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MASTER'S THESIS

SLOVENIAN CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS GREEN MARKETING

Ljubljana, September 2024 ŽIVA DEKLEVA

AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

The undersigned Živa Dekleva, a student at the University of Ljubljana, School of Economics and Business, (hereafter: SEB LU), author of this written final work of studies with the title Slovenian Consumers' Attitudes towards Green Marketing, prepared under supervision of doc. Anastas Vangeli, PhD,

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSR – corporate social responsibility
EU – European Union
KPIs – key performance indicators
SMEs – small and medium-sized enterprises
SPSS – Statistical Package for Social Sciences
US – United States
WOM – word-of-mouth

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, concern over climate change has been rising rapidly among many countries, and people have been noting environmental issues occurring in the areas where they live, showing a high level of concern about garbage, waste and landfills, as well as air pollution, loss of forests and extinction of plant and animal species (Funk et al., 2020). Technology and social media have provided the society with platforms where we can consume and share information on the matters that are important to us. By opening up new channels for public debate, they have revolutionized the communication about social issues, including climate change, transferring the power of information sharing from institutions such as large media companies, political organizations and scientific journals, to a much higher number of individuals on social media (Pearce et al., 2018). Better familiarity with internet provides better access to market information, and helps consumers improve their consumption skills (Lisboa et al., 2022), allowing their purchasing decisions to be more in alignment with their values. According to The Global Sustainability Study 2021 survey (Simon-Kucher & Partners, 2022), which was conducted in 17 countries, though the number of consumers who care about sustainability continues to grow, there has been a decrease in the number of consumers willing to pay more for sustainable alternatives. This indicates that sustainability will be seen as an expectation rather than an exception or a primary purchase driver and a key differentiator in the overall value proposition. Furthermore, more and more consumers see themselves as the number one driver for positive change (Simon-Kucher & Partners, 2022), and this value is reflected in their purchasing decisions, as well as in what they demand from the companies they buy from. In order to meet consumer needs, companies have been under pressure to implement new strategies to improve their environmental performance and provide new business solutions that are kinder to the environment.

With the rise of the green consumer segment, opportunities have arisen for the companies not only by enhancing their environmental performance but also by establishing effective communication strategies. However, some companies have viewed this as an opportunity to capitalize on new demands by making promises without fulfilling them. Reports of corporate corruption, hypocrisy and scandals have become pervasive and have decreased consumers' trust in environmental claims and green marketing (Repinc, 2019). From consumers' perspective, the main reason for their skepticism is the sense that companies exploit social issues for self-promotion, which makes consumers question companies' honesty (Repinc, 2019; Webb & Mohr, 1998).

Therefore, as the sensitivity of stakeholders to environmental issues grows, so does the demand for high levels of responsibility and transparency (Torelli et al., 2020). Due to the ubiquity of misleading environmental claims and information overload, it has been hard for consumers to distinguish greenwashing from legitimate claims. Moreover, because of the lack of regulation, sustainability reports in the EU have not been optimized and,

consequently, are not necessarily credible (Repinc, 2019). To enable consumers to make informed purchasing decisions aligned with their environmental values, the EU recognized the challenge and proposed an amendment of the EU consumer rules, banning greenwashing and planned obsolescence by introducing legal requirement for companies to provide reliable, comparable, and verifiable information on products' durability and reparability. Companies will increasingly have to prove their environmental performance through third party verification (European Commision, 2022). Development and implementation of the communication strategies, particularly addressing flaws in companies' environmental efforts, will have to be executed intelligently in order to prevent consumer disengagement.

Although there have been quite a few studies done on consumers' attitudes towards green products and services, not many, and none in Slovenia, have explored consumers' attitudes towards green marketing and greenwashing since the new environmental movement began. This research study contributes to filling this gap by surveying Slovenian consumers' attitudes towards green marketing and their concerns about greenwashing. The main purpose of this master's thesis is to determine Slovenian consumers' attitudes and perceptions of green marketing practices and malpractices, as well as to identify the factors that influence Slovenian consumers' green attitudes and purchasing decisions the most by comparing them between genders, across age groups, and across groups of individuals with different completed levels of education.

The research goals of the thesis are to assess Slovenian consumers' environmental concerns and attitudes toward green products and green marketing, as well as greenwashing; investigate the factors influencing green consumer behavior; and analyse demographic variations in attitudes toward green marketing and greenwashing. Lastly, the thesis aims to provide marketing strategies to businesses targeting environmentally conscious consumers and promoting sustainable practices.

The thesis comprises of 6 main chapters, in addition to the introduction and conclusion. The initial three chapters provide a theoretical overview. The first chapter explores companies' perspectives, current business landscape and the challenges it presents, as well as strategies and techniques for implementing green marketing and reaching green consumers. The second chapter investigates greenwashing practices and describes the changing political landscape in the EU, affecting companies' communication practices regarding their environmental footprint. The third chapter delves into the psychological factors that influence green consumer attitudes and behavior.

The subsequent section of the thesis describes the empirical research: chapter four involves an outline of the research framework and a description of the process of data collection and sample characteristics. The fifth chapter presents the analysis and results of the empirical research, focusing on the overall Slovenian consumer attitudes and their self-reported behavior, their perceptions of greenwashing, as well as the impact of demographic, socio-economic factors and psychological factors on their green attitudes and behavior. The last

chapter of the thesis involves a discussion of the results, the implications of the research findings, and, lastly, the limitations of the study along with the recommendations for the future research.

2 GREEN MARKETING

Since the 1970s, several marketing concepts that deal with ecological and social issues have emerged as a response to an increasingly environmentally conscious society that demanded sustainable and socially responsible products and services. One of these concepts is green marketing, which emerged in the 1980s, as a descendent of ecological marketing, and was concerned not only with the depletion of nonrenewable resources and critical substances, but also with the loss of species, the destruction of ecosystems and habitats, as well as with poverty in the developing countries. At the time, the focus broadened beyond the production processes and the direct impact on natural environment to packaging and products (Belz & Peattie, 2012). Today, green marketing is defined by an organization's application of strategic, tactical and operational marketing processes and activities, the objectives of which are to create, communicate and deliver products and services with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment (Sarkar, 2012; Vilkaite-Vaitone et al., 2022). The main goal of green efforts is limiting the ecological brunt that consumption leaves on the natural environment (Dahlstrom, 2010). In essence, green marketing entails promoting sustainable marketing-related activities, as well as meeting the human demands, all while minimizing negative effects on environment by reducing energy consumption and increasing environmentally friendly behavior (Geng & Maimaituerxun, 2022). It refers to a company's advertising campaigns that communicate a product's environmental performance, promote green lifestyle, or highlight their corporate environmental responsibility (Alamsyah et al., 2020).

It is important to note that the terminology in the area of green marketing has varied over the years. While Belz and Peattie (2012) argue that green marketing and sustainable marketing are two separate concepts, green marketing is unmistakably affiliated with sustainability, and the term is often used interchangeably with the term sustainable marketing (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). For this reason, even though some studies state that the term "sustainable", as well as "green", "eco", "environmental", "ecological" used in relation to "marketing" may have different connotations (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017), in this paper, they will be sometimes used synonymously.

2.1 Sustainability Framework

Sustainable development is often defined as the development which "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It aims to create a healthy and dynamic balance between human and natural systems, and establish political, social and

economic frameworks that will safeguard the planet's ecosystems, enhance the quality of people's lives, and promote economic vitality and opportunities. There are three elements of life that are central to these definitions of sustainability: economic prosperity, environmental protection, and social equality – together, they form the triple bottom line. It can be broken down into 3Ps: people, planet, and profit. Companies that put sustainability on their agenda must not aim only for the single financial bottom line while disregarding the other two, but should seek solutions that will bring long-term benefits in all three areas: besides reaching good financial performance, they must take care of their employees and the social systems within the company's community, as well as assess their effects on their local, national and global resources (Arowoshegbe et al., 2016). Therefore, green marketing should include all three sustainability pillars by eliminating waste, creating income and raising environmental consciousness among consumers. By developing sustainable solutions to current business problems, the companies balance their need for profit with a broader need to protect the environment and contribute to the social progress (Tsiaras et al., 2016).

2.2 The importance of Environmental Efforts and Green Marketing

2.2.1 Consumer Pressures

There are several reasons to apply green practices and communicate them to the public, but the main incentive for the development of sustainable corporate efforts is the overall increase in the environmental awareness of the consumers. As climate-change-related natural disasters are becoming more and more frequent, environmental concern is increasing, and sustainability has become one of the most prominent consumer demands, reflecting society's desire and effort to restore ecological balance (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). According to Ottman (2011), sustainability is a core value of every living generation today. It was the young Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) who started the pro-environment activist movements in the late 60s and early 70s, influencing politics and giving rise to the first environmental acts, and since then, every generation has faced a sustainability crisis in one way or another, having impacted their values. With the emergence of internet, consumers, especially members of Generation Y (also known as Millenials) and Generation Z (also known as Gen Zers), have been able to express their sustainability values and challenge untruthful marketing practices, putting even more pressure on the companies and governments to adopt pro-environmental practices, and making environmentally considerate behavior the norm (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Ottman, 2011).

2.2.2 Governmental Pressures

Climate change has recently been one of the most prominent topics in politics as well. Due to the increased environmental awareness of the society, politicians too, have been pressured to include sustainable development into governmental and corporate practices. Discussing

environmental issues is no longer an area of risk management department, but rather an opportunity that offers great potential for growth and innovation (Iannuzzi, 2012). There has been an exponential growth in environmental regulations in the 21st century, starting with the more sustainable packaging and mandatory take-back requirements in 2004, which have spread from Europe worldwide (Iannuzzi, 2012). In 2019, European Commission introduced the European Green Deal, a growth strategy to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society by becoming a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy. It is a strategic plan on how to achieve the United Nation's 2030 Agenda and reach 17 Sustainable Development Goals (European Commission, 2019). Since the introduction of the EU Green Deal, many laws and legislations have been enforced, legally binding the companies to commit to the goals stated in the EU Green Deal.

2.2.3 Competitive Pressures

As much as the voters' values reflect in governmental practices and decisions, consumers' values similarly influence corporate practices. New consumer demands have brought new business opportunities and competitiveness for innovation, which meant competitive advantage for the early movers a few years ago, but is now considered a necessity, since enough companies are competing in this aspect. Moreover, conventional consumer-products giants have sensed the opportunities that the introduction of new brands would present (Ottman, 2011, p. 46), and when big competitors move toward green practices, other companies tend to follow, making green the mainstream (Iannuzzi, 2012).

2.2.4 Decreasing Costs and Increasing Profits

Due to the regulations that have recently come into place or are predicted to be enforced in the future, prices of raw materials and the costs of manufacturing have increased drastically. Higher costs of certain materials and technologies have forced companies to look for and apply new technologies, finding new ways of production processes, and therefore, using this as an opportunity to unearth efficiencies that could improve their bottom line (Ottman, 2011). Different and innovative approach to waste management and utilization of manufacturing waste have come to the forefront, efficiently creating by-products rather than disposing waste (Pradeep et al., 2016). As sustainability is becoming the new norm, environmental soundness is becoming a new dimension of quality, for which consumers are willing to pay a premium. This presents the companies with an opportunity to increase profits by reaching and even exceeding consumers' expectations (Ottman, 2011).

2.2.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been defined by the European Commission as "a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business

operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis" (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). By integrating the concepts and practices of the social and environmental activities, green marketing promotes sustainable consumption among consumers and competitors (Cuc et al., 2022), therefore contributing to the actual reduction of environmental pressures, creating positive change and helping companies achieve social responsibility goals and visions (Geng & Maimaituerxun, 2022). CSR showcases the company's commitment to a firm's both economic stakeholders, and has been found to improve corporate reputation by generating a positive public image and enhancing consumer loyalty. Good corporate reputation also retains and inspires employees and strengthens the corporate identity (Zhu et al., 2013; Shu et al., 2019).

2.3 Marketing Methods and Techniques

2.3.1 Developing Green Marketing Strategies

Developing a marketing strategy involves 4 steps: segmentation, targeting, positioning and differentiation. First, through segmentation and targeting, a company identifies which consumer group it will serve. Green segmentation can be done either by determining consumer characteristics or their purchase characteristics. There are 3 factors that affect environmentally conscious behavior (energy economics, energy conservation and environmental activism), and divide consumers into 2 groups of active green activists and passive green activists (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

There are several ways to segment consumers based on their characteristics: Dangelico & Vocalelli (2017) name 6 different approaches: (1) psychographic segmentation (taking into consideration biospheric-altruism, corporate skepticism, economic), (2) motivation-based segmentation, (3) segmentation by consumers' eco-friendliness, (4) willingness to contribute, (5) issue-based segmentation (dividing them into environmental protectors, health fanatics, and animal lovers), (6) and segmentation based on environmental awareness and knowledge.

However, according to Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017), in order to enlarge their consumer segments, instead of determining who the green consumer is, companies should seek to understand what their target consumers need when making a purchasing decision. Here, the purchase perception matrix can help understand consumer behavior. It includes two determinants: the degree of confidence (e.g. in firm's environmental performance) needed to make the purchase on one axis and the degree of compromise (e.g. higher costs) on the other. The matrix helps determine what needs to be done in order to persuade the consumer to buy the product: when a high degree of confidence is needed, information asymmetries should be reduced, therefore, boosting the confidence in the purchase. When the purchase requires high compromise, companies should reduce the costs, therefore, increasing their efficiency (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017; Belz & Peattie, 2012). Based on the purchase

perception, consumers can be segmented by the motivation behind the purchasing decision and their perception of the green products (risks and benefits): (1) conventional consumers (who do not perceive the benefits of green purchase), (2) emerging green consumers (who are aware of the benefits of the green products but might not be persuaded by them), (3) price sensitive consumers (who are aware of the benefits but are not willing to pay the perceived higher price), and (4) environmentally green consumers (who are environmentally conscious and are willing to purchase green products) (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

Based on consumer's environmental requirements, companies decide which consumer segment they are going to target, applying one of the three marketing strategies: (1) they can decide to do niche targeting and address the true green consumers by applying the so-called concentrated marketing strategy; (2) they can customize their product assortment to address consumers of different levels of greenness by applying the differentiated (segmented) marketing strategy, or (3) they can address the whole market by mass marketing their green products, which means applying undifferentiated marketing strategy (Stoica, 2021). Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017) argue that even though companies should target the most environmentally friendly consumer cluster, they should also try to influence the segment of undecided consumers. According to that, different green marketing strategies should be developed for each consumer cluster. Companies can develop (1) tactical green targeting by marketing the greenness of products directly, (2) quasi-strategic green targeting by building a green brand along the existing brands and (3) strategic green targeting by launching a new green strategic business unit.

The positioning strategy involves the differentiation from a firm's competitors by communicating environmentally friendly attributes (Hartmann et al., 2005), and can be done either through functional product attributes (achieved by environmental benefits from increasing efficiency in production processes or product usage) or emotional product attributes (evoking emotions of well-being, which is associated with altruistic behavior and the connection with nature, as well as with raising the possibility to express oneself through consumption of green brand as a status symbol). The strongest effect is achieved by combining both types of positioning (Hartmann et al., 2005; Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

In order for companies to determine the degree to which product's green attributes are to be marketed to consumers as a differentiating factor, they must first determine what is the main attribute of the product (traditional or green) that a consumer demands when making a purchasing decision, and whether the green attribute is intense or important enough to be the differentiating feature rather than price, quality or comfort (Stoica, 2021).

Stoica (2021, pp. 4–5) defines three strategic alternatives to position the green brand based on the combination between the traditional attributes and green attributes (green positioning bases):

(1) Predominantly presenting the positioning green bases, which are specific to the organization's environmental concerns; putting more emphasis on the benefits and attributes related to the greenness of the product than the (traditional) benefits related to performance, costs or comfort. This alternative is especially recommended when targeting exclusively the niche market (the segment of consumers particularly concerned of environmental protection). Here, innovation and superiority in the ecological field supported by standardized certifications that add the credibility to the green brand positioning are crucial;
(2) Presenting both traditional positioning bases and those that are specific to the organization's environmental concerns in a balanced way; putting the same emphasis on the socio-ecological dimension (green positioning bases) as on the primary (traditional) attributes; this alternative is appropriate when the green component is not the main attribute that a consumer demands when making a purchasing decision;
(3) Predominantly presenting the traditional positioning bases; putting the main emphasis on the conventional product benefits as the socio-ecological dimension are of the secondary importance to a consumer at the time of the purchasing decision. This alternative is appropriate when the target market is not niche, or when the greenness is only the result of the legislations in force.

However, it is important to note that selling green products does not mean much if the company does not embody environmental values. Companies should thus give relevance to green brand positioning as well, communicating the role that they set themselves to play in society. They should strive to increase green perceived value, build a green image and in turn increase green brand equity (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017).

2.3.2 Green Marketing Mix

The green marketing mix refers to the synchronization of the traditional marketing mix in accordance to the firm's goal of maintaining environmental protection (Ahmed et al., 2022; Solaiman et al., 2015). It consists of green product, green price, green promotion and green place (distribution) (Solaiman et al., 2015).

The first and central element of the green marketing mix is the green product, which refers to an environmentally friendly final product, the production of which requires environmentally friendly measures and non-toxic materials, and therefore, lower consumption of natural resources. Both the production and the product's environmental impact during its whole life-cycle are kept to a minimum, by limiting the production of waste, and excluding cruelty towards animals (Ahmed et al., 2022; Solaiman et al., 2015; Sembiring, 2021). Lastly, a green product is designed and processed to reduce the polluting effects of production, distribution and consumption (Sembiring, 2021), and should be green in all supply chain stages. An important aspect of green product is the packaging, which is sometimes considered as the 5th P in the green marketing mix. Because it is a major source

of environmental waste, it should be made of recyclable or biodegradable materials and reduced to a minimum (Solaiman et al., 2015).

The second component of the green marketing mix is the green price. Product price refers to the cost of the product, and green products tend to have higher primary output costs, but lower long-term costs (Sembiring, 2021). Due to the costs associated with the modification of the production process, packaging and waste disposal, green products have typically been priced higher than conventional products. Higher prices are also the consequence of the perception that the consumers would be willing to pay more for green products, even though it has been found that there is a gap between the consumer attitudes and their behavior (Solaiman et al., 2015).

Consumers' willingness to pay higher prices is determined by their perception of the additional value of the product (Sembiring, 2021), which is why it is important for the companies to identify the consumers who are most likely to buy green products, and then providing them with the information on why the green products are more costly, e.g., providing information on production procedures, logistics costs, etc. (Solaiman et al., 2015). This is called environmental targeting and is part of the third component of the green marketing mix – green promotion, which involves providing information about environmental benefits of using the product, and showing the link between the green product and environmental protection, as well as between the organization and nature. Green promotion encourages pro-environmental lifestyle by persuading consumers to choose the green product over the others (Ahmed et al., 2022), or convincing them of their green identity by communicating their pro-environmental corporate activities. However, credibility is crucial, which is why they must be careful not to overclaim (Solaiman et al., 2015), and should avoid misleading or deceptive means to attract customers (Kalama, 2007). More insights on this topic will be elaborated in the following chapter.

Finally, the last element of the green marketing mix is the green place, which refers to the modification of the logistics processes in order to distribute a product without harming the environment in the process (Ahmed et al., 2022). It aims to cut down the transportation emissions and limit the carbon footprint and other types of logistics-related environmental pollution by considering the environmental impact of all the aspects of the distribution, not just the transportation. It takes into account everything from the distribution channels and distribution center locations to market coverage, channel members, inventory management, warehousing, as well as order processing, and reverse logistics (Kalama, 2007, p. 16). These considerations have driven some of the most important advances in distribution, resulting in cost and time savings, decreased inventory costs and increased revenues, better inventory management, decreased occurrence of stock-out events and enhanced overall customer service (Lee & Lam, 2012).

2.3.3 Green Marketing Strategies

With a significant increase in public scrutiny, firms in almost every industry have started to incorporate environmental concerns into their product and service development. It is important that firms are able to provide customers with information on the environmental impact of their products (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). While companies are under increasing pressure to put more efforts in becoming better corporate citizens, highlighting their green efforts might not always lead to increased profits or enhanced brand reputation (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). Before determining the green strategy, companies should determine how substantial the green consumer segment is for them, and how they can differentiate themselves on the green dimension. Based on these two dimensions, as well as with the help of the marketing mix, Ginsberg and Bloom (2004) divided green marketing into 4 main strategies: (1) lean green strategy, (2) the defensive green strategy, (3) the shaded green strategy and (4) the extreme green strategy.

Lean green companies strive to be good corporate citizens, but they do not put much attention on publicizing their green environmental efforts. By adopting pro-environmental actions, they seek long-term preemptive solutions by reducing costs and improving efficiencies, and comply with regulations. Their greenness is reflected mostly in product development process, design and manufacturing (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004).

Defensive green companies adopt green marketing strategies as a precaution, or as a reaction to a crisis or a competitor's actions. Their goal is to improve their brand image or mitigate potential damage. Companies that use defensive green strategy are usually unable to differentiate themselves from the competitors, which is why their promotion of greenness is temporary and not aggressive in order to prevent potential unmet expectations of the consumers. While they pursue certain pro-environmental actions, such as sponsoring smaller environmentally friendly events or programs, and while they defend their environmental efforts, they do not develop any significant green campaigns, since sustainable green competitive advantage cannot be obtained. Just like lean green companies, defensive green companies pursue greenness mostly in product development process, design and manufacturing, but they also promote it on a small scale through more quiet public relations promotions rather than through straightforward advertising (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004).

Shaded green companies focus on long-term benefits and consider green processes as an opportunity to create innovative products and technologies, which requires a great financial and nonfinancial commitment, as well as investments into systemwide green processes. Despite being able to differentiate themselves on greenness, the companies tend to promote the direct benefits to the customer such as lower usage costs or better efficiency (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004).

Lastly, extreme green companies integrate environmental issues into their business and product life-cycle processes. Corporate social responsibility is embedded in their core values

and their missions, and is adopted in all parts of their business, from manufacturing to marketing. Their greenness is reflected in all marketing elements: the product, the price, the promotion, as well as the place (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004).

3 GREENWASHING

With an increasing demand for green products, companies have been trying to raise their competitive advantage and appeal to ecologically conscious consumers by applying green marketing strategies described in the chapter above. However, either due to accidentally choosing the wrong strategy or consciously choosing to deceive consumers, green marketing claims might not necessarily reflect a firm's environmental conducts accurately. In other words, some companies exaggerate their environmental efforts (Szabo & Webster, 2020). Greenwashing are actions that exhibit a significant gap between the expressed sustainability commitments and actual genuine commitments (Dahlstorm, 2010, p. 321). Merriam Webster Dictionary defines greenwashing as "the act or practice of making a product, policy, activity, etc. appear to be more environmentally friendly or less environmentally damaging than it really is". It relates to the selective disclosure of information on environmental practices, dissemination of positive information and withholding of unfavorable information, with the purpose to mislead consumers to believe that the firm's performance is better than it actually is (Lyon & Maxwell, 2011; de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). The two main levels at which greenwashing has been examined are the corporate level (referring to the distorted dissemination of environmental issues which affect the whole company) and the product level (referring to an explicit advertising strategy used for untruthfully describing environmental characteristics of a product or service) (Torelli et al., 2020).

Terrachoice (in Iannuzzi, pp. 168–169), an environmental marketing agency, recognized **7** sins of greenwashing: (1) Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off: suggesting that a product is green based on a narrow set of attributes, disregarding other important environmental issues of the product; (2) Sin of No Proof: making a claim that is not supported by easily accessible information or a third party certificate; (3) Sin of Vagueness: making a poorly defined or a claim that is too broad so that a consumer easily misunderstands it; (4) Sin of Irrelevance: making a claim involving irrelevant information that does not provide data on actual environmental practices or company's attitude towards the environment; (5) Sin of Lesser of Two Evils: making a claim that might be true within a product category, but might deflect consumers' attention from the greater environmental impacts of the product category as a whole; (6) Sin of Fibbing: making an environmental statement that is just false; and lastly, (7) Sin of Worshiping False Labels: giving the impression of third-party endorsement by using fake labels.

Szabo and Webster (2020) state that greenwashing can either be done intentionally or unintentionally. Based on the transparency of the organizations, their actual greenness, and their green marketing, they divide them that into 4 categories: (1) intentional greenwashers

(the “evil greeners”), (2) unintentional greenwashers (e.g., from their supply chains), (3) truthful greeners and truthful non-greeners (no greenwashing whatsoever), and (4) companies that do have green initiatives but do not advertise them in order to avoid being accused of greenwashing (the “green muters”). The lack of transparency in this case can stem from either ethical concerns (often referred to as “green blushing”), or the lack of confidence about the scientific environmental knowledge. Additionally, green muting can occur due to the apprehension about potential backlash for prioritizing environmental impact over performance or quality (referred to as “brownwashing”).

3.1 Laws and Regulations

With more and more omnipresent greenwashing practices, it has been harder for the consumers to identify true green claims, which has resulted in consumers’ skepticism towards all green claims, regardless of their accuracy (de Freitas Netto et al., 2020). This results in less green economy, since greenwashing undermines the efforts of the companies that are truthfully dedicated to make their products and activities environmentally friendly. In order to decrease the level of greenwashing, the European Commission aims to make reliable, comparable and verifiable environmental information across the EU a legal requirement, enabling consumers, companies and investors to make more informed and greener decisions. Therefore, the European Green Deal, a strategic plan and a timetable for the EU’s transition towards a more sustainable and just society, also includes a requirement for companies to support their claims with a standard methodology to assess their environmental impact.-Moreover, the 2020 Circular Economy action plan also included the revision of EU consumer law to encourage and enable consumers to actively participate in the green transition European Commission. (2022, March).

In March 2022, the European Commission proposed an update on the EU consumer rules i to ensure that consumers are well-informed on the consumed goods and can make more environmentally friendly choices. The amendment of the Consumer Rights Directive would include an obligation for firms to inform consumers on products’ durability and reparability, and the amendment of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive would aim to impose a ban on greenwashing and planned obsolescence by expanding the list of prohibited unfair commercial practices. These practices include withholding information on durability of the product, its reparability and limited functionality, or misleading consumers by making vague environmental claims and displaying sustainability labels that are neither based on a third-party verification scheme nor established by public authorities. By providing clear rules for businesses and facilitating enforcement of cases related to greenwashing and early obsolescence of products, the purpose of these amendments is to support a change in consumer behavior in order to achieve climate and environmental goals stated in the European Green Deal and to protect consumers from commercial practices that hinder their wish to shop more sustainably. In order to meet consumers’ needs, all this will encourage

competition among businesses to create products that are as environmentally friendly as possible (European Commission, n.d.).

3.2 Avoiding Accusations of Greenwashing

Greenwashing has mostly been associated with a negative impact on business, resulting in more negative consumer attitudes towards green products and lower green purchase intentions. It affects organizational credibility and reputation, and reduces corporate financial performance, as well as the adoption of sustainability practices in SMEs (Vangeli et al., 2023). To avoid accusations of greenwashing, companies should take actions on 2 levels: through stakeholder engagement and operative communication management. First, companies must strive to establish a symmetrical two-way communication with stakeholders by involving them in an open dialogue, sharing information with them and recognizing the mutuality of responsibility. Vollero (2022) calls this the organized listening activity, which helps understand public expectations and needs, bridge the gap between the statements of sustainability and the actual perceptions of stakeholders, as well as avoid the mismatch between the promises expressed in the company's communication and the results perceived by the various stakeholders. It also helps companies apply the right sustainability initiatives and encourage them to participate in CSR programs, which positively effects stakeholders' perceived self-efficacy and their intentions to generate positive word-of-mouth considering the company's CSR efforts (Vollero, 2022).

An active engagement of all stakeholders, including employees, helps develop a sustainable identity and adopt a more responsible behavior within the company, which results in the abandonment of a short-term sustainability strategy (Vollero, 2022). By educating their employees on sustainability and creating a common understanding of what greenwashing is, companies can create a unified culture with a shared set of values (Svenssone & Drugge, 2021). This is a goal since it encourages various audiences to participate in developing CSR programs and defining priorities in communication activities and decisions. Employees must be treated as credible sources of information on sustainability for other stakeholders, so a two-way communication is required within the company as well. Company's commitment to sustainability should be communicated without ambiguity, reducing the potential gap between the stakeholders' expectations and the results of the sustainability initiatives, one of the main triggers of greenwashing allegations (Vollero, 2022). By building a true green "DNA", companies are more likely to attract business partners that share similar values (Falchi et al., 2022), reducing the probability of unintentional greenwashing. Moreover, the Millenial generation, which is currently the largest working generation, prioritizes CSR commitment when making job decisions, so companies with true green identities will attract employees with similar values as well (Sterbenk et al., 2021). Because decisions about sustainability and communication strategies are often made by top management, in order to effectively translate the gathered information about stakeholders' expectations into responsible behaviour, it is crucial that companies have a well-established intra-

organizational coordination that enables reflective communication within the company – an activity that allows effective flow of useful information about the public expectations and perceptions (Vollero, 2022).

Sustainability initiatives and CSR programs are a prerequisite for developing the right green marketing strategy. In order to choose the right CSR programs, which are in alignment with the corporate reputation and the concerns of stakeholder, both the organized listening activity and the reflective communication are required (Vollero, 2022). Because of the prevalent skepticism towards green claims, consumer trust and an increase in consumer perception of sustainability can only be won by proving the authenticity and credibility of the claims (Svenssone & Drugge, 2021).

Several factors have been found to lower the levels of skepticism. Consumers attribute motives to the companies' operations and these motives can be seen either as altruistic (serving social interests) or egotistical (serving the interests of the company). The tone of the messages should thus be informative rather than promotional. Promotional tone of the messages is positively correlated to the attribution of egotistical motives, while informative tone positively correlates with the attribution of the altruistic motives (Repinc, 2019). The messages should therefore provide complete, relevant, persuasive and credible information. Transparent information about environmental efforts and the sustainability attributes of products and services can positively influence consumers' attitudes towards the brand. Careful and consistent communicating without overexaggerating or using fluffy language is extremely important to establish consumer trust and build brand reputation about sustainability (Repinc, 2019; Svenssone & Drugge, 2021). If there are aspects of the company's operations or products that cannot be made greener, it is better to illustrate and explain the company's shortfalls rather than trying to be perceived as environmentally "perfect". Consumers respond better to companies they consider truthful, which is why transparency can increase a company's accountability and decrease perceptions of greenwashing, ultimately enhancing the company's brand image (Repinc, 2019; Szabo & Webster, 2019).

Although using simple, understandable messages that signal environmental attributes, e.g., the green colour has been proven to have a positive effect on customers' purchase decisions (Svenssone & Drugge, 2021), companies should be able to showcase concrete KPIs (Vollero, 2022) – reliable, comprehensive, consistent, and comparable, science-based data that is aligned with organizational strategic objectives and explains the value creation process. The most relevant environmental KPIs that impact environmental value creation are connected to gas emissions, renewable resources, resource consumption and waste (Hristov & Chirico, 2019; Repinc, 2019).

In order to achieve transparency and credibility, companies must also avoid using selective disclosure mechanisms, which tend to emphasize certain elements of products or services that showcase positive impact of company's sustainability actions but have little or marginal

relevance from a broader perspective. Selective disclosure mechanisms are usually connected to the company's controlled communication which involves messages such as sustainability reports, press releases and advertisements (Vollero, 2022). Here, using third-party endorsement can reduce potential consumer skepticism and increase the credibility of communication messages (Repinc, 2019; Vollero, 2022).

There are several channels a company can use to reach its stakeholders. Through owned media (social media accounts, blogs and corporate websites), firms can communicate their vision statements and corporate values, exposing their recognizable CSR identity, and backing it up with reporting documents, texts, images and graphs that present specific KPIs. If properly implemented, companies encourage consumers to participate in the debates while still being the ones to control the conversation. In other words, company-controlled channels, especially social media accounts and blogs, can increase customer engagement, encouraging the creation of user-generated content on sustainability issues and giving way to a symmetrical two-way communication. In turn, this strengthens the earned media (positive word-of-mouth, consumer comments, etc.), one of the most effective ways of reinforcing a company's CSR communication. Just like third-party certificates, positive word-of-mouth can increase the legitimacy and credibility of the company's communication messages by adding the trustworthiness of a third party. On the other hand, paid media (SEM, display, ads, sponsored initiatives, which do rarely give rich sustainability information) should be used cautiously as it can be perceived as less sincere and genuine, which might reinforce skepticism towards the company's communication (Vollero, 2022). Lastly, having marketing strategies reviewed and controlled by sustainability experts reduces the risk of releasing environmental claims that could be misunderstood (Svenssone & Drugge, 2021).

To sum up, in order to develop a clear communication strategy, companies must consider the aspects of their corporate responsibility program that best align with their corporate reputation and the concerns and expectations of stakeholders. Sustainability must be a natural part of the brand. A clear definition of the core themes that represent sustainability values and efforts consistent within the entire organization is key. Without trying to conceal the negative consequences of the its conduct, dispelling allegations of poor sustainability or hiding the true nature of the problem, the company can be perceived by the consumers in a positive manner (Svenssone & Drugge, 2021; Vollero, 2022). However, there are situations or industries in which companies might find it wise not to communicate their sustainability efforts at all. This especially applies to companies that are undergoing internal changes and have just started their CSR journey, as they will face more skepticism than companies that have focused on sustainability from the start (Svenssone & Drugge, 2021). However, companies in this case avoid the accusations of greenwashing, but they also forswear the benefits associated with green reporting, competitive advantage, and do not contribute to the "ripple effect" by pushing their competitors and partners to follow their example, which then reduces the pace of the societal progress (Falchi et al., 2022).

4 CONSUMER PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

The concept of pro-environmental or green behavior refers to the actions through which individuals consciously try to minimize their impact on the natural environment either by performing actions that have a positive outcome on the environment (e.g. recycling, reducing waste and energy consumption, purchasing green product alternatives, etc.), or by avoiding actions with a negative and harmful environmental impact (e.g. not using disposable bags) (Parzonko et al., 2021). In the following chapters, factors that influence pro-environmental behavior will be reviewed and discussed. Following the Kollmuss and Agyeman (2002) example of a theoretical overview, they will be divided into 3 categories: internal, external and demographic factors.

4.1 Internal Factors

4.1.1 Knowledge

The fundamental factor that motivates pro-environmental behavior is environmental knowledge. According to Frick et al. (2004), declarative (factual) knowledge about environmental issues is divided into 3 domains: system knowledge (relating to ecosystems and environmental issues), action-related knowledge (relating to what can be done) and effectiveness knowledge (relating to relative benefits associated with pro-environmental behavior). Although knowledge is necessary to promote environmentally friendly behavior, it is not enough. The provision of knowledge has been proven to influence the behavior of people that already care about the topic. Emotions serve as the mediator that translate the knowledge on environmental issues into environmentally responsible behavior and are the emotional component, which, together with the cognitive component (knowledge) shapes beliefs, values and attitudes (Carmi et al., 2015).

4.1.2 Emotions and Personal Responsibility

Affect, defined as positive or negative feeling toward an event or an object, and emotions, defined as intense feelings which change motivational action tendencies, are both strongly connected with cognitive and motivational processes, consequently influencing human behavior (Brosch, 2021; Brosch & Steg, 2021). They are found to be among the most prominent drivers of climate-change-related perception and actions as they are the key entry point for instilling values and attitudes linked to pro-environmental behavior (Brosch & Steg, 2021; Carmi et al., 2015).

Climate change can be discussed either by highlighting the threats human society will face if we do not act now, or by showcasing how the future could look like if we do indeed act

and focus on reversing the negative effects and preventing further negative consequences of global warming. Negative climate messages elicit negative emotions such as fear and guilt, while positive messages have been aimed at promoting positive emotions such as hope and optimism. Climate messages that emphasize significant threat posed by climate change and thus evoke negative emotions, have been found to increase risk perceptions and perceived collective control, which enhances pro-environmental intentions. Optimistic messages have increased hope, but reduced risk perception. They did not increase motivation in individuals to participate in mitigating the climate change effects. However, positive messages bringing out "constructive hope" by stating that climate change can be mitigated through solution-oriented individual and collective action have also been positively related to self-reported pro-environmental behavior (Brosch & Steg, 2021).

Personal responsibility and the feelings of guilt also fall among the emotional predictors of pro-environmental behavior. Personal responsibility is defined as an individual's feeling of personal obligation towards the environment, either due to their moral foundations or due to the desire to conform to social expectations and norms (Culiberg et al., 2022; Kaiser & Shimoda, 1999). Another motivational factor that influences pro-environmental behavior is anticipatory affective experience (Culiberg et al., 2022): the anticipated emotions, also called "anticipated warm glow" or "anticipated guilt", which refer to the expected emotional experience occurring after engaging or not engaging in prosocial actions (Culiberg et al., 2022; Brosch, 2021).

4.1.3 Attitudes

Environmental attitudes have been defined in several ways, one of the simplest being "the collection of beliefs, affects, and behavioral intentions a person holds regarding environmentally related activities or issues" (Schultz et al., 2004). They measure the positive or negative effect of an individual's values towards environmental issues and activities, which showcases their cognitive judgement of environmental protection (Tan et al., 2022). Environmental attitudes have been divided based on 3 dimensions: the concern for oneself (egoistic dimension), the concern for others (social-altruistic dimension) and the concern for biosphere (biospheric dimension) (Milfont, 2012).

While the prediction of behavior is directly dependent on the consumer attitude, the attitude alone is closely linked to the knowledge and personal experience (Cherian & Jacob, 2012). There have been conflicting results with regard to relationship between the attitude towards the environment and the pro-environmental behavior (Cherian & Jacob, 2012; Belz & Peattie, 2012), as many studies have found an "attitude-behavior" gap, referring to the consumers' failure to translate their concerns about sustainability into pro-environmental behavior and consumption choices (Belz & Peattie, 2012, p.77). In order to close the gap, Belz & Peattie (2012) proposed two dimensions differentiating between different types of sustainability purchase: the degree of compromise (e.g. paying a premium, sacrificing

performance or convenience during use) and the degree of confidence (the extent to which a consumer believes in the product's eco-performance, and trusts that the company addresses a genuine sustainability issue). Corresponding to the two dimensions, Nguyen et al. (2018) identify two key moderating variables that can help close the gap: the availability of green products (as unavailability of the green products is one of the top reasons green consumers do not buy a green alternative) and the perceived consumer efficacy.

4.1.4 Consumer Efficacy

Another key factor that influences consumer behavior is consumer self-efficacy, defined as "the degree to which a person believes that that he or she can effectively engage in an activity" (Sellers et al., 2013, p.171). The higher efficacy an individual has towards a goal, the more likely they are to engage in a behavior that will help them attain that goal. Efficacy is also strongly influenced by knowledge – consumers must know what actions to take and why; in other words, they must understand the processes in order to take the right actions, and they must feel positively about the outcome of those actions (Sellers et al. 2013). Therefore, the more an individual believes that their conscious behavior towards the environment can bring a positive impact, the more prone they are to act in favor of the natural environment (Reese & Junge, 2017; Priya & Thenmozhi, 2021).

Being an issue that impacts the entire society, climate change can only be solved by collective efforts and not by individuals, which is why the perceived collective efficacy is also extremely important to promote pro-environmental behavior (Jugert et al., 2016). Perceived collective efficacy refers to a group's shared beliefs in the ability to produce desired results through collective action (Bandura, 2000). Self-efficacy is required for collective efficacy perceptions to influence people's intentions to act in environmental crises. By increasing perceived self-efficacy, collective efficacy can be increased as well and vice versa; messages of collective efficacy can increase perceptions on both social and individual level, which then translate into elevated personal intentions to act (Jugert et al., 2016).

Self-efficacy and collective efficacy are both intertwined with in-group identification. Collective efficacy has influence on a person's pro-environmental intentions when they identify themselves as part of a bigger group. When people are derived from personal control (when they feel a personal threat which climate change could be interpreted as), they seek to identify themselves with agentic in-groups, get their approval and regain a sense of control. Increased in-group identification due to the threat of losing personal control increases perceived collective efficacy as strong group identities enable collective action, give psychological empowerment to its members, and enhance their members' belief that a group's actions can bring positive social change. When an individual identifies as a part of a group, they interpret the world in accordance with the group's norms, which then increases

their own self-efficacy, affecting their pro-environmental behavior on the individual level (Chen, 2015; Jugert et al., 2016).

4.1.1 Green Skepticism

Finally, when it comes to green marketing and whether it will influence consumer purchasing decisions, it is also important to consider greenwashing perception, i.e., how much consumers even trust the sustainability claims of the companies. As environmental awareness grows, so does awareness of greenwashing cases, and consequently, consumers end up feeling misled, which results in an increase in skepticism towards green claims (Repinc, 2019; Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021). While greenwashing is referred to as the main cause for skepticism towards CSR, studies have shown that consumers' greenwashing perception does not have a direct impact on the green purchasing intention. However, green trust (measuring consumers' confidence in a specific product, service or brand's environmental performance), green word-of-mouth and brand loyalty act as mediators in this relationship (Chen et al., 2018; Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021; Xiao et al., 2021). When consumers realize that they have been misled, they stop spreading positive word-of-mouth, and might even start spreading negative word-of-mouth, which, due to the social media era, can turn into a boycott or a public scandal (Guerreiro & Pacheco, 2021).

4.2 External Factors

External factors refer to the conditions that are outside consumers' volitional control or ability. These external conditions can either enable and encourage people to engage in pro-environmental behavior or prevent and make it harder for them to do so (Walton & Jones, 2022). Kollmuss & Agyeman (2002) divide these conditions into 3 categories: institutional (e.g. infrastructure that allows recycling, taking public transportation, etc.), economic (cost-benefit ratio), and social and cultural factors that offer or hinder the possibilities to act ecologically.

4.2.1 Subjective Norms, Values and Identification

Ajzen (in Özalp & Maajaakkola, 2019) defined subjective norms, otherwise known as social norms, as the perceived social pressures to engage or not to engage in certain behavior. They are culturally specific and can be divided into two categories:

(1) Injunctive norms, which refer to the pressure an individual feels to get the improval of his or her behavior from the other people; when an individual percieves that most people in the collective recognize and appreciate pro-environmental behavior and condemn non-environmental behavior, they will adopt the behavior that has more advantages in the collective;

(2) Descriptive norms, which refer to the pressure an individual feels to engage in the same behavior as the collective. Individuals consciously examine whether their behavior is consistent with the collective, and when it is not, they adapt it to the one of the group in order to avoid inconsistencies. Therefore, if an individual is surrounded by people who behave pro-environmentally, they are more likely to engage in the same behavior as well (Xu et al., 2022).

Subjective norms influence people to choose behavior that brings collective appreciation, to avoid exclusion or other people's disapproval by adjusting their green purchase intention and meeting other people's expectations (Paul et al., 2016; Xu et al., 2022). Moreover, if an individual has positive subjective norms towards certain behavior, then his or her behavior intentions are more likely to be positive as well (Paul et al., 2016).

Similarly, social pressure and social impressions also play an important role in forming attitudes and behaviors. Social value refers to an individual's image and acceptance in a social context. In the environmental context, it refers to peer group identity value in the environmentally friendly product purchasing decision, which can have a symbolic meaning or social value (Caniëls et al., 2021). By displaying green purchasing attitude, individuals communicate their identity to their peers and gain social acceptance (Aagerup & Nilsson, 2016). Green behavior in this case is a signal of high social status to peers or an indication of self-sacrifice for the greater good as many times there is a level of inconvenience perceived in buying green (Caniëls et al., 2021). Salazar et al. (2013) found that herd behavior, defined as a type of social influence manifested through observation and imitation of others rather than through direct information exchange interaction between consumers, affects consumers' attitudes towards sustainable consumption (Salazar et al., 2013; Caniëls et al., 2021). From symbolic consumption perspective, green consumer behavior is shaped by individuals' social interactions and the influence of other people rather than their independent decision making driven by internal attitudes and values. Rather than utilitarian environmental benefits (doing good for society), it is the social acceptance (looking good for society) that motivates pro-environmental attitudes (Aagerup & Nilsson, 2016; Caniëls et al., 2021). Therefore, social identification, defined as an individual's awareness of their belonging to certain social groups which has some emotional or value significance to the individual or the group membership, is also considered a significant factor determining pro-environmental purchase behavior (Caniëls et al., 2021).

4.2.2 Institutional and Economic Factors

Pro-environmental behavior is often tied to the accessibility of the proper infrastructure (recycling bins, public transportation) as well as to the economic incentives (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). In many ways, Slovenia has been acknowledged as environmentally progressive country and a true green destination (GOV.SI, 2020). Ljubljana has been used as an example of best practices in terms of waste management (Dakskobler, 2019). In 2016,

the EU anointed Ljubljana the Greenest Capital, and a year later, National Geographic Traveler Magazine named Slovenia World's Most Sustainable Country, as it achieved 96 out of 100 sustainability indicators (Christ, 2018). Based on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI), which takes into account ecosystem vitality, health of the environment and climate policy, Slovenia today ranks 7th out of the 180 countries evaluated (Wolf et al., 2022). However, due to the spatial dispersion of settlements, Slovenia has been facing certain challenges in its transition towards green economy. For example, certain services such as public transportation are not available due to extremely high costs per user.

Moreover, even though economic factors are extremely complex and should always be considered together with psychological and sociological factors, they can have a strong impact consumer behavior too. For example, lower prices on heating oil in the US have for a long time prevented people from engaging in alternative green behavior. Similarly, deposits on bottle and can containers have prompted people to recycle more (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002). Therefore, the issue of unaffordability of green products (e.g. electric cars, solar panels installations, etc.) can be successfully addressed through public tenders and subsidies.

4.3 Socio-Demographic Factors

4.3.1 Gender

Lastly, many studies theorize an individual's pro-environmental behavior as contingent to socio-structural factors such as gender, education, age, income and residence region (Echegaray & Hansstein, 2017). With regard to gender, in general and across age groups and cultures, women tend to show greater environmental concern and willingness to achieve sustainability. In contrast, men are less likely to adopt pro-environmental behavior and feel less guilty about their non-green behavior (Brough et al., 2016). In the past, this gender gap was explained by the gender differences in personality traits, stating that women tend to showcase more prosocial and altruistic behavior than men (Dietz et al., 2002), as they are socialized to value the needs of others, be more expressive and care more about ethics, which then affects their attitude towards environmental protection (Witek & Kuźniar, 2020; Zelezny et al., 2000). Brough et al. (2016), however, propose that the reason for men's resistance is the association of the green behavior with femininity, and a corresponding stereotype that green consumers are feminine. This is again connected to the maintenance of social identity and the perceived group membership.

Similarly, according to a study on the adoption of green products among Slovenian consumers, female consumers express greater environmental concern, awareness of green products and perceived environmental responsibility compared to male consumers, although no differences in green purchase intention and environmental familiarity between females and males were found (Hojnik et al., 2019).

4.3.2 Age

Age is also one of the most significant factors influencing attitudes towards green products and pro-environmental purchasing behavior (Kafková, 2019; Witek & Kuźniar, 2020). The average age of a green consumer is lower than the average age of a traditional consumer (Witek & Kuźniar, 2020), and the youth have been found to have more pro-environmental preferences than older generations (Lorenzini et al., 2021). However, Patel et al. (2017) report that a more mature demographic (aged 36–50) display higher degrees of pro-environmental behavior than younger generations (under 36 years old). Moreover, the increase in environmental awareness and pro-environmental behavior is positively related to the increase in age (Abeliotis et al., 2010). Similarly, the study of Slovenian consumers by Golob et al. (in Virant, 2019, p. 29) revealed similar results as older Slovenian consumers were more prone to exhibit pro-environmental behavior than young consumers.

4.3.3 Education

According to Patel et al. (2017), income is not considered a predictor of pro-environmental behavior but is considered a predictor of consumes' willingness to pay more for green products and services. Education on the other hand, is linked to the pro-environmental behavior, and most studies show that there is a significant positive relationship between the high education level and pro-environmental behavior. However, in contrast to the studies done in the global settings, a study of Slovenian consumers by Golob et al. (in Virant, 2019, p. 29) showed that those with relatively low education levels purchased more sustainably than those with higher education.

5 RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

While many studies have researched green consumption behavior, not many have studied the attitudes that consumers have towards green marketing specifically, especially in Slovenia, and none of them focused on the influence of the corporate environmental efforts and greenwashing. Hojnik et al. (2019) studied the roles of familiarity of green products and environmental responsibility in mediating relationship between Slovenian consumers' environmental concern and their purchasing intention. A year later, Hojnik et al. (2020) focused on the predictors of green consumerism in Slovenia. One research has been done which studied green marketing (Vrbič, 2006), and another focusing on perceptions of greenwashing in Slovenia (Junkar, 2013). However, as the years have passed, new movements have arisen, as well as new laws and innovative sustainable solutions have come into place. People's attitudes and behaviors have changed. Due to the new environmental movement that has brought climate issues to the forefront of public discourse, with Greta Thunberg taking the lead, it is important to reassess current attitudes of Slovenian consumers towards green marketing and greenwashing. Repinc (2019) did a research exploring the influence of factors on skepticism of consumers towards corporate communication of CSR.

The empirical part focused on the tone of the messages that was perceived by consumers (either informative or promotional) and how it influences consumer skepticism. Bucaj (2020) studied the attitudes of consumers towards green labels.

5.1 Research Objectives

The main purpose of this master's thesis is to determine Slovenian consumers' attitudes towards green marketing practices and malpractices. It explores whether young consumers are more environmentally conscious than older generations, and whether the purchasing decisions of young consumers are more impacted by false sustainability claims than the purchasing decisions of the older generations. The purpose of the thesis is also to determine how consumers perceive corporate environmental efforts as well as how greenwashing impacts consumers' attitudes and behavior. Therefore, the thesis provides a useful insight into consumers' perception of corporate environmental practices and the communication of thus practices to the public, which is useful information to researchers, marketers, corporations and businesses, as well as policy makers, and other potentially interested parties.

Therefore, the research goals of the thesis are:

(1) To determine the environmental concern of Slovenian consumers and analyse their attitudes towards green products, green marketing and environmental claims;
(2) To determine the underlying factors that influence green consumer attitudes and behavior;
(3) To examine whether there are any differences in attitudes towards green marketing and greenwashing based on socio-demographic variables;
(4) To provide companies with marketing strategies for appealing to environmentally conscious consumer and for promoting sustainable behavior.

To reach these goals, several research questions have been developed:

RQ 1: What emotions, if any, do consumers experience after exhibiting (or not exhibiting) green behavior?
RQ 2: Are Slovenian consumers willing to pay premium price for a green product?
RQ 3: Are they willing to sacrifice convenience or higher performance of a product in order to be green?
RQ 4: What is their perception of green certificates and 3rd party labels?
RQ 5: What is the level of expressed skepticism towards environmental claims?
RQ 6: What is the consumers' perception of the frequency of the greenwashing practices?
RQ 7: What is the consumers' perception of the intent behind greenwashing practices?
RQ 8: What is consumers' reaction after having learned of a company's greenwashing?

5.2 Data Collection

This master's thesis relies on data from both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources were books, academic journal articles, dissertations and research papers, as well as official media websites that are known to be legitimate sources of reporting on relevant social and economic events and informing the public. First, theoretical frameworks of green marketing and the implications of greenwashing were discussed, followed by a critical overview of the existing literature on consumer attitudes and perceptions towards both of these phenomena. Information collected from previous research was utilized in order to provide a novel insight into the topic. Lastly, the thesis also includes existing literature on how companies can avoid the accusations of greenwashing.

Primary data, which was obtained for the purpose of the analysis, was collected through an online survey questionnaire distributed to Slovenian consumers using the snowball sampling technique. The survey was administered through the survey tool 1KA, and then distributed through social media (Facebook and Instagram) as well as directly via communication channels (by e-mail and other forms of online messaging). Since the target population for the empirical research of this thesis were Slovenian consumers, the results were collected in Slovenian language, and were later on translated into English. 363 people have participated in the survey altogether, 361 of whom fully completed the survey. Nonetheless, I included the partially solved surveys as part of the analysis as well.

5.3 Measures

The questionnaire consisted of 2 parts. The first part contained 30 statements divided into 6 different sets in order to explore the respondents' attitudes towards environment, green products, green claims and corporate initiatives, as well as greenwashing. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement to the statements, which was measured with a 5-point Likert scale (1 meaning "Strongly disagree" and 5 meaning "Strongly agree"). The second part of the questionnaire involved sample demographic questions, i.e. regarding the participants' age, gender and level of education.

After collection, the primary data were analysed through the implementation of descriptive statistical methods and techniques using IBM SPSS Statistics software. In order to analyse collected data and provide the answers to the research questions, several different statistical methods were used in SPSS. Descriptive statistics were conducted in order to examine the socio-demographics of the sample as well as to calculate the means, standard deviations and modes and medians of the variables (attitudes, behaviors and influencing factors). The Cronbach Alpha's test was conducted in order to measure the scale's reliability, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used in order to assess the normality of the data distribution. Due to the abnormality of the distribution of data (see Appendix 4), parametric tests (independent sample t-test, ANOVA, regression analysis) were not appropriate for comparing attitudes between different samples. Therefore, nonparametric tests were used:

the Mann-Whitney test was used in order to compare attitudes, perceptions and purchasing intentions between male and female respondents. Because Mann-Whitney test is only applicable when comparing 2 samples, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used in order to compare attitudes, perceptions and purchasing intentions across several different groups, divided either by age or education level of respondents. The Spearman's correlation test was conducted in order to assess relationships between different variables.

5.4 Sample Characteristics

The target population for the research analysis in the scope of this thesis were Slovenian consumers who were at least 18 years of age or above. In the sample of 363 respondents, 361 have responded to the socio-demographic questions. 243 of those were female (76%) and 118 male respondents (33%).

The respondents were also asked to choose the age group they belonged to. The majority of respondents (31%) fell between the ages of 46 and 60, followed by those between 36 and 45 years old (25%) and those between 26 and 35 (23%). The smallest proportion of the respondents were represented by the respondents aged between 18 and 25 (13%) and those over 60 (8%). The results are presented in Table 1.

In terms of their work status, the majority of the 273 respondents (75%) reported being employed, followed by 46 students and high school students (13%). Only 6% reported being retired, 2% workless and 3% “something else” (see Table 1).

The last question in the socio-demographic part of the survey was about the highest level of completed education. The groups were divided based on the education cycles following the Bologna Process. The majority of respondents (33%) reported having obtained the bachelor’s degree, followed by the group of those who had finished general or technical high school (29%), and those who had obtained master's degree (27%). As expected, the smallest groups were those who have completed primary school or short-term vocational upper secondary school (6%), and those with completed 3rd cycle (an obtained PhD, Doctorate or pre-Bologna Master of Science) (4%). There were no respondents who reported not having completed primary school (see Table 1).

Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of respondents by age and gender

Q7	**GENDER**				
	Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Valid**	**Cumulative**
	1 (Male)	118	33%	33%	33%
	2 (Female)	243	67%	67%	100%
Valid	Cumulative	361	99%	100%	

Source: own work

(table continues)

Table 2: Socio-demographic profile of respondents by age and gender (cont.)

Q8	**AGE**				
	Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Valid**	**Cumulative**
	1 (18-25)	49	13%	14%	14%
	2 (26-35)	83	23%	23%	37%
	3 (36-45)	89	25%	25%	61%
	4 (46-60)	111	31%	31%	92%
	5 (61+)	29	8%	8%	100%
Valid	Cumulative	361	99%	100%	
Q9	**CURRENT EMPLOYMENT STATUS**				
	Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Valid**	**Cumulative**
	1 (Pupil/Student)	46	13%	13%	13%
	2 (Employed)	273	75%	76%	89%
	3 (Unemployed)	8	2%	2%	91%
	4 (Retired)	22	6%	6%	97%
	5 (Other)	11	3%	3%	100%
Valid	Cumulative	360	99%	100%	
Q10	**HIGHEST COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION**				
	Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentage**	**Valid**	**Cumulative**
	1 (Incomplete basic)	0	0%	0%	0%
	2 (Completed basic, short-term vocational upper secondary (2- or 3-year programs)	23	6%	6%	6%
	3 (Completed general or technical upper secondary (4-year programs)	105	29%	29%	35%
	4 (Bachelor's Degree)	119	33%	33%	68%
	5 (Master's Degree)	98	27%	27%	96%
	6 (PhD or Doctorate)	16	4%	4%	100%
Valid	Cumulative	361	99%	100%	

Source: own work

6 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the results which were obtained by the survey and analysed with the use of the above-mentioned statistical methods and procedures. For easier interpretation, the results are presented in tables and graphs. The ones that are not included here are in the appendices.

To assess the general attitudes towards the environment and climate crisis, green products, green marketing and greenwashing, respondents were asked to rate their agreement to several statements. The relative frequencies, the means and the 95% mean confidence level can be found Appendix 2. The mean confidence interval was calculated in order to generalize the research findings to the population of interest (Slovenian consumers above 18 years old).

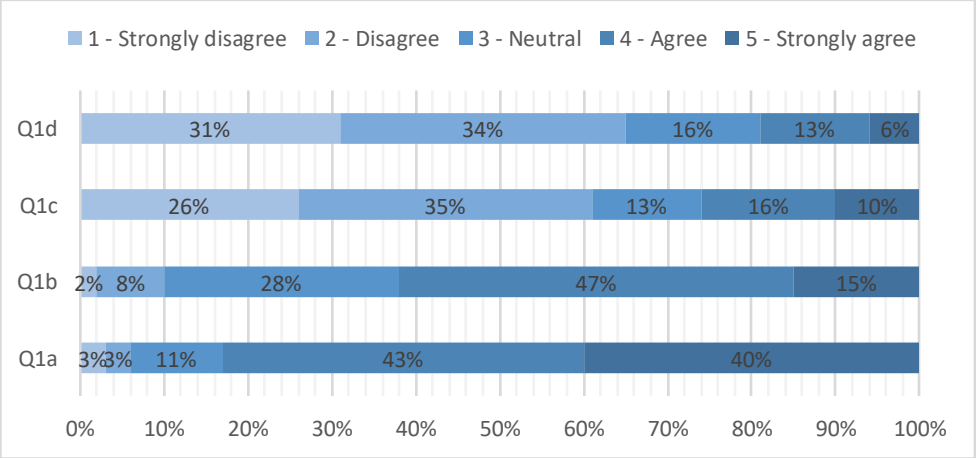
6.1 Environmental Concern

The respondents were asked to express their agreement to the following statements that reveal the general attitude towards the environment and the environmental crisis:

Q1a: "Global warming and climate change make me concerned for the current and future state of the environment."
Q1b: "It is very important for me to be environmentally conscious, so I dedicate time and energy to acquire knowledge about climate change on my own."
Q1c: "My actions or lack thereof have no particular impact on the natural environment."
Q1d: "As an individual, I cannot help to slow down environmental deterioration."

The results, which are shown in Figure 1 and Appendix 2, reveal that the environmental concern amongst Slovenian consumers is high (with 83% of the respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement "Q1a"; mean = 4.13). It is relatively important for them to be informed on the environmental issues (62 % of them either agreed or strongly agreed to the statement Q1b; mean = 3.64). Based on the existing literature, their perceived consumer efficacy was also assessed. Most respondents (61%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that their behavior did not have any particular effect on the environment (Q1c; mean = 2.50), and most of the respondents (65%) also (strongly) disagreed with the statement that they cannot help slow down environmental deterioration (Q1d; mean = 2.36).

Figure 1: Environmental concern



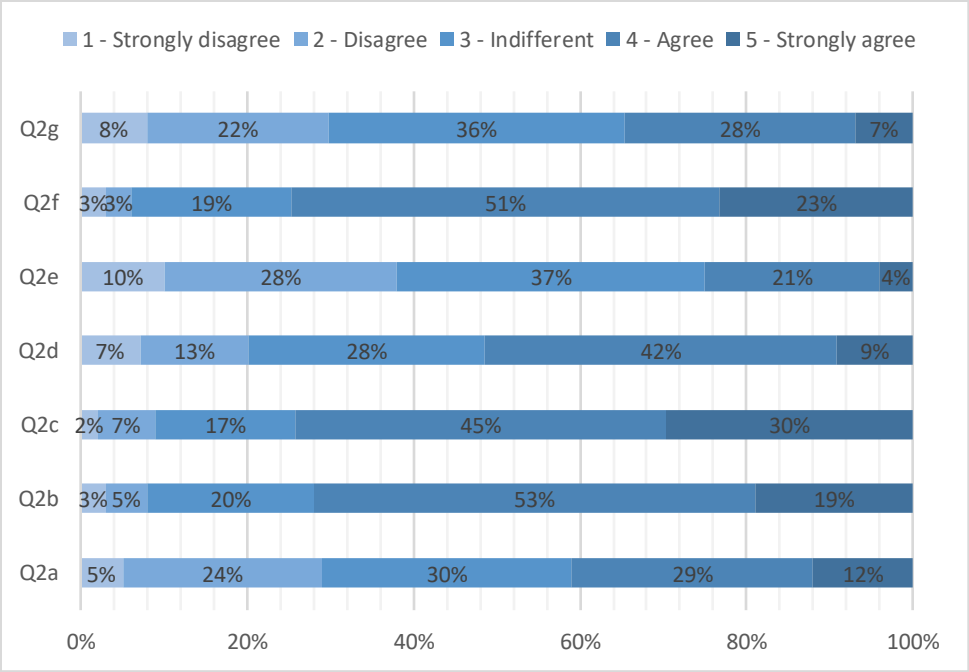
Source: own work, N = 361

6.2 Attitudes towards Green Products

In order to assess the general attitude towards the green products and brands, the respondents were asked to express their agreement to the following statements:

Q2a: "When I'm purchasing a new product, I don't pay attention to its environmental footprint."
Q2b: "I have a positive attitude towards, or am generally in favor of buying environmentally friendly products and brands that care about protecting and preserving the environment."
Q2c: "If I am choosing between two products that are comparable in price and quality (performance) but different in terms of their environmental footprint, I choose the product that is more environmentally friendly."
Q2d: "I am willing to pay more for an environmentally friendly product."
Q2e: "I am willing to sacrifice the quality (performance) or convenience of the product to buy the environmentally friendly alternative."
Q2f: "When I buy an environmentally friendly product, I feel good."
Q2g: "If I have to choose between two products and I buy the product that is less environmentally friendly, I feel guilty."

Figure 2: Attitudes towards green products



Source: own work, N = 361

In general, most respondents (72 %) reported having positive attitude towards green products and brands (Q2b; mean = 3.80). However, only 41 % reported that they pay attention to the greenness of the products when purchasing them (Q2a; mean = 3.18). The majority (75 %)

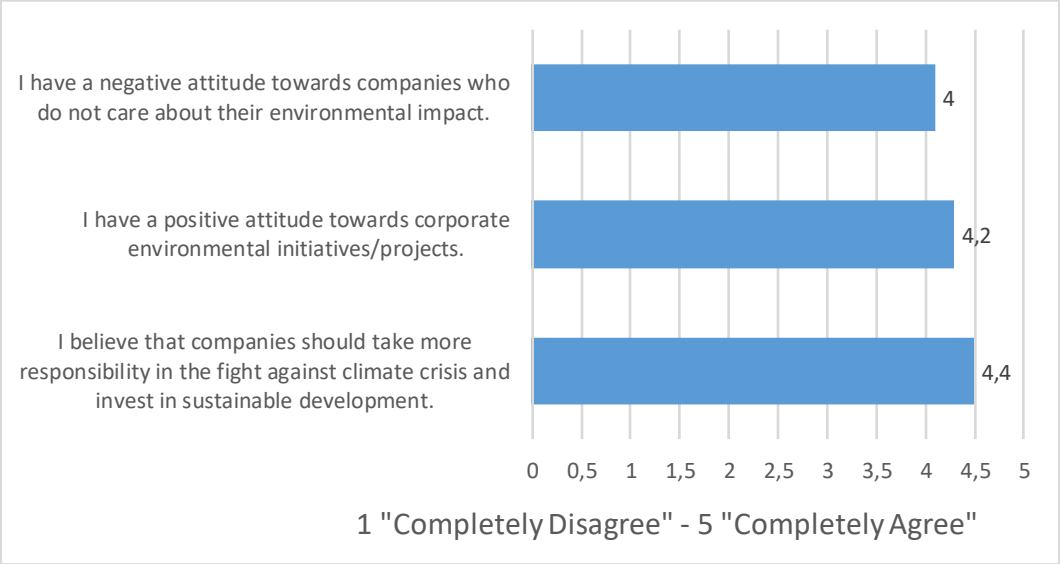
agreed that they would be inclined to buy a green product that was comparable in price and performance to a traditional one (Q2c; mean = 3.92). Most of them (51 %) also stated that they were prepared to pay more for a green product (Q2d; mean = 3.31). However, only 25 % agreed to be inclined to sacrifice the quality and convenience for green characteristics of the product (Q2e; mean = 2.83). The results are presented in Figure 2 and in Appendix 2.

Figure 2 also shows that the majority of the respondents (74 %) reported feeling positive emotions when purchasing a green product (Q2f; mean = 3.88). However, much fewer (35 %) reported feeling negative emotions when not purchasing a green product (Q2g; mean = 3.03).

6.3 Attitudes towards Corporate Environmental Efforts

The majority of the respondents (93 %) either agreed or strongly agreed that companies should take on more responsibility in mitigating climate change (Q3a; mean = 4.40). 85 % also reported positive attitude towards green corporate initiatives (Q3b; mean = 4.17), and 75 % reported having negative attitude towards firms and brands who openly do not care about the environment (Q3c; mean = 4.03). The means are presented in Figure 3, while more detailed tables on the responses can be found in Appendix 2.

Figure 3: Attitudes towards corporate environmental efforts



Source: own work, N = 361

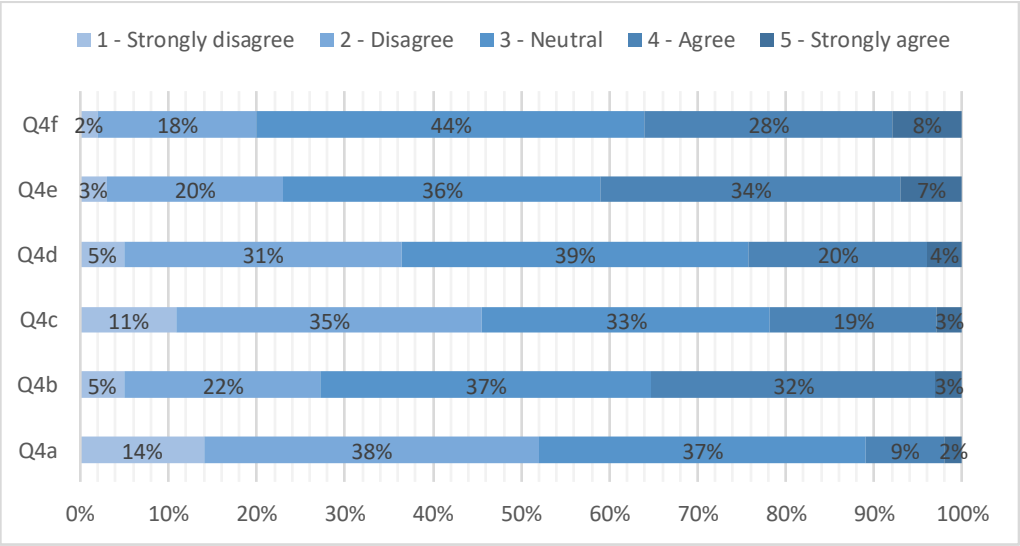
6.4 Attitudes towards Green Marketing

In order to assess the respondents' attitudes towards green marketing, they were asked to express their agreement to the following statements:

Q4a: “I believe that companies are honest and sincere when promoting their environmental initiatives, products and services.”
Q4b: “I believe that eco-labels and certificates are a good source of information about a product’s sustainability or a company’s or social responsibility.”
Q4c: “Before purchasing a product/service, I invest time and energy into looking up whether the company’s claims on the product’s/service’s environmental impact are true.”
Q4d: “Environmental claims do not influence my purchase intention.”
Q4e: “Promoting sustainable characteristics of a company and their products makes me suspicious.”
Q4f: “Most environmental claims made by companies are misleading.”

The respondents were less opinionated with regard to green marketing, although there has been some skepticism expressed with regard to green marketing and green claims. Most respondents (42 %) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that the companies are honest and sincere with their green initiatives (Q4a; mean = 2.46). There was no consensus on whether eco-labels and certificates are a credible source of information on the greenness of the product or the CSR efforts (Q4b; mean = 3.06). Many respondents (41 %) reported having suspicions with regards to the promotion of a company’s or product’s sustainable characteristics (Q4e = 3.22). 44 % of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement that said that most environmental claims are misleading (Q4f; mean = 3.23). However, there was a neutral agreement towards the effect of the green claims on the purchasing intention (Q4d = 2.88), and most respondents reported not putting time and effort to look up the sincerity of the claims (Q4c = 2.67). The results are presented in Figure 4 and Appendix 2.

Figure 4: Attitudes towards green marketing

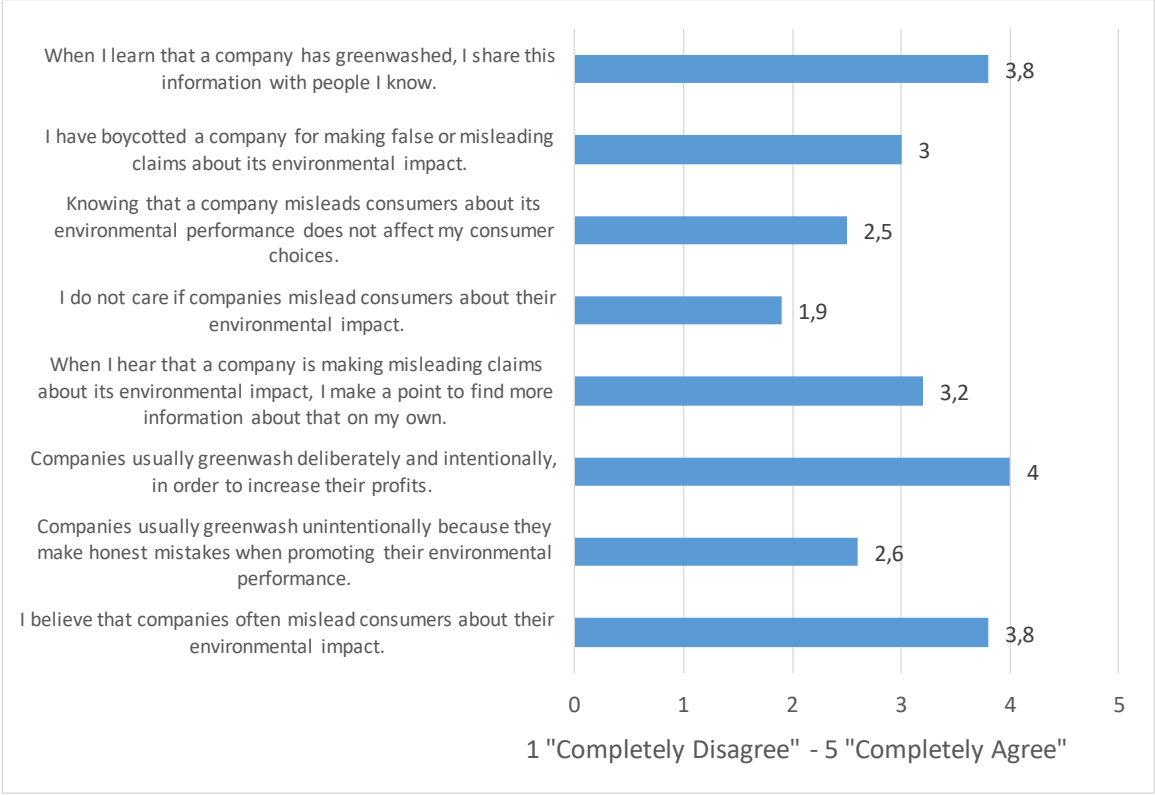


Source: own work, N = 361

6.5 Perception of Greenwashing

In terms of the attitudes towards greenwashing, the majority (68 %) either agreed or strongly agreed that companies often mislead consumers (Q5a; mean = 3.75). The majority (77 %) also agreed to the statement that most of the misleading is done on purpose to increase profit (Q5c; mean = 3.96; Q5b; mean = 2.61). Only 10 % of the respondents said that they did not care whether companies mislead them (Q5e; mean = 1.92). Finding more information about credibility of the companies' green claims was reported relatively frequently (Q5d; mean = 3.21). 17 % of respondents agreed with the statement that greenwashing does not affects their purchasing decisions (Q5f; mean = 2.46). Boycotting behavior due to greenwashing was reported relatively frequently (Q5g; mean = 2.96), but there was a higher frequency of reported WOM behavior (Q5h; mean = 3.84). The responses are presented in Figure 5 and Appendix 2.

Figure 5: Perception of and attitudes towards greenwashing

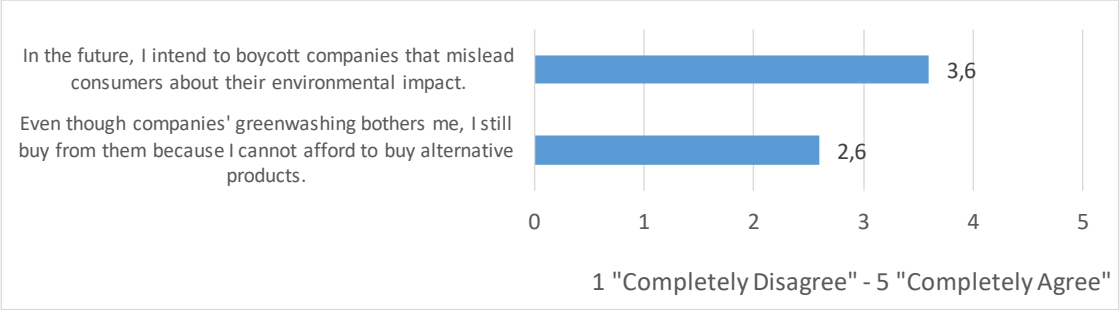


Source: own work, N = 360

The respondents who indicated that they care if companies mislead consumers about their environmental impact (Q5e) were asked to express their agreement to the follow-up statements about them still buying from greenwashing companies because they are unable to afford alternative products (Q6a), and about whether they plan to boycott greenwashers in the future (Q6b). As presented Appendix 2 and Figure 6, 19 % of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed to the first (Q6a) statement, and 48 % (strongly) disagreed. The rest of

the respondents (33 %) were neutral (mean = 2.6). The majority (58 %) of respondents said that they plan to boycott greenwashing companies in the future (mean = 3.6).

Figure 6: Boycotting intentions by people who care if companies greenwash



Source: own work, N = 289

6.6 Demographic and Socio-Economic Differences

In this chapter, variations in environmental attitudes and behavior across different demographic and socio-economic groups are examined. As part of the statistical analysis, several variables, which have also been identified in the literature review as factors influencing pro-environmental attitudes and behavior, were compared between these groups.

6.6.1 Gender

As shown in Table 2, there was a notable distinction in mean ranks between male and female respondents when comparing their expressed environmental concern, consumer efficacy, and their attitudes towards green products. Environmental concern was measured with the statement "Global warming and climate change make me concerned for the current and future state of the environment." The application of the Mann-Whitney U (p-value = 0.018; two-tailed) test showed that the female group of respondents expressed more environmental concern as it exhibited a higher mean rank (mean rank = 189.37) compared to the male group (mean rank = 163.77). This indicated a higher tendency among female participants to express concern about global warming and climate change.

Moreover, differences in the level of perceived consumer efficacy between the two groups were observed. This variable was composed from 2 variables, measured with the statements: "My actions or lack thereof have no particular impact on the natural environment" and "As an individual, I cannot help slow down environmental deterioration" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.599, Appendix 3). Because the statements were negative, the interpretation of ranks must be reversed. As presented in Table 2, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences between genders (p-value = 0.000; two-tailed). Male consumers exhibited a mean rank of 207.61, while female respondents had a lower mean rank of 167.28, indicating that male participants, on average, showcased lower consumer efficacy compared to their female counterparts.

Emotions connected to the green purchases were assessed by two variables ("When I buy an environmentally friendly product, I feel good" and "If I am choosing between two products, and I buy the product that is less environmentally friendly, I feel guilty"), which were combined into one single composite variable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.702, Appendix 3). Mann-Whitney U test revealed statistically significant differences between genders (p-value = 0.001; two-tailed). Female respondents exhibited a higher mean rank 192,96, compared to the male respondents who had lower mean rank of 156,36 (see Table 2). This suggests that, on average, female respondents expressed stronger emotional associations with green or non-green purchases.

Table 3: Mann-Whitney U test for gender differences in expressed environmental concern, consumer efficacy and emotions

Gender		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**	**Mann-Whitney U**	**Wil-coxon W**	**Z**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)**
Environmental concern	Men	118	163,77	19324,50	12303,50	19324,50	-2,365	0,018
	Women	243	189,37	46016,50				
	Total	361						
Consumer efficacy	Men	118	207,61	24498,00	11079,00	40482,00	-3,501	0,000
	Women	242	167,28	40482,00				
	Total	360						
Emotions	Men	118	156,36	18451,00	11430,00	18451,00	-3,188	0,001
	Women	243	192,96	46890,00				
	Total	361						

Source: own work

As presented in Table 3, the Mann-Whitney U test revealed the attitudes towards green products (variable computed from 7 other variables; Cronbach's alpha = 0.83, Appendix 3) differ significantly between the male and female respondents (p-value = 0.001; two-tailed). On average, female respondents (mean rank = 192.87) expressed more favorable attitudes towards green products than male respondents (mean rank = 155.13).

In order to explore attitudes towards green efforts, three variables measured with the statements: "I believe that companies should take more responsibility in the fight against climate crisis and invest in sustainable development", "I have a positive attitude towards corporate environmental initiatives/projects" and "I have a negative attitude towards companies who do not care about their environmental impact" were combined into one single variable (Cronbach's alpha = 0.649, Appendix 3). The Mann-Whitney U test showed statistically significant differences in attitudes towards green efforts between male and female respondents (p-value = 0.029; two-tailed). On average, female respondents (mean rank = 188.70) expressed more positive attitudes towards green efforts compared to male respondents (mean rank = 163.67), suggesting that women tend to support or have a more favorable attitude toward environmental endeavours or corporate efforts aimed at sustainability. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U test for gender differences in attitudes towards green products and green corporate efforts

Gender		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wil-coxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitudes towards green products	Men	118	155,13	18305,50	11284,50	18305,50	-3,239	0,001
	Women	242	192,87	46674,50				
	Total	360						
Attitudes towards green efforts	Men	118	163,67	19313,50	12292,50	19313,50	-2,181	0,029
	Women	242	188,70	45666,50				
	Total	360						

Source: own work

A single variable measuring skepticism was computed from 4 other variables: reversed statements of "I believe that companies are honest and sincere when promoting their environmental initiatives, products and services" and "I believe that eco-labels and certificates are a good source of information about a product's sustainability or a company's or social responsibility," as well as "Promotion of sustainable characteristics of a company and their products makes me suspicious" and "Most environmental claims made by companies are misleading" (Cronbach's alpha = 0.643, Appendix 3). There was a significant difference in the expressed "skepticism" between the genders. The Mann-Whitney test (p-value = 0.000; two-tailed) confirmed that on average, men are more skeptical of green marketing messages (mean rank = 210.94) than women (mean rank = 165.23). The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 5: Mann-Whitney U test for gender differences in skepticism towards environmental claims

Gender		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Skepticism	Men	116	210,94	24468,50	10505,50	40151,50	-3,932	0,000
	Women	243	165,23	40151,50				
	Total	359						

Source: own work

Similarly, Table 5 shows that the Mann-Whitney U test (p-value = 0.002; two-tailed) affirmed the presence of a gender-driven disparity in consumer perception of the frequency of greenwashing. Men were found to harbor a stronger belief in the frequency of greenwashing (mean rank = 201.86), compared to the group of female respondents (mean rank = 169.30).

In terms of the intent behind greenwashing, two statements investigated the respondents' viewpoints: "Companies usually greenwash unintentionally because they make honest mistakes when promoting their environmental performance" and "Companies usually greenwash deliberately and intentionally, in order to increase their profits." In response to the first statement, male respondents exhibited a mean rank of 177.08, while female respondents had a slightly higher mean rank of 182.91. This suggests that, on average, female participants more likely perceived companies to engage in greenwashing practices due to honest mistakes, compared to their male counterparts. However, the gender-based differences in perception of unintentional greenwashing were not statistically significant (p-value = 0.606; two-tailed), suggesting that any observed variations could be due to chance rather than gender-related factors. In response to the second statement, significant results were obtained (p-value = 0.000; two-tailed). Male respondents demonstrated a mean rank of 209.04, while female respondents had a lower mean rank of 167.38, implying that, on average, men expressed a stronger belief in the occurrence of deliberate greenwashing compared to women.

Table 6: Mann-Whitney U test for gender differences in greenwashing perceptions

Gender		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Sum of Ranks**	**Mann-Whitney U**	**Wil-coxon W**	**Z**	**Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)**
I believe that companies often mislead consumers about their environ-mental impact.	Men	118	201,86	23819,00	11640	40801	-3,029	0,002
	Women	241	169,30	40801,00				
	Total	359						
Companies usually greenwash unintentionally because they make honest mistakes when promoting their environmental performance.	Men	118	177,08	20895,00	13874	20895	-0,515	0,606
	Women	243	182,91	44446,00				
	Total	361						
Companies usu-ally greenwash deliberately and intentionally in order to increase their profits.	Men	118	209,04	24667,00	11028	40674	-3,916	0,000
	Women	243	167,38	40674,00				
	Total	361						

Source: own work

6.6.2 Age Group

I decided to group the respondents into 3 broader categories, combining the first two groups into one ("18 to 35-year-olds") and the next two groups into another one ("36 to 60-year-olds). The third group included those 60 years and older. While no significant differences were found in the environmental concern across different age groups (p-value = 0.546), an analysis of consumer efficacy across different age groups through the Kruskal-Wallis test showed statistically significant differences (p-value = 0.003), indicating that age affects consumer efficacy. Those 60 years and older expressed significantly lower consumer efficacy (mean ran =: 247.71) compared to the other two groups (mean ranks = 178.72; 168.73, respectively), suggesting that older individuals perceive to have less power over the overall outcome. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6.

In terms of emotions, the Kruskal-Wallis test yielded no significant differences in emotions across different age groups, so according to this analysis we can conclude that age does not have a significant impact on the emotional reactions to green purchases (p-value = 0.637) (see Table 6).

Table 7: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in environmental concern, consumer efficacy and emotional reactions to green purchases across age groups

Age groups		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	**df**	**Asymp. Sig.**
Environmental concern	1	132	182,80	0,546	2	0,761
	2	200	178,29			
	3	29	191,48			
	Total	361				
Consumer efficacy	1	132	169,73	11,832	2	0,003
	2	199	178,72			
	3	29	241,71			
	Total	360				
Emotions	1	132	173,18	2,545	2	0,280
	2	200	182,54			
	3	29	205,98			
	Total	361				
1 = 18 to 35-year-olds; 2 = 36 to 60-year-olds; 3 = 60 years and older						

Source: own work

Similarly, as shown in Table 7, no significant differences were found in terms of attitudes towards green products (p-value = 0.115) and green efforts (p-value = 0.857), as well as expressed skepticism towards environmental claims across different age groups (p-value = 0.886).

Table 8: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in green attitudes and skepticism across age groups

Age groups		N	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
Attitudes towards green products	1	131	168,09	4,333	2	0,115
	2	200	184,52			
	3	29	208,83			
	Total	360				
Attitudes towards green efforts	1	132	176,72	0,307	2	0,858
	2	200	183,07			
	3	28	179,98			
	Total	360				
Skepticism	1	132	180,55	0,242	2	0,886
	2	199	178,44			
	3	28	188,54			
	Total	359				
1 = 18 to 35-year-olds; 2 = 36 to 60-year-olds; 3 = 60 years and older						

Source: own work

However, in terms of the perceived frequency of greenwashing, Kruskal-Wallis test revealed statistically significant differences across the three age groups (p-value = 0.028) (see Table 8).

Table 9: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in perceptions of the intentions behind greenwashing across age groups

Age groups		N	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
I believe that companies often mislead consumers about their environmental impact.	1	132	193,79	7,159	2	0,028
	2	199	167,98			
	3	28	200,43			
	Total	359				
Companies usually greenwash unintentionally because they make honest mistakes when promoting their environmental performance.	1	132	155,31	13,603	2	0,001
	2	200	195,06			
	3	29	201,00			
	Total	361				
Companies usually greenwash deliberately and intentionally in order to increase their profits.	1	132	188,24	5,164	2	0,076
	2	200	172,09			
	3	29	209,53			
	Total	361				
1 = 18 to 35-year-olds; 2 = 36 to 60-year-olds; 3 = 60 years and older						

Source: own work

The 36-60 age group in particular expressed the weakest agreement to the statement that companies frequently mislead consumers (mean rank = 167.98). The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed statistically significant differences in the perceptions of the intentions behind

greenwashing. On average, the youngest group agreed the least with the statement that companies usually greenwash unintentionally (mean rank = 155.31; p-value = 0.001). The second group (36-30 age range) agreed with the statement that companies usually greenwash intentionally the least (mean rank = 172.09; p-value = 0.076) (see Table 8).

As it can be observed in Table 9, the Kruskal-Wallis test found statistically significant differences in the consumers' reactions to greenwashing practices. Statistically significant differences were found in the reports of knowingly buying from greenwashers. (p-value = 0.008). On average, the youngest group agreed the most with the statement "Knowing that a company misleads consumers about its environmental performance does not affect my consumer choices" (mean rank =199.88) compared to the other two groups. The 36 to 60-year-olds (mean rank = 165.67) agreed with it the least. Similarly, statistically significant differences were found in the agreement to the statement in relation to buying from companies that are known greenwashers due to the unaffordability of green alternatives (p-value = 0.034). The youngest group (18 to 35-year-olds) on average agreed with the statement the most (mean rank =160.01). The 36 to 60-year-olds agreed with it the least.

Table 10: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in consumers' reactions to greenwashing across age groups

Age groups		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	**df**	**Asymp. Sig.**
Knowing that a company misleads consumers about its environmental performance does not affect my consumer choices.	1	132	199,88	9,629	2	0,008
	2	199	165,67			
	3	28	188,11			
	Total	359				
Even though companies' greenwashing bothers me, I still buy from them because I cannot afford to buy alternative products.	1	110	160,01	6,774	2	0,034
	2	156	134,37			
	3	22	138,77			
	Total	288				
I have boycotted a company for making false or misleading claims about its environmental impact.	1	132	142,08	32,110	2	0,000
	2	200	206,75			
	3	29	180,59			
	Total	361				
When I learn that a company has greenwashed, I share this information with the people I know.	1	132	173,65	1,150	2	0,563
	2	199	183,96			
	3	29	187,90			
	Total	360				
1 = 18 to 35-year-olds; 2 = 36 to 60-year-olds; 3 = 60 years and older						

Source: own work

As presented in Table 9, the Kruskal-Wallis test also showed statistically significant differences across the age groups in their reporting of boycotting companies due to greenwashing (p-value = 0.000). On average, the youngest group agreed with the statement "I have boycotted a company for making false or misleading claims about its environmental

impact" the least (mean rank = 142.08), while the second group (36 to 60-year-olds) on average expressed the highest level of agreement with the statement (mean rank = 206.75), which is aligned with the respondents' answers to whether greenwashing practices affect their consumer choices. However, no significant differences were found in responses to the statement "When I learn that a company has greenwashed, I share this information with people I know" across the different age groups (p-value = 0.563), suggesting that age does not have a significant effect on the word-of-mouth.

4.6.3 Education Level

When comparing the overall environmental concern across different groups of respondents based on their education level, the Kruskal-Wallis detected no significant variation of responses with regards to their environmental concern across the samples (p-value = 0.295) (see Table 10), implying that individuals with different levels of education share similar level of concern related to global warming and climate crisis.

Table 11: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in environmental concern, consumer efficacy and emotions across different completed levels of education

Completed level of education		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	**df**	**Asymp. Sig.**
Environmental concern	1	23	214,76	4,930	4	0,295
	2	105	169,81			
	3	119	179,16			
	4	98	188,41			
	5	16	174,19			
	Total	361				
Consumer efficacy	1	23	265,15	41,733	4	0,000
	2	105	210,46			
	3	119	167,86			
	4	97	140,43			
	5	16	199,16			
	Total	360				
Emotions	1	23	235,04	8,173	4	0,085
	2	105	174,59			
	3	119	172,73			
	4	98	187,16			
	5	16	169,19			
	Total	361				
1 = Completed basic, short-term vocational upper secondary (2- or 3-year programs), 2 = Completed general or technical upper secondary (4-year programs) , 3 = 1st cycle of higher education, 4 = 2nd cycle of higher education, 5 = 3rd cycle of higher education						

Source: own work

However, as it can be observed in Table 10, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed the existence of significant differences in the perceived consumer efficacy across different completed education levels, indicating that the perceived consumer efficacy varies significantly

between certain education level groups (p-value = 0.000). There were statistically significant differences between the responses by individuals who had completed the second cycle of education and those with only completed basic or short-term vocational upper secondary school (p-value = 0.000), as well as between the second cycle of education and those who had completed general or technical upper secondary school (p-value = 0.000).

Similarly, statistically significant differences appeared between those with completed first cycle of higher education and those with completed basic or short-term vocational upper secondary school (p-value = 0.000) and those who had completed general or technical upper secondary school (p-value = 0.019). No significant differences were discovered when comparing people with completed third cycle, which is why we cannot conclude that there is a positive relationship between the level of completed education and consumer efficacy (see Table 10).

Emotional reactions related to buying green products seem to be similar across different educational levels as no significant differences were found after conducting the Kruskal-Wallis test (p-value = 0.085) (see Table 10).

Table 12: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in attitudes towards green products and green efforts across different completed levels of education

Completed level of education		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	**df**	**Asymp. Sig.**
Attitudes towards green products	1	23	211,43	5,305	4	0,257
	2	105	168,30			
	3	118	174,88			
	4	98	193,18			
	5	16	179,88			
	Total	360				
Attitudes towards green efforts	1	23	187,70	16,420	4	0,003
	2	104	170,03			
	3	119	169,23			
	4	98	212,27			
	5	16	127,47			
	Total	360				
1 = Completed basic, short-term vocational upper secondary (2- or 3-year programs), 2 = Completed general or technical upper secondary (4-year programs) , 3 = 1st cycle of higher education, 4 = 2nd cycle of higher education, 5 = 3rd cycle of higher education						

Source: own work

Similarly, the Kruskal-Wallis revealed no significant differences in the attitudes towards green products across groups with different education levels (p-value = 0.257). However, significant differences were found in the attitudes of the respondents towards green efforts (p-value = 0.003). The group of respondents who had completed third cycle expressed the most positive attitudes towards green corporate efforts (mean rank = 212.27). The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 13: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences expressed skepticism towards environmental claims across different completed levels of education

Completed level of education		N	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
Skepticism	1	22	164,93	7,498	4	0,112
	2	105	193,73			
	3	118	175,42			
	4	98	166,59			
	5	16	226,53			
	Total	359				
1 = Completed basic, short-term vocational upper secondary (2- or 3-year programs), 2 = Completed general or technical upper secondary (4-year programs) , 3 = 1st cycle of higher education, 4 = 2nd cycle of higher education, 5 = 3rd cycle of higher education						

Source: own work

As shown in Table 12, the Kruskal-Wallis test showed no statistically significant differences in the respondents' expressed skepticism towards environmental claims across groups divided by different levels of education (p-value = 0.112). No statistically significant differences were found in the degree of the expressed belief that companies often mislead consumers about their environmental impact (p-value = 0.360).

Table 14: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in perceptions of greenwashing across different completed levels of education

Completed level of education		N	Mean Rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	df	Asymp. Sig.
I believe that companies often mislead consumers about their environmental impact.	1	23	208,24	4,358	4	0,360
	2	103	187,97			
	3	119	170,54			
	4	98	174,80			
	5	16	190,31			
	Total	359				
Companies usually greenwash unintentionally because they make honest mistakes when promoting their environmental performance.	1	23	246,54	27,429	4	0,000
	2	105	203,77			
	3	119	177,35			
	4	98	155,80			
	5	16	118,88			
	Total	361				
Companies usually greenwash deliberately and intentionally in order to increase their profits.	1	23	198,28	1,045	4	0,903
	2	105	180,69			
	3	119	176,84			
	4	98	181,48			
	5	16	186,19			
	Total	361				
1 = Completed basic, short-term vocational upper secondary (2- or 3-year programs), 2 = Completed general or technical upper secondary (4-year programs) , 3 = 1st cycle of higher education, 4 = 2nd cycle of higher education, 5 = 3rd cycle of higher education						

Source: own work

Comparing the greenwashing perceptions across various levels of completed education, the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference in the belief that companies usually greenwash unintentionally education (p-value = 0.000), while it showed no statistically significant difference in the belief that companies usually greenwash deliberately and intentionally to increase profits (p-value = 0.903). Individuals with the lowest levels of education (primary school or vocational and technical upper secondary school) expressed the strongest belief in unintentional greenwashing (mean rank = 246.54). Those with 2nd cycle of higher education expressed the weakest belief (mean rank = 155.80). The results of the analysis are shown in Table 13.

Table 15: Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in behavioral reactions to greenwashing across different completed levels of education

Completed level of education		**N**	**Mean Rank**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	**df**	**Asymp. Sig.**
I do not care if companies mislead consumers about their environmental impact.	1	22	254,73	16,582	4	0,002
	2	105	181,31			
	3	119	174,79			
	4	98	165,81			
	5	16	205,53			
	Total	360				
Knowing that a company misleads consumers about its environmental performance does not affect my consumer choices.	1	22	234,82	10,458	4	0,033
	2	105	189,35			
	3	119	174,83			
	4	98	164,18			
	5	15	178,50			
	Total	359				
I have boycotted a company for making false or misleading claims about its environmental impact.	1	23	219,33	7,832	4	0,098
	2	105	164,07			
	3	119	178,98			
	4	98	193,75			
	5	16	173,97			
	Total	361				
When I learn that a company has greenwashed, I share this information with the people I know.	1	22	214,57	5,270	4	0,261
	2	105	178,61			
	3	119	176,21			
	4	98	185,29			
	5	16	148,63			
	Total	360				
1 = Completed basic, short-term vocational upper secondary (2- or 3-year programs), 2 = Completed general or technical upper secondary (4-year programs) , 3 = 1st cycle of higher education, 4 = 2nd cycle of higher education, 5 = 3rd cycle of higher education						

Source: own work

As presented in Table 14, the Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there was statistically significant difference in the level of indifference to companies' greenwashing practices across groups divided by levels of completed education (p-value = 0.002). On average,

individuals with completed primary school or vocational and technical upper secondary education expressed the highest level of indifference to companies' greenwashing pratices (mean rank = 254.73). The test also indicated a statistically significant difference in the impact of knowing about greenwashing practices on the respondents' consumer choices based on their level of completed education (p-value = 0.033). On average, individuals with completed primary school or vocational and technical upper secondary education reported the lowest impact of companies' greenwashing practices on their consumer choices (mean rank = 234.82).

Finally, no statistically significant differences were observed in the reporting of boycotting behavior (p-value = 0.098) and word-of-mouth (p-value = 0.261) across groups of individuals with different completed levels of education (see Table 14).

6.7 The Impact of Environmental Concern

In order to explore the relationship between pro-environmental attitudes and the environmental concern as an influencing factor, further tests were conducted. Because the data was not normally distributed (see Appendix 4), the Spearman's correlation was used, which revealed a statistically significant positive moderate relationship between environmental concern and positive attitudes towards green products (correlation coefficient = 0.478, p-value = 0.000) (see Table 15). Unsurprisingly, individuals who expressed greater concern about global warming and climate change issues were more likely to have positive attitudes towards green products. Environmental concern was found to be a factor in shaping the attitudes towards corporate green efforts. Spearman's correlation revealed a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between environmental concern and positive attitudes towards corporate green efforts (correlation coefficient = 0.542, p-value = 0.000) (see Table 15). These results suggest that individuals who express a higher level of environmental concern also express more positive attitudes toward green efforts.

Table 16: Correlation matrix measuring the correlations between environmental concern and positive green attitudes

Correlations		
		Environmental concern
Attitudes towards green products	Spearman's rho	0,478**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	361
Attitudes towards green efforts	Spearman's rho	0,542**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	361
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Source: own work

Table 17: Correlation matrix measuring the correlations between environmental concern and behavioral reactions to greenwashing

Correlations		
		Environmental concern
Boycotting behavior due to greenwashing	Spearman's rho	0,226**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	362
Word-of-mouth	Spearman's rho	0,295**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	361
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Source: own work

As shown in Table 16, the Spearman's correlation test also revealed statistically significant positive correlations between environmental concern and the frequency of the reported boycotting behavior (correlation coefficient = 0.226, p-value = 0.000), as well as between environmental concern and the reported WOM (correlation coefficient = 0.295, p-value = 0.000), suggesting that individuals who are more concerned about the environment are to some degree more likely to boycott companies who greenwash or generate WOM. However, even though there is an association between the variables, the strength of relationship was not strong, suggesting that there are other factors that contribute to boycotting behavior and WOM.

Table 18: Correlation matrix measuring the correlations between environmental concern and self-acquired knowledge

Correlations		
		Environmental concern
Self-acquired knowledge about a product/service	Spearman's rho	0,263**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	362
Self-acquired knowledge about greenwashing practices	Spearman's rho	0,270**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,000
	N	361
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).		

Source: own work

As presented in Table 17, the Spearman's correlation test also revealed a weak positive correlation (correlation coefficient = 0.270, p-value = 0.000) between an individual's environmental concern and their self-initiated efforts to acquire about a firm's potential greenwashing practices (measured with the statements "Before purchasing a product/service, I invest time and energy into looking up whether the company's claims on the

product's/service's environmental impact are true" and "When I hear that a company is making misleading claims about its environmental impact, I make a point to find more information about that on my own").

7 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS AND BUSINESS IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Discussion of the Research Findings

Table 19: Summary of key findings

Category	**Slovenian consumers:**
Environmental concern	are generally highly concerned about the environment.
Purchasing behavior	are willing to pay a premium for green products but are less likely to compromise on performance or convenience.
Attitudes	have positive attitudes towards green products and green corporate efforts.
Skepticism	are skeptical of the motives behind green marketing.
Perception of greenwashing	generally believe that greenwashing is frequent and deliberate.
Boycotting	are relatively inclined to boycott.
Word-of-mouth	are likely to share information about greenwashing practices with others.
Category	**Socio-demographic differences**
Gender differences	Significant differences were found in almost all tested variables, except reactions to greenwashing (boycotting and word-of-mouth).
	Women expressed higher environmental concern and consumer efficacy.
	Women displayed more positive attitudes towards green products and corporate initiatives.
	Women reported emotional reactions to their purchasing decisions more frequently.
	Men exhibited greater skepticism towards environmental claims and green marketing.
Age differences	No significant differences were observed in environmental concern, attitudes towards green products, green corporate efforts, or skepticism.
	Significant differences were found in the expressed consumer efficacy, perceptions of greenwashing, and the reported boycotting behavior.
Education differences	No significant differences were found in environmental concern, attitudes towards green products, skepticism, or reactions to greenwashing.
	Significant differences emerged in the expressed consumer efficacy, attitudes towards green efforts and the perceptions of greenwashing.
Category	**Correlations between environmental concern**
and positive green attitudes	Positive moderate correlation between environmental concern and positive attitudes towards green products.
	Positive moderate correlation between environmental concern and positive attitudes towards green corporate efforts.
and behavioral reactions to greenwashing	Positive weak correlation between environmental concern and boycotting.
	Positive weak correlation between environmental concern and WOM.
and self-acquired knowledge	Positive weak correlation between environmental concern and and self-acquired knowledge about a product/service.
	Positive weak correlation between environmental concern and and self-acquired knowledge about greenwashing practices of a firm.

Source: own work

In this chapter, the results of the empirical research analysis of Slovenian consumers' attitudes towards green marketing are discussed and presented in a manner to answer the research questions of the thesis. They are reviewed and compared with findings from previous studies regarding pro-environmental attitudes and behavior in Slovenia and findings connected to green marketing in the global context.

The main objective of the thesis was to observe and better understand the pro-environmental attitudes of Slovenian consumers in terms of green marketing and greenwashing. Understanding how different groups of consumers' attitudes differ can help companies tailor their communication strategies and better address different consumer segments, therefore effectively conveying their green initiatives. Moreover, companies, governmental bodies and other institutions, whose goal is to promote pro-environmental behavior and shape consumers' habits towards sustainability can better encourage individual green actions and ultimately foster a more environmentally conscious society.

Results of the analysis revealed high environmental concern among Slovenian consumers and relatively high interest in being informed about environmental issues, which is in accordance with the outcomes of the study conducted by Virant (2019) and Perhavec (2020), revealing that Slovenian consumers are highly environmentally concerned. The respondents also showcased positive attitudes towards green products and corporate green efforts. However, they expressed relatively high skepticism towards environmental claims and negative perception of greenwashing, expressed by the belief that it mostly occurs frequently and deliberately.

Environmental concern was found to be positively correlated with favorable attitudes towards green products and green efforts. This is in accordance with the results of Virant's (2019) and Perhavec's (2020) studies, who found positive correlations between environmental concern and green packaging as well as green cosmetics. Similarly, the study conducted by Bulut et al. (2021), who studied post-millenials' green purchasing behavior, found that the environmental concern affects their purchasing perception. Bulut et al. (2021) also found that environmental concern influences the consumers' awareness of perceiving greenwashing. In accordance with this result, my analysis showed weak positive correlations between environmental concern and WOM, as well as environmental concern and the willingness to boycott companies due to greenwashing. Weak positive correlation was also found between the environmental concern and the self-initiated efforts to acquire knowledge about a product's or service's environmental performance and a firm's greenwashing practices. This suggests that although people express concern about the environment, it does not on its own affect the behavior – either boycott, WOM or investigation of a firm's potential greenwashing practices. This is in accordance with the findings which observed a gap between attitudes and behaviors (Solaiman et al., 2015).

Although the analysis detected high skepticism and high perception of frequent and intentional greenwashing among the respondents, the reporting of boycotting behavior by

the respondents was much less frequent. This is aligned with the study of false, irrelevant and vague labelled claims by Urbanski and Haque (2020) which found that consumers' purchase intent was not affected by greenwashing. On the contrary, the results of their study revealed that greenwashing might even lead to better exposure of the product, so the consumers are more likely to buy it. Moreover, even though some consumers reported skepticism, as well as awareness of falsity or irrelevance of claims, the majority of them still reported consuming greenwashed goods, indicating that lack of awareness is not the reason for purchasing such goods (Urbanski and Haque, 2020). However, most of the respondents reported sharing information about greenwashing practices with the people they know. This is in accordance with the findings by Bulut et al. (2021), who found that when an individual showcases environmental concern and perceives greenwashing elements of a product, they will not recommend the product, which shows that greenwashing will lead to negative word-of-mouth.

Significant differences were found when comparing the survey answers between genders. Female respondents expressed significantly higher environmental concern as well as a higher level of consumer efficacy than male respondents, which is similar to the outcomes of the study by Hojnik et al. (2019) and the studies in global settings by Brough et al. (2016) and Zelezny et al. (2000) who found lower environmental responsibility among men. Female respondents also expressed more positive attitudes towards green products and green corporate efforts. This is aligned with the study by Hojnik et al. (2020) who observed greater green purchase intention and higher environmental commitment among women. The study by Virant (2020) discovered that women in Slovenia possess more favorable attitudes towards green packaging than men, and Perhavec (2020) discovered that women have more favorable attitudes towards green cosmetics compared to men. On average, men also expressed higher levels of skepticism towards corporate environmental claims. With regards to greenwashing, no significant differences were found in the perception of intentional and deliberate greenwashing. However, female respondents agreed to the statement that greenwashing practices were done unintentionally and by honest mistakes more frequently compared to men.

The role of affect and specific emotions has lately been included in the investigation of environmental attitudes and sustainable behavior, as emotions are connected to cognitive and motivational processes, affecting human responses towards climate change (Brosch, 2021). Significant gender disparities were found with regards to emotional reactions to green consumer purchasing decisions. Slovenian women, on average, reported having an emotional reaction after making green purchasing decisions more frequently compared to men, which is in line with the study by Brough et al., (2016), who found that men tend to feel less guilty about their non-green behavior. Du Bray et al. (2018), who studied emotional responses to climate change, state that men are more likely to suppress emotions due to social norms or trauma. This could be due to the association of green behavior with femininity, which might discourage men to engage in green behaviors. Moreover, emotional reactions

to environmental issues are connected to vulnerability, which is influenced by exposure, sensitivity and adaptive capacity. In terms of climate change, some groups of people will face greater consequences than the others, and du Bray et al. (2018), who studied and compared emotional reactions of men and women towards climate change in 4 different sites (New Zealand, Cyprus, Fiji and England) found that both women and men experienced emotional reactions to climate change. The differences appeared in the type of emotions experienced: more women reported feeling sadness than men, and more men reported experiencing anger than women. Once again, this could be the consequence of societal expectations about which emotions are more permissible in certain situations for men or women.

Examining age as the influencing factor on environmental attitudes and reported pro-environmental behavior revealed no significant differences in environmental concern across different age groups, nor any statistically significant differences in the attitudes towards green efforts or green products. This is aligned with the study of pro-environmental movements in Switzerland (Lorenzini et al., 2021) and the study of the membership in environmental organizations (Kafková, 2019). Lorenzini et al. (2021) found relatively small differences in environmental concern across generations, which was higher in younger individuals. However, they argue that the broader political scene shapes political attitudes and behaviors regardless of an individual's age, which means that all generations evolve in parallel and are influenced by general social issues. Therefore, all citizens, regardless of their age, adopt environmental attitudes in times of intense environmental mobilization. Lorenzini et al. (2021) argue that environmental ideas of strong environmental movements have the ability to contribute to broader social change and influence the creation of both political and environmental organizations which stir public opinion. This means that the whole society experiences a change in environmental values (Kafková, 2019; Lorenzini, 2021) and explains why each generation has been greener than the previous (Lorenzini et al., 2021; Ottman, 2011). This might also be the reason why no significant differences in environmental concern and attitudes towards green efforts or green products were found across different age groups. Environmental concern and pro-environmental attitudes have transcended generational boundaries, which might point to a period effect rather than a cohort effect. Similarly, skepticism towards environmental claims were not found to be correlated with age.

The research analysis showed significant differences in the expressed consumer efficacy across age groups. The results revealed that older individuals, specifically those over 60 years of age, expressed lower consumer efficacy compared to the younger generations, meaning that they perceive their actions to not have a significant impact on the outcome of climate change. These results diverge with the findings of a global study on people's attitudes towards climate change, conducted by Ipsos (2021), which revealed high levels of pessimism among the youngest cohort (under 35 years old), as 20 % of the respondents expressed the belief that it is too late to fix climate change. This potentially indicates low

individual and collective efficacy, which can then affect young people's inclination to act pro-environmentally. Such fatalism was not present in other cohorts (Ipsos, 2021). The results that reveal lower consumer efficacy in older generations could be due to the stage in life the older respondents are in, as they might feel they have less time to contribute to mitigating climate change effects compared to younger generations.

The distinctions across different age groups emerged also with regards to the frequency of greenwashing practices, namely the oldest age group expressed the strongest belief in the frequent occurrence of greenwashing. The oldest age group also expressed the highest agreement to the high frequency of unintentional greenwashing, while the youngest group (aged 18-35) agreed to that statement the least. Significant differences also appeared in the responses to the statements "Even though companies' greenwashing bothers me, I still buy from them because I cannot afford to buy alternative products" and "Knowing that a company misleads consumers about its environmental performance does not affect my consumer choices." The youngest age group expressed highest agreement to these two statements. Both statements could be linked to the financial constraints of this age group. It would make sense to explore this further, as especially the second statement could also be connected to the beliefs of this group, e.g., not considering greenwashing as a critical factor when making purchasing decisions. No significant differences were found across age groups with regards to the skepticism towards environmental claims as well as the reported WOM. The results are in contrast to the study by Urbanski and Haque (2020), who found the younger generations being more skeptical and having less trust in companies' environmental claims in comparison to older generations that are much more easily persuaded to believe greenwashing was in actuality sustainable. Significant differences were found in terms of boycotting, as the second age group (36-60 age range) reported having boycotted a firm due to its greenwashing most often. Again, this could be tied to the financial reasons, so it would make sense to conduct further research which would compare the reponses between different groups based on their income.

The role of education does not seem to be a determinant in affecting environmental concern. However, it is correlated with consumer efficacy, as respondents with higher education levels (with a bachelor's or master's degree) expressed higher consumer efficacy. This suggests that education might contribute to a sense of empowerment in making a difference by adapting our actions. When examining attitudes towards green efforts, significant differences in attitudes appeared across groups with different education levels, underscoring the need for tailored environmental communication aimed at individuals with different education levels. Skepticism and the belief that companies often mislead consumers about their environmental impact were found not to be correlated with the education level. Nonetheless, a slightly lower level of skepticism was detected among individuals with lower education levels, which matched with the belief in the unintentional greenwashing, as individuals with the lowest education levels expressed the strongest belief in the unintentional greenwashing. Significant differences were found when comparing the

indifference of the groups to companies' greenwashing practices even when knowing about them. Individuals with lower education levels showcased higher indifference and reported lower impact of greenwashing on their consumer choices. This again could be tied to financial reasons as well. The results contrast with the study outcomes by Hojnik et al. (2020), who found greater purchase intention in highest education level (MBA and PhD) and lowest education levels (elementary or high school), compared to those with the mid-level education (bachelor's degree).

7.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

According to the survey findings, Slovenian consumers were, on average, found to be environmentally conscious consumers. They exhibited high environmental concern and expressed highly favorable attitudes towards green products. The majority of them expressed the willingness to pay a premium price for more environmentally friendly products. Many, but much fewer of the respondents expressed the willingness to sacrifice performance or convenience for a green alternative. Slovenian consumers also expressed positive attitudes towards corporate green efforts, and most of them expressed negative attitudes towards companies who do not care about their environmental footprint. Interestingly, despite expecting companies to put in environmental efforts, the skepticism of the legitimacy of environmental claims and other green marketing activities was relatively high. This highlights the need for the companies to focus more on building transparent messages when promoting their environmental efforts from the start. Providing clear and straightforward information backed up by provable and self-evident sustainability KPIs, companies can build a transparent green image. Companies should also have strategies in place to communicate their shortcomings with regard to their environmental performance transparently and react fast and effectively if or when they experience a backlash. Namely, admitting mistakes is a better choice than covering them up. In this case, the most important aspect is to reinforce environmental literacy through honest and modest communication, persuading stakeholders to understand that environmental progress is a continuous process of improvement, while inviting their expertise to co-create solutions for the still-impending issues (Falchi et al., 2022).

In terms of the greenwashing perception, the majority of the respondents perceived greenwashing practices to be a frequent phenomenon. Most of the respondents believed that greenwashing practices are done deliberately and with the intention to increase profits, and the majority of them did not believe that greenwashing happens by mistake. There have been disparities in the reports of boycotting behavior – some people have reported having boycotted greenwashers, others have not boycotted in the past. However, the majority of the respondents reported talking about the greenwashers with the people they knew, which indicates the occurrence of negative WOM. This (both skepticism and expectations towards companies showcasing green behavior were high in these analysis) suggests that even though individuals expect companies to put in green efforts, this can still induce suspicions. In other words, even though consumers think that companies exhibit green behavior for selfish

reasons, they still expect them to make green choices. This paradox highlights the need for businesses to prioritize genuine, transparent, and verifiable green initiatives to build trust and meet consumer expectations. Slovenia is a small country, and companies can turn this into their advantage. By being transparent and fair, caring for the environment, prioritizing the well-being of its employees and investing into regional development, companies can achieve all three pillars of sustainability. Due to Slovenia's size, positive impacts and sustainable practices can be recognized and appreciated more quickly, thus strengthening the company's brand image and amplifying its reputation.

Disparities appeared also in answers to the questions concerning consumer efficacy as many respondents expressed doubt that their behavior has an impact on the environment. This highlights the need to educate and bring attention to the ways consumers can make an impact on the environment and help mitigate climate change. Therefore, green brands and institutions should focus on empowering Slovenian consumers by informing them about the impact of their consumer choices, especially by providing real graspable numbers, e.g. "by switching this product for a green alternative, you have saved an X amount of CO2 emissions." A step forward would be to highlight the personal responsibility of both the seller (company) and the buyer (consumer) by showcasing the environmental impact of purchasing a certain product or service, e.g.: "The production of this pair of pants produced an X amount of CO2 emissions and used an X amount of water." Campaigns that would raise awareness by providing actual numbers would also bring people together and raise not only consumer self-efficacy, but also collective consumer efficacy, as the consumers would have an overview of the impact they made as an individual, as well as a part of a larger community. An example this is Mastercard and Planica's campaign. They created a car-sharing platform and urged people to share a car to Planica for Ski Jumping World Cup Finals. Visitors who posted their rides on shareplanica.si were gifted a VIP parking spot and a voucher for food and drink. Collaborating with the Energy Efficiency Center of the Jožef Stefan Institute, Agency 101, who managed the communications, calculated that 12 tons of CO2 emissions were saved because of the shared rides (Agencija 101, n.d.). The campaign sparked action among people, all while strengthening the brand image of Mastercard, as well as the Planica Ski Jumping World Cup.

The majority of the respondents also expressed the desire to be informed about environmental issues and reported that they acquire information on environmental issues on their own. However, much fewer respondents said that they look up information about the validity of companies' environmental claims. Based on the survey, consumers seem to look up information about the truthfulness of environmental claims only after they hear about the greenwashing practices from other sources. This highlights the need for a mechanism that would clarify and validate the environmental claims without having to persuade consumers to do their own research on whether the claims are true or false.

Another aspect companies must consider when developing green marketing strategies is the significance of gender. Every variable tested, except the reactions to greenwashing, namely

boycotting and WOM, proved to differ significantly between genders. Women showcased more environmental concern, higher consumer efficacy, and generally more positive attitudes towards green products and green corporate initiatives, while men expressed stronger skepticism towards environmental claims and a more negative perception of the occurrence of greenwashing. Companies should take this into account when developing their marketing strategies. In some instances, companies that mainly target men should consider focusing on the performance or quality of their products or service, rather than promoting green attributes. In order to convince men to buy a green alternative or act more pro-environmentally, companies should affirm their masculinity or change the associations people have towards green products (Ians, 2016). In the long run, the government, companies and educational institutions could help redefine environmentalism by connecting it with the norms and characteristics that are considered more masculine or gender-neutral in society – for example, with progressiveness, protectiveness, innovativeness, ability to solve problems, etc. They could also collaborate with famous male environmentalists, who are considered masculine by the society.

7.3 Limitations and Recommendations for Further Research

While the study dives deep into Slovenian consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards green marketing and addresses influencing factors which shape them, certain limitations still remain and should be taken into consideration. First, the study relied on convenience sampling and was done on the internet, reaching only individuals with internet access. This potentially leads to an underrepresentation of certain perspectives by excluding individuals who are less inclined or unable to participate by solving an online survey. Although the sample was sizable, it was still not fully representable of the population of Slovenian consumers. Most of respondents (67%) were women. In comparison with the entire population, age groups were also distributed unevenly, with a notable deficit of respondents over 60 years of age (8%) and a much higher concentration (56%) in the 36-60 age range. Similarly, the division by the education level was not comparable to the actual situation in Slovenia, where 22% of people have basic education or lower, while this study includes everyone above 15 years of age (Razpotnik, 2022). The deficit of participants with basic education or just general high school education (6 % of the respondents, meaning only 24 individuals) as well as those with completed 3rd cycle of higher education (4% of respondents, meaning only 12 individuals) could have skewed the results. Lastly, the participants were predominantly employed individuals (75%), introducing another potential bias and limiting an insight into those with a different work status and lifestyle. These imbalances may have impacted the generalizability of the study outcomes to the national or cultural level as well as the comparability to the diverse demographic groups.

Moreover, the survey comprised questions about abstract concepts, which the respondents might not have been able to imagine in practice, as no examples were given to better imagine the issues spoken about. The gathered data was self-reported, which introduces the

possibility of response bias as the participants might have given answers influenced by a desire to present themselves in a certain light. Subjective perceptions and self-reports, together with potential variations in the relative perceptions of the measuring scale added a layer of subjectivity to the survey outcomes as well. Finally, based on the current literature on consumer attitudes and behavior, not all influencing factors known to affect attitudes and behavior could be included in the research, which might also limit the comprehensiveness of the study.

Finally, the thesis navigates a broad area on how consumer attitudes and behavior are shaped. However, it also delves into much more narrow concepts, such as specific influencing factors that shape environmental attitudes, specifically attitudes towards green marketing activities and greenwashing. It also studies the Slovenian consumer in particular and therefore unveils characteristics specific to Slovenian green consumer. This research field has recently become extremely popular and is ever-expanding, mirroring the evolving environmental values and norms as the society is becoming more and more environmentally conscious. In order to propel this momentum, I suggest that future research continues focusing on the influencing factors on green behavior with particular attention on bridging the gap between attitudes and purchasing decisions. Here, studying the specific factors that hinder individuals in engaging in environmentally friendly behavior is extremely important, for example, low consumer efficacy and environmental responsibility, feminine perception of environmentalism, skepticism, as well as the external conditions (unaffordability or inconvenience of green products or poor infrastructure) connected with consumer's readiness to pay a premium or sacrifice convenience or performance of the traditional product or service. Given the prevalent skepticism and expectations with regards to green marketing, future research endeavours should strive to understand specifically what kind of messages and communication strategies motivate or hinder individuals to make environmentally friendly decisions. These types of studies should move beyond self-reported information and incorporate experiments or other practical investigations, therefore providing more reliable business and theoretical implications.

Moreover, cross-cultural comparative analyses could unveil culturally-specific perceptions of green marketing strategies, and reactions to greenwashing, providing another insight into the factors influencing green attitudes and behavior. Research should delve deeper into what motivates people to boycott, protest certain politics or even engage in green vigilantism. Considering that Slovenians are less inclined to boycott or practice green vigilantism, comparing these findings with those from other countries would offer valuable insights into fostering active environmental engagement. For policymakers, studies should focus on communication strategies related to conveying green transition, reacting to lobbying scandals or handling environmental disasters, as they would provide invaluable information for developing strategies that would build trustworthiness and foster environmentally friendly behavior among the citizens. Finally, future research should also focus on the significance of gender in shaping pro-environmental behavior, particularly on how to

encourage men to adopt greener practices. Due to the significant gender differences in pro-environmental attitudes and behavior, I would also propose the researchers to explore how sustainable development differs between societies with gender-balanced power structures and those without such balance.

8 CONCLUSION

Each generation of consumers has been greener than the previous one, and as environmental consciousness continues to spread, consumers are demanding more environmentally friendly products and increased corporate social responsibility. Therefore, the landscape for businesses transforms under the pressures of the consumers, the government and the competition. This is as much of a threat as it is an opportunity, as new consumer demands are underscored by new laws, imposing new environmental standards, new expectations from companies, and dictating the trajectory of social development towards more environmentally friendly societies. Building a more socially responsible business and improving environmental performance has become a strategic necessity, and with new stringent measures against greenwashing, companies will have to be smart in developing the right communication strategies about their environmental practices. The study contributes to understanding Slovenian consumers' attitudes towards green marketing and greenwashing.

The respondents revealed high environmental concern, and generally favorable attitudes towards environmentally friendly products, as well as corporate environmental endeavours. They also expressed their demand for the companies to be more responsible and take a bigger role in the sustainable development. In terms of the socio-demographic factors, the study revealed that women expressed higher environmental concern, more positive attitudes towards green products and corporate green efforts, as well as lower skepticism levels towards green marketing, compared to men. Women also exhibited higher consumer efficacy and reported emotional reactions more frequently, while men demonstrated higher levels of skepticism towards green marketing. There were gender nuances in the perception of greenwashing as well, as men exhibited a stronger belief in the occurrence of intentional greenwashing than women. The results also showed the correlation between age and consumer efficacy, as well as perceptions of greenwashing, impact of greenwashing on purchasing decisions, and boycotting behavior. The oldest group reported the lowest consumer efficacy (responsibility), compared to the two other groups. The youngest reported the environmental claims and greenwashing influenced their consumer behavior the least. The second group (36-60 age range) most frequently reported having boycotted in the past, and they also reported that the environmental claims influenced their purchasing decisions. No significant disparities were found in environmental concern or attitudes towards green products and green corporate efforts, indicating that environmental attitudes and behavior transcend generations, pointing to the influence of the current trend the society is in (period effect). In examining the impact of education on consumer environmental attitudes towards green marketing, the study only found it correlated with consumer efficacy, as those with

basic or short-term vocational upper secondary education and those with only general or technical upper secondary school reported significantly lower efficacy than those with first-cycle and second-cycle higher education levels. The results also showcased a significant difference in the indifference to greenwashing practices, as those with lower education levels expressed higher indifference, and lower impact of greenwashing on their purchasing decisions.

The study also explored the relationship between pro-environmental attitudes and its influencing factors, revealing statistically significant moderate positive relationship between environmental concern and favorable attitudes towards green products, and significantly moderate positive relationship between the environmental concern and corporate green efforts. A significant weak correlation was found between environmental concern and self-acquired knowledge on environmental issues. Individuals with higher environmental concern reported self-initiated efforts of acquiring information on their own. This implies the need for simplified and accessible information to consumers about a product's or service's environmental footprint as well as greenwashing.

Climate change is one of the most significant problems the world is facing today, which reflects in consumer demands, new laws and regulations, as well as how firms conduct business. Every party will have to take responsibility for their actions, and the general public especially will be holding authorities and corporations accountable. The communication of green efforts and marketing, which will be based on the environmental performance, will continue to rise in order to reach the target consumer, who will, based on the trends that we are seeing in the society, become greener and greener. Moreover, companies will continue to be under scrutiny, which is why they will have to be careful to develop the right communication strategies. Appropriate and credible communication will contribute to the ripple effect, pushing competitors to follow examples of good practices and, in turn, contributing to green innovations and progression toward sustainability.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary in Slovenian

Podnebne spremembe in novo okoljsko gibanje z Greto Thunberg na čelu so močno zaznamovale zadnje pol desetletja. V svetu se kaže porast zaskrbljenosti ljudi zaradi podnebnih sprememb, saj ljudje opažajo okoljske probleme, ki se pojavljajo na območjih, kjer živijo (Funk et al., 2020). Število potrošnikov, ki jim je mar za trajnost, sicer še naprej narašča, a vedno manj je potrošnikov, ki so pripravljeni plačati več za bolj trajnostne produkte. Poleg tega jih vse več meni, da so sami najpomembnejši dejavnik pozitivnih sprememb (Simon-Kucher & Partners, 2022) in ta vrednota se odraža v njihovih nakupnih odločitvah ter pričakovanjih, ki jih imajo do podjetij, pri katerih kupujejo.

Potrošniki na trajnost izdelkov in storitev ne gledajo več kot na dodano vrednost, temveč kot na nekaj samoumevnega in pričakovanega. Da bi zadostila zahtevam potrošnikov, podjetja izvajajo nove strategije za izboljšanje svoje okoljske učinkovitosti in razvijajo nove poslovne rešitve, ki so prijaznejše do okolja. Tako z izboljšanjem okoljske uspešnosti, kot tudi z razvojem učinkovitih komunikacijskih strategij se za podjetja odpirajo nove priložnosti.

Nekatera podjetja so ta nova potrošniška pričakovanja izkoristila za dajanje praznih obljub in zavajanje. Vseprisotnost t.i. "zelenega zavajanja" oz. "greenwashinga", ki pomeni lažno in zavajajoče oglaševanje okoljske prijaznosti izdelka, politike ali dejavnosti, je zmanjšalo zaupanje potrošnikov v izjave podjetij o njihovi okoljski učinkovitosti (Repinc, 2019).

Zato se z naraščajočo občutljivostjo deležnikov za okoljska vprašanja povečuje tudi zahteva po visoki stopnji odgovornosti in preglednosti (Torelli et al., 2020). Zavajajoče izjave podjetij o njihovi okoljski učinkovitosti so pogoste, ljudje pa so preobremenjeni z ogromnim številom informacij, zato težko prepoznajo zeleno zavajanje. Poleg tega zaradi pomanjkanja predpisov trajnostna poročila v Evropski Uniji (EU) niso bila optimizirana in posledično niso bila nujno verodostojna (Repinc, 2019). Da bi potrošnikom omogočila sprejemanje bolj informiranih nakupnih odločitev, usklajenih z njihovimi okoljskimi vrednotami, je EU predlagala spremembo EU pravil za potrošnike, ki prepoveduje zeleno zavajanje in načrtovano zastarljivost izdelkov ter uvaja pravno zahtevo, ki zapoveduje podjetjem, da zagotavljajo zanesljive, primerljive in preverljive informacije o trajnosti in možnosti popravila izdelkov. Podjetja bodo morala svojo okoljsko uspešnost vedno bolj pogosto dokazovati s potrdili s strani tretjih oseb (European Commission, 2022) in okoljska prizadevanja podjetij bodo morala biti komunicirana pametno in premišljeno.

Na temo odnosa potrošnikov do zelenih izdelkov in storitev je bilo narejeno že veliko raziskav. Večina se posveča odnosu potrošnikov do določene skupine izdelkov. A odkar se je začelo novo okoljsko gibanje, v Sloveniji ni bila narejena nobena raziskava, ki bi preučevala odnos potrošnikov do zelenega trženja in zavajanja. Da bi zapolnila to vrzel, je glavni namen te magistrske naloge raziskati in bolje razumeti okoljsko naravnanost slovenskih potrošnikov ter ugotoviti njihova stališča do praks zelenega trženja in zavajanja.

Magistrska naloga analizira okoljsko zaskrbljenost slovenskih potrošnikov in njihov odnos do zelenih izdelkov in zelenega trženja ter zelenega zavajanja; raziskuje dejavnike, ki vplivajo na vedenje zelenih potrošnikov, ter analizira demografske razlike v odnosu do zelenega trženja in zelenega zavajanja. Ugotovitve raziskave lahko pomagajo podjetjem pri razvoju komunikacijskih strategij in posledično pri spodbujanju trajnostnih praks in doseganju okoljsko ozaveščenih potrošnikov.

Rezultati analize so pokazali visoko okoljsko zaskrbljenost slovenskih potrošnikov. Anketiranci so izrazili tudi pozitiven odnos do zelenih izdelkov in okoljskih prizadevanj podjetij. Prav tako so izrazili zahtevo, da morajo biti podjetja bolj odgovorna in prevzeti večjo vlogo pri trajnostnem razvoju. Hkrati se je izkazalo, da so slovenski potrošniki skeptični do izjav podjetij o njihovi okoljski učinkovitosti in negativno dojemajo zeleno zavajanje, za katero menijo, da ga podjetja izvajajo pogosto in namerno. Čeprav je analiza med anketiranci odkrila veliko skepticizma in zaznavanje pogostega in namernega zelenega zavajanja, so anketiranci redkeje poročali o bojkotiranju.

Ženske so v primerjavi z moškimi izrazile večjo skrb za okolje, bolj pozitiven odnos do zelenih izdelkov in okoljskih prizadevanj podjetij ter nižjo stopnjo skepse do zelenega trženja. Moški so bolj pogosto izrazili prepričanje, da podjetja namerno zavajajo o svoji okoljski učinkovitosti. V okoljski zaskrbljenosti ali odnosu do zelenih izdelkov in okoljskih prizadevanj podjetij ni bilo ugotovljenih bistvenih razlik med različnimi starostnimi skupinami, kar kaže na vpliv trenutne situacije, v kateri je družba. Kljub temu so rezultati pokazali povezavo med starostjo in zaznano učinkovitostjo potrošnikov, zaznavanjem zelenega zavajanja in vplivom zelenega zavajanja na nakupne odločitve ter bojkotiranjem.

Študija je raziskala tudi odnos med okoljskimi stališči in dejavniki, ki vplivajo nanje, ter odkrila zmerno pozitivno korelacijo med skrbjo za okolje in pozitivnim odnosom do zelenih izdelkov ter zmerno pozitivno povezavo med skrbjo za okolje in pozitivnim odnosom do okoljskih prizadevanj podjetij. Šibka korelacija je bila ugotovljena med okoljsko zaskrbljenostjo in samostojnim pridobivanjem informacij o okoljskih vprašanjih, kar kaže na potrebo po dostopnih informacijah o okoljskem odtisu izdelka ali storitve ter o zelenem zavajanju.

Podnebne spremembe so eden najpomembnejših problemov, s katerimi se danes sooča svet, kar se odraža v zahtevah potrošnikov, novih zakonih in predpisih ter načinu poslovanja podjetij. Vsi deležniki bodo morali prevzeti odgovornost za svoja dejanja, zlasti splošna javnost pa bo od oblasti in podjetij zahtevala vedno večjo odgovornost. Komuniciranje okoljskih prizadevanj in trženje, ki bo temeljilo na okoljski uspešnosti, bo še naprej naraščalo, saj bo ciljni potrošnik postajal vse bolj zelen. Poleg tega bodo podjetja še naprej pod drobnogledom, zato bodo morala biti pozorna na razvoj primernih komunikacijskih strategij. Ustrezno in verodostojno komuniciranje bo spodbudilo konkurente, da bodo sledili primerom dobrih praks, kar bo posledično prispevalo k zelenim inovacijam in trajnostnemu napredku.

Appendix 2: Descriptive Statistics Tables

Descriptive statistics for expressed environmental concern and consumer efficacy

Q1	**Environmental concern and consumer efficacy**												
	Answers						**Valid**	**n**	**Mean**	**std. deviation**	**std error**	**Bounds**	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total						lower	upper
Q1a	13	10	39	156	145	363	363	363	4,13	0,96	0,05	4,03	4,23
	4%	3%	11%	43%	40%	100%							
Q1b	7	30	101	172	53	363	363	363	3,64	0,9	0,047	3,55	3,74
	2%	8%	28%	47%	15%	100%							
Q1c	92	128	47	59	36	362	362	363	2,5	1,3	0,068	2,37	2,63
	25%	35%	13%	16%	10%	100%							
Q1d	113	122	57	48	21	361	361	363	2,29	1,2	0,063	2,16	2,41
	31%	34%	16%	13%	6%	100%							
1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, 4 = “Agree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree”													

Descriptive statistics for expressed attitudes towards green products

Q2	**Attitudes towards green products**												
	Answers						**Valid**	**n**	**Mean**	**std. deviation**	**std error**	**Bounds**	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total						lower	upper
Q2a	17	88	110	104	42	361	361	363	3,18	1,08	0,05	3,07	3,29
	5%	24%	30%	29%	12%	100%							
Q2b	11	19	71	191	70	362	362	363	3,8	0,91	0,048	3,71	3,9
	3%	5%	20%	53%	19%	100%							
Q2c	9	24	60	162	107	362	362	363	3,92	0,97	0,051	3,82	4,02
	2%	7%	17%	45%	30%	100%							
Q2d	27	48	103	152	32	362	362	363	3,31	1,05	0,055	3,21	3,42
	7%	13%	28%	42%	9%	100%							
Q2e	35	100	135	76	16	362	362	363	2,83	1,01	0,053	2,72	2,93
	10%	28%	37%	21%	4%	100%							
Q2f	11	12	69	186	84	362	362	363	3,88	0,90	0,048	3,79	3,98
	3%	3%	19%	51%	23%	100%							
Q2g	29	79	130	100	24	362	362	363	3,03	1,04	0,055	2,92	3,14
	8%	22%	36%	28%	7%	100%							
1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, 4 = “Agree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree”													

Descriptive statistics for expressed attitudes towards corporate environmental efforts

Q3	**Attitudes towards corporate environmental efforts**												
	Answers						**Valid**	**n**	**Mean**	**std. deviation**	**std error**	**Bounds**	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total						lower	upper
Q3a	5	3	18	154	182	362	362	363	4,4	0,75	0,039	4,32	4,47
	1%	1%	5%	43%	50%	100%							
Q3b	4	2	45	190	121	362	362	363	4,17	0,74	0,039	4,09	4,24
	1%	1%	12%	52%	33%	100%							
Q3c	5	21	63	142	130	361	361	363	4,03	0,95	0,05	3,93	4,13
	1%	6%	17%	39%	36%	100%							
1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, 4 = “Agree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree”													

Descriptive statistics for expressed attitudes towards green marketing

Q4	Attitudes towards green marketing												
	Answers						Valid	n	Mean	std. deviation	std error	Bounds	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total						lower	upper
Q4a	52	138	133	33	6	362	362	363	2,46	0,91	0,048	2,36	2,55
	14%	38%	37%	9%	2%	100%							
Q4b	19	79	135	116	12	361	361	363	3,06	0,94	0,049	2,97	3,16
	5%	22%	37%	32%	3%	100%							
Q4c	41	125	118	67	11	362	362	363	2,67	1	0,053	2,57	2,78
	11%	35%	33%	19%	3%	100%							
Q4d	18	113	141	73	16	361	361	363	2,88	0,94	0,049	2,78	2,98
	5%	31%	39%	20%	4%	100%							
Q4e	10	72	131	123	25	361	361	363	3,22	0,94	0,049	3,13	3,32
	3%	20%	36%	34%	7%	100%							
	6	64	161	102	29	362	362	363	3,23	0,89	0,047	3,14	3,32
	2%	18%	44%	28%	8%	100%							
1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, 4 = “Agree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree”													

Descriptive statistics for expressed preceptions of and reported behavioral reactions to greenwashing

Q5	Perceptions of and behavioral reactions to greenwashing												
	Answers						Valid	n	Mean	std. deviation	std error	Bounds	
	1	2	3	4	5	Total						lower	upper
Q5a	3	26	88	183	60	360	360	363	3,75	0,85	0,045	3,67	3,84
	1%	7%	24%	51%	17%	100%							
Q5b	62	116	103	63	18	362	362	363	2,61	1,11	0,058	2,5	2,73
	17%	32%	28%	17%	5%	100%							
Q5c	3	12	68	194	85	362	362	363	3,96	0,79	0,042	3,87	4,04
	1%	3%	19%	54%	23%	100%							
Q5d	18	77	103	137	26	361	361	363	3,21	1,02	0,054	3,11	3,32
	5%	21%	29%	38%	7%	100%							
Q5e	144	145	36	28	8	361	361	363	1,92	1	0,053	1,82	2,03
	40%	40%	10%	8%	2%	100%							
Q5f	63	138	99	51	9	360	360	363	2,46	1,02	0,054	2,35	2,56
	18%	38%	28%	14%	3%	100%							
Q5g	54	88	80	97	43	362	362	363	2,96	1,26	0,066	2,83	3,09
	15%	24%	22%	27%	12%	100%							
Q5h	12	25	48	200	76	361	361	363	3,84	0,95	0,05	3,74	3,94
	3%	7%	13%	55%	21%	100%							
Q6a	40	98	94	50	7	289	289	363	2,61	1,01	0,059	2,49	2,72
	14%	34%	33%	17%	2%	100%							
Q6b	11	30	81	119	48	289	289	363	3,56	1,01	0,059	3,45	3,68
	4%	10%	28%	41%	17%	100%							
1 = “Strongly Disagree”, 2 = “Disagree”, 3 = “Neither Agree nor Disagree”, 4 = “Agree”, 5 = “Strongly Agree”													

Appendix 3: Cronbach's Alpha for Different Sets of Statements

Tests of Reliability		
Statement	**Cronbach's Alpha**	**N of Items**
Consumer efficacy	0,599	2
My actions or lack thereof have no particular impact on the natural environment.		
As an individual, I cannot help slow down environmental deterioration.		
Emotions	0,702	2
When I buy an environmentally friendly product, I feel good.		
If I am choosing between two products, and I buy the product that is less environmentally friendly, I feel guilty.		
Attitudes towards green products	0,83	7
I have a positive attitude towards, or am generally in favor of buying environmentally friendly products and brands that care about protecting and preserving the environment.		
If I am choosing between two products that are comparable in price and quality (performance) but different in terms of their environmental footprint, I choose the product that is more environmentally friendly.		
REVERSED: When I'm purchasing a new product, I don't pay attention to its environmental footprint.		
I am willing to pay more for an environmentally friendly product.		
I am willing to sacrifice the quality (performance) or convenience of the product to buy the environmentally friendly alternative.		
When I buy an environmentally friendly product, I feel good.		
If I am choosing between two products and I buy the product that is less environmentally friendly, I feel guilty.		
Attitudes towards corporate environmental efforts	0,649	3
I believe that companies should take more responsibility in the fight against climate crisis and invest in sustainable development.		
I have a positive attitude towards corporate environmental initiatives/projects.		
I have a negative attitude towards companies who do not care about their environmental impact.		
Skepticism	0,643	4
REVERSED: I believe that companies are honest and sincere when promoting their environmental initiatives, products and services.		
REVERSED: I believe that eco-labels and certificates are a good source of information about a product's sustainability or a company's or social responsibility.		
Promoting sustainable characteristics of a company and their products makes me suspicious.		
Most environmental claims made by companies are misleading.		

Appendix 4: Normality of Distribution

Tests of Normality						
Statements	**Kolmogorov-Smirnova**			**Shapiro-Wilk**		
	Statistic	**df**	**Sig.**	**Statistic**	**df**	**Sig.**
Global warming and climate change make me concerned for the current and future state of the environment.	0,276	363	0	0,77	363	0
It is very important for me to be environmentally conscious, so I dedicate time and energy to acquire knowledge about climate change on my own.	0,274	363	0	0,868	363	0
My actions or lack thereof have no particular impact on the natural environment.	0,258	362	0	0,864	362	0
As an individual, I cannot help slow down environmental deterioration.	0,245	361	0	0,857	361	0
When I'm purchasing a new product, I don't pay attention to its environmental footprint.	0,181	361	0	0,91	361	0
I have a positive attitude towards, or am generally in favor of buying environmentally friendly products and brands that care about protecting and preserving the environment.	0,307	362	0	0,83	362	0
If I am choosing between two products that are comparable in price and quality (performance) but different in terms of their environmental footprint, I choose the product that is more environmentally friendly.	0,275	362	0	0,838	362	0
I am willing to pay more for an environmentally friendly product.	0,251	362	0	0,879	362	0
I am willing to sacrifice the quality (performance) or convenience of the product to buy the environmentally friendly alternative.	0,194	362	0	0,91	362	0
When I buy an environmentally friendly product, I feel good.	0,297	362	0	0,823	362	0
If I am choosing between two products and I buy the product that is less environmentally friendly, I feel guilty.	0,19	362	0	0,911	362	0
I believe that companies should take more responsibility in the fight against climate crisis and invest in sustainable development.	0,294	362	0	0,703	362	0
I have a positive attitude towards corporate environmental initiatives/projects.	0,271	362	0	0,783	362	0

(table continues)

Appendix 5: Normality of Distribution (cont.)

Statements	Kolmogorov-Smirnova			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
I have a negative attitude towards companies who do not care about their environmental impact.	0,242	361	0	0,834	361	0
I believe that companies are honest and sincere when promoting their environmental initiatives, products and services.	0,218	362	0	0,887	362	0
I believe that eco-labels and certificates are a good source of information about a product's sustainability or a company's or social responsibility.	0,201	361	0	0,891	361	0
Before purchasing a product/service, I invest time and energy into looking up whether the company's claims on the product's/service's environmental impact are true.	0,208	362	0	0,904	362	0
Environmental claims do not influence my purchase intention.	0,202	361	0	0,897	361	0
Promoting sustainable characteristics of a company and their products makes me suspicious.	0,206	361	0	0,897	361	0
Most environmental claims made by companies are misleading.	0,241	362	0	0,89	362	0
I believe that companies often mislead consumers about their environmental impact.	0,29	360	0	0,857	360	0
Companies usually greenwash unintentionally because they make honest mistakes when promoting their environmental performance.	0,201	362	0	0,907	362	0
Companies usually greenwash deliberately and intentionally in order to increase their profits.	0,293	362	0	0,829	362	0
When I hear that a company is making misleading claims about its environmental impact, I make a point to find more information about that on my own.	0,232	361	0	0,894	361	0
I do not care if companies mislead consumers about their environmental impact.	0,27	361	0	0,796	361	0
Knowing that a company misleads consumers about its environmental performance does not affect my consumer choices.	0,232	360	0	0,895	360	0
I have boycotted a company for making false or misleading claims about its environmental impact.	0,181	362	0	0,907	362	0
When I learn that a company has greenwashed, I share this information with the people I know.	0,332	361	0	0,806	361	0
Even though companies' greenwashing bothers me, I still buy from them because I cannot afford to buy alternative products.	0,203	282	0	0,903	282	0
In the future, I intend to boycott companies that mislead consumers about their environmental impact.	0,249	282	0	0,884	282	0
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Appendix 6: Survey Questionnaire in Slovenian Language

Pozdravljeni,

sem Živa Dekleva, študentka magistrskega programa mednarodno poslovanje na Ekonomski fakulteti v Ljubljani. Prosila bi vas, da rešite sledečo anketo in mi tako pomagate pri zaključku magistrske naloge, v sklopu katere raziskujem odnos slovenskih potrošnikov do okolju prijaznega vedenja podjetij in do načinov komuniciranja le-tega javnosti.

Anketa je v celoti anonimna in vam bo vzela približno 5 minut.

Hvala že vnaprej za sodelovanje!

Q1 - V kolikšni meri se strinjate z vsako od spodnjih trditev? Svoje odgovore označite s klikom na izbrano polje za vsako trditvijo. (○ Sploh se ne strinjam ○ Ne strinjam se ○ Niti se strinjam, niti se ne strinjam ○ Strinjam se ○ Popolnoma se strinjam)

Zaradi globalnega segrevanja in podnebnih sprememb me skrbi za trenutno in prihodnje stanje naravnega okolja.

Zame je zelo pomembno, da sem okoljsko ozaveščen/a, zato namenjam čas in energijo, da bi sam/a pridobil/a znanje o podnebnih spremembah.

Kaj delam oz. česa ne delam, nima posebnega vpliva na naravno okolje.

Kot posameznik/ica ne morem pripomoči k upočasnitvi slabšanja stanja okolja.

Q2 - V kolikšni meri se strinjate z vsako od spodnjih trditev? Svoje odgovore označite s klikom na izbrano polje za vsako trditvijo. (○ Sploh se ne strinjam ○ Ne strinjam se ○ Niti se strinjam, niti se ne strinjam ○ Strinjam se ○ Popolnoma se strinjam)

Ko kupujem nov izdelek, na okoljski odtis le-tega nisem pozoren/a.

Imam pozitiven odnos oz. sem na splošno naklonjen/a nakupu okolju prijaznejših izdelkov in znamkam, ki jim je pomembno varovanje in ohranjanje okolja.

Če izbiram med dvema izdelkoma, ki sta primerljiva po ceni in kakovosti (zmogljivosti), a se razlikujeta po njunem okoljskem odtisu, izberem izdelek, ki je bolj okolju prijazen.

Za zeleni izdelek sem pripravljen/a plačati višjo ceno.

Za nakup zelene alternative sem pripravljen/a žrtvovati kakovost (zmogljivost) ali priročnost izdelka.

Ko kupim okolju prijazen izdelek, se dobro počutim.

Če se odločam med dvema izdelkoma in kupim izdelek, ki je manj okolju prijazen, se počutim krivo.

Q3 - V kolikšni meri se strinjate z vsako od spodnjih trditev? Svoje odgovore označite s klikom na izbrano polje za vsako trditvijo. (○ Sploh se ne strinjam ○ Ne strinjam se ○ Niti se strinjam, niti se ne strinjam ○ Strinjam se ○ Popolnoma se strinjam)

Menim, da bi morala podjetja prevzeti večjo odgovornost v boju proti klimatski krizi in vlagati v trajnostni razvoj.

Imam pozitiven odnos do okoljskih pobud/projektov podjetij.

Imam negativen odnos do podjetij, ki jim ni mar, kakšen vpliv imajo na naravno okolje.

Q4 - V kolikšni meri se strinjate z vsako od spodnjih trditev? Svoje odgovore označite s klikom na izbrano polje za vsako trditvijo. (○ Sploh se ne strinjam ○ Ne strinjam se ○ Niti se strinjam, niti se ne strinjam ○ Strinjam se ○ Popolnoma se strinjam)

Verjamem, da so podjetja pri promociji svojih okoljskih pobud, proizvodov in storitev poštena in iskrena.

Menim, da so ekološke oznake in certifikati kredibilen vir informacij o trajnosti izdelka oz. družbeni odgovornosti podjetja.

Pred nakupom izdelka/storitve vložim čas in energijo v to, da preverim, ali so trditve o vplivu izdelka/storitve na okolje, ki jih navaja podjetje, resnične.

Okoljske trditve ne vplivajo na mojo nakupno namero.

Promocija trajnostnih karakteristik podjetja in njihovih produktov me dela sumničavega/sumničavo.

Večina okoljskih trditev podjetij je zavajajoča.

Q5 - V kolikšni meri se strinjate z vsako od spodnjih trditev? Svoje odgovore označite s klikom na izbrano polje za vsako trditvijo. (○ Sploh se ne strinjam ○ Ne strinjam se ○ Niti se strinjam, niti se ne strinjam ○ Strinjam se ○ Popolnoma se strinjam)

Menim, da podjetja pogosto zavajajo potrošnike o njihovem vplivu na okolje.

Podjetja navadno zavajajo nenamerno, saj se pri promoviranju svoje okoljske učinkovitosti iskreno zmotijo.

Podjetja navadno zavajajo namerno in premišljeno z namenom povečanja profita.

Ko slišim, da določeno podjetje navaja zavajajoče podatke o svojem vplivu na okolje, se potrudim, da sam/a poiščem več informacij o tem.

Ni mi mar, če podjetja zavajajo potrošnike o svojem vplivu na naravno okolje.

Čeprav se zavedam, da podjetje na področju trajnosti zavaja, to ne vpliva na moje potrošniške odločitve.

V preteklosti sem bojkotiral/a podjetje zaradi lažnih ali zavajajočih trditev o njihovem vplivu na okolje.

Ko izvem, da je podjetje zavajalo, te informacije delim naprej s svojimi znanci.

IF (1) Q5e = [1, 2]

Q6 - V kolikšni meri se strinjate s spodnjo trditvijo? Svoj odgovor označite s klikom na izbrano polje za trditvijo. (○ Sploh se ne strinjam ○ Ne strinjam se ○ Niti se strinjam, niti se ne strinjam ○ Strinjam se ○ Popolnoma se strinjam)

Čeprav me moti, da podjetje zavaja o svojem vplivu na okolje, še vedno kupujem pri tem podjetju, saj si ne morem privoščiti nakupa alternativnih izdelkov.

V prihodnosti nameravam bojkotirati podjetja, ki zavajajo potrošnike o svojem vplivu na naravno okolje.

Q7 - Spol

○ Moški

○ Ženski

Q8 - Starost

○ 18-25

○ 26-35

○ 36-45

○ 46-60

○ 61+

Q9 - Trenutni status zaposlitve

○ Dijak(inja) / študent(ka)

○ Zaposlen(a)

○ Brezposeln(a)

○ Upokojen(a)

○ Drugo

Q10 - Najvišja dosežena stopnja izobrazbe

○ Nedokončana osnovna šola

○ Končana osnovna šola, nižja ali srednja poklicna šola (2- ali 3-letno izobraževanje)

○ Končana gimnazija ali srednja strokovna šola (4-letno izobraževanje)

○ Končana 1. bolonjska stopnja (predbolonjski sistem: višješolski, visokošolski strokovni programi)

○ Končana 2. bolonjska stopnja (predbolonjski sistem: magisterij stroke, specializacija po visokošolskih strokovnih programih, univerzitetni programi)

○ Končana 3. bolonjska stopnja (specializacija po univerzitetnih programih, magisterij znanosti, doktorat znanosti)