CO2. Raditi con Best shave e salva l'ambiente.

Messaggio mirato a distogliere l'attenzione da l'ovvia insostenibilità di un prodotto usa e getta, che nella sostanza resta tale.

Questo messaggio spesso usato nei prodotti di bellezza è ingannevole in quanto le sostanze citate sono già vietate per legge. Non dovrebbe quindi essere un vanto della società averli eliminati dai propri prodotti.



Slogan senza senso e senza prova alcuna

Simbologia priva di significato spesso usata per assomigliare a vere certificazioni ambientali



5) Last part of questionnaire, common to both groups

Quanto le seguenti caratteristiche influenzano la tua scelta di un prodotto? *

1 (per niente) 5 (moltissimo)

	1	2	3	4	5
Prezzo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sostenibilità	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Design / Packa...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Qualità del prod...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Quanto ti trovi d'accordo con le seguenti affermazioni?

Descrizione (facoltativa)

Mi capita spesso di leggere l'etichetta di un prodotto prima di acquistarlo. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente d'accordo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfettamente d'accordo

...

Analizzo spesso la confezione del prodotto e la sua composizione prima di acquistarlo. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente d'accordo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfettamente d'accordo

Baso la mia scelta sulla sostenibilità dei prodotti. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente d'accordo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfettamente d'accordo

Cerco spesso di trovare un'alternativa più sostenibile dei prodotti di cui necessito. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente d'accordo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfettamente d'accordo

Mi capita spesso di ricercare online informazioni più dettagliate riguardo alla sostenibilità di certi prodotti / brand. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente d'accordo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfettamente d'accordo

Mi definisco una persona attenta alla sostenibilità *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Per niente d'accordo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Perfettamente d'accordo

Mi è capitato di recente di sospendere l'acquisto di un prodotto perché non sostenibile *

1 2 3 4 5

Per niente d'accordo Perfettamente d'accordo

È giusto comprare prodotti il quanto più sostenibili possibile *

1 2 3 4 5

Per niente d'accordo Perfettamente d'accordo

Molte aziende si impegnano seriamente per rendere i propri prodotti più sostenibili *

1 2 3 4 5

Per niente d'accordo perfettamente d'accordo

Descrivi in poche parole cosa pensi dei messaggi pubblicitari di carattere ecologico e/o etico.

Testo risposta lunga

.....

6) Last product to evaluate, common to both groups.

Little Chef *Un biscotto delizioso, leggero e sostenibile è possibile!*

Cuciniamo i nostri dolci nel rispetto dell'ambiente e delle persone. I nostri biscotti sono biologici, il loro imballaggio compostabile, il nostro cacao proviene da fonti etiche e sostenibili e l'energia da fonti rinnovabili. Per sapere di più riguardo alla nostra politica di sostenibilità dirigiti sul nostro sito.

Biscotti tradizionali
Con gocce di cioccolato

BOCCALONE
BIOLOGICO
FAIR TRADE
COMPOSTABILE

EUROPEAN UNION
EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR PROTECTION OF BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTION
EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF BIOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND ORGANIC MOVEMENT
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ORGANIC PRODUCERS
EUROPEAN ORGANIZATION FOR PROTECTION OF BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTION
EUROPEAN COUNCIL OF BIOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE AND ORGANIC MOVEMENT
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF ORGANIC PRODUCERS