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The Rise of Greenwashing and the Battle for Consumer Trust

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ABSTRACT

Greenwashing has drawn significant attention in recent times. It became so popular that the stakeholders are not able to differentiate which company is into green marketing and which one is into green washing**.** Organizations promote greenwashing mainly through their advertisements without following any ethical guidelines.

Greenwashing is any false claim by an organization that misrepresents to the consumer that its policies and products are environmentally sound. These unverifiable claims attributing responsible environmental concern by companies are false and misleading.

Most customers are now concerned about environment sustainability and want to be a part of the sustainable efforts. But Organizations started taking advantage of this and promote products or services that are not at all sustainable in nature.

Our research paper starts with a comprehensive review about advertising and its impact on customers. It then delves into the reality of greenwashing, factors which prompts the organization to go for greenwashing and the detailed analysis of the thirteen sins committed by the organizations. The study adopts qualitative research technique focusing on the secondary sources of data. The paper attempts to picturize the effect and aftereffect of greenwashing with real time case studies.

Keywords: Green washing, advertisements, ethics, CSR, legal developments

INTRODUCTION

According to Kotler et al. (2016) , Customers, or consumers, are the reason a business. Producing goods seems to be easier than attracting and satisfying customers. Marketing is the effort required to attract customers and retain them using the 4 Ps of Marketing (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion), where promotion plays a leading role (Zeithaml, Bitner& Gremler 2018) .

The customer has a wide choice of brands for almost every product. Organizations need to attract and convince prospective customers to purchase their goods and services to increase their market share.

Advertising is a cost-effective tool for promotion by public communication. Wood (1958) relates the first written advertisement in the Waset, ancient Egyptian ruins of Thebes. Advertisements chase people everywhere, exerting much power over human minds as technology advances, even though nobody is fond of advertising. The advertising industry connects consumers with products and companies. It creates awareness about the products and services among them or other companies and forces firms to produce the desired products or services of the customer.

Advertising increases brand awareness by reaching a larger audience to help jumpstart the economy by stimulating buying and increasing sales. It establishes trust and creates goodwill for the company by gaining customer loyalty.

The global advertising industry in 2023 has a market size of $647.3 billion and is growing at a rate of 4.6% (CAGR) to reach US$ 978.5 Billion in the next 10 years (IMARC group, 2024).

Moriarty et al. (201 classified the two kinds of advertising as (1) Product advertising, which focuses on the product to promote to the target market, and (2) Institutional advertising, which helps to improve a Company's image instead. The three purposes of advertising are to

- Inform potential and current customers about new products, services, and ideals
- Persuade them to buy the products with special offers and improvements and
- Remind current customers to develop a distinctive brand for the business.

Peloza & Shang (2011) posited the popularity of CSR with growing environmental concerns in recent years. Governments are also pushing the firms to disclose their CSR activities. Firms want to reconcile business interests with ecological interests in tune with the belief that it should align its self-interests of profit-seeking with the interests of society and the environment.

Stiglitz (2007) asserted that green marketing originated and nurtured by CSR for creating Public policies to advance a more equitable and sustainable society. Ramakrishnan (2022) asserts the interdependence of society and business.. As the idea of sustainable development lingers, organizations must fulfil societal expectations of a sustainable environment.

CSR has emerged as a compromise paradigm between the profit maximization interests of business and demand of Sustainable goods and services by public. Despite the growth in consumer activism, businesses, guided by market decisions, remain overwhelmingly concerned with their economic interests. Companies utilize Green marketing to derive value from CSR.

Wolniak (20 credits Jay Westervelt for coining the term "Greenwashing" in 1986 in his essay on the Reuse of towels in the hospitality industry, falsely claiming it as a water conservation strategy.

Pillai, Ramachandran, and Ramachandran (2024) opine that most people connect Green Marketing with terms like eco-friendly, recyclable, refillable etc., used during the advertisement of environmentally friendly products. Benz (2000) observed that the widespread use of eco-words has moved from its green notion into more commercial contexts.

Greenwashing is any false claim by an organization that misrepresents to the consumer that its policies and products are environmentally sound. These unverifiable claims attributing responsible environmental concern by companies are false and misleading.

Also known as Green Sheen, Greenwashing creates a false impression by playing on customer sentiments by projecting the products of the Firm as environmentally friendly. Greenwashing exploits the growing demand for Antunes, Santo & Hurtado (2015) assert that organizations must be viable economically, socially responsible, and sustainable by integrating business operations with their social and environmental concerns to achieve the Triple Bottom Line of People, Planet, and Profit propounded by Elkington (1994).

According to Zhang et al. (2020), businesses use Green Marketing techniques to portray themselves as "socially responsible organizations" to win over customers. Majláth (2017) and Burbano & Delmas (2011) link the growth of green markets to the use of Greenwashing. A greenwashing company engages in subpar environmental performance while making false claims about it.

Researchers from several diverse areas discuss Greenwashing. Lyon & Maxwell (2011) find this multifaceted nature of greenwashing, considering social dimensions with environmental dimensions, and makes the definition of the concept itself ambiguous.

CAUSES OF GREEN WASHING

Following are the six Causes of Greenwashing (Perks, 2023)

Lack of Information

Most organizations lack complete information on the green initiatives they have implemented in their supply chain. Lack of awareness or improper data will make them focus only on carbon emissions, neglecting all the other aspects of green marketing. As a result, a sense of confusion prevails in governance and leadership, making the organization believe that whatever they are doing is right. They think that they are addressing the issues related to sustainability in the most effective way.

For example, H&M uses a sustainability metric that measures the amount of carbon emitted from each material manufacturing apart from water and energy usage.

One of those scorecards indicated wrongly that the production utilized less than 20% water instead of 20% more water for a particular garment. Later, H& M clarified it as an error due to a technical discrepancy. However, it clearly shows the lack of information about the production unit (Murphy, 2024) .

- **Lack of Transparency**

Most organizations lack a sense of commitment to being transparent, or they do not want to disclose the data about so-called green marketing efforts. The Japanese fast fashion brand Uniqlo is always in the headlines for using cheap materials for its clothing items and thus selling them at the lowest price. It has created a lot of transparency issues and does not produce any certification for its textiles. There is no visible proof to show in its supply chain for its efforts in reduction of carbon emission. The efforts of Uniqlo to reach environmental sustainability do not match national and international policies(Igini, 2022) .

- **Lack of Ambition**

Organizations are not committed to sustainability efforts and do not feel any urgency to combat environmental shifts. They seem to believe the reputation of their brand will protect the greenwashing done by them.

Example: - As part of its sustainability campaign, Starbucks decided not to use plastic straws in their outlet and introduced plastic lids instead. However, these plastic lids consume more plastic than straws. Starbucks showed a lack of commitment to using its brand image among customers to be called one of the sustainable organizations (Lozanova, 2009) .

- **Lack of Accountability**

Good Corporate governance is a must for any organization dedicated to sustainable development**.** However, some firms do not put efforts to set up policies and regulations for implementing and monitoring sustainability practices. Samsung was accused of greenwashing for the disposal of Galaxy Note 7 due to transparency issues. Samsung has failed to give a detailed report on the disposal and how far the product can be recyclable. Greenpeace has asked Samsung to explain their plan for a responsible way of disposal without burning or doing illegal dumping (Daphne, 2023) .

- **Lack of Incentives**

Most organizations do not consider a need to change towards sustainability. They adopt greenwashing to generate short term profit instead of looking at the long term benefits that the organization can gain from avoiding greenwashing,

In 2016, the Keurig beverage brand claimed that its coffee pods were recyclable to find later that these were not, and customers filed a case against the company. The organization was neither getting an incentive nor an opportunity to process its products as recyclable ones (Murphy, 2024) .

- **Lack of Clear Standards and Expectations**

The main problems with green initiatives are the availability of too many standards, confusion about the expectations of green products, and the lack of awareness by most organizations. The renowned American investment bank Goldman Sachs came under scrutiny as it was unclear about the factors that evaluate ESG standards and misled customers by giving an incomplete ESG statement (Davison, 2024) .

Greenwashing affects society by causing market distortions, misleading customers, and monopolizing the environmental discourse through economic powers. Seele & Gatti (2017) differentiate three types of corporate legitimacy as

- Cognitive legitimacy takes into account the accepted assumption of the societal environment of an organization.
- Moral legitimacy takes into account the moral reasoning about the organization and its behavior and
- Pragmatic legitimacy considers the assessment of expected personal benefits by the stakeholders.

According to Guo et al. (2014), an organization's actions can undermine its moral legitimacy (positive green assessment), pragmatic legitimacy (benefiting constituents), and cognitive legitimacy (taking the constituents for granted) when it fails to meet its green goals.

3. Seven Sins of Green washing

Terra Choice (2010), an environmental marketing firm, classified the deceptive practices that companies use to project their products or services to be eco-friendlier than they are as **seven sins of Greenwashing**: -

- Companies indulge in **The Sin of Hidden Trade-Offs** when they ignore other significant environmental impacts of a product or service and falsely promote a single positive environmental attribute.

Example: - A company claiming its product uses recycled materials but hides the environmental harm during production.

McDonald's marketed the paper straw in 2019 as an alternative to the plastic straw. Ironically, these paper straws that cannot be recycled are only a greenwashing ploy. Such greenwashing efforts neither convince the customers nor contribute to sustainability efforts (Green Business Benchmark, 2021).

- **The Sin of No Proof** refers to claims by firms without providing supporting proof or evidence by third-party certification**.** Target, a leading retail brand, labeled and promoted several beauty products as "Clean" in 2019 asserting their ingredients are safe and 100 % natural. However, many of them contained unsafe chemicals for humans and the environment. Target has to face a case for interpreting and promoting products in the phrase "Clean" without any substantive proof (McCroskey, 2023).

- **The Sin of Vagueness** in environmental claims refers to use of broad, ambiguous, or terms defined poorly. For example, many firms use "natural" or "environmentally friendly" and other similar terms without clearly defining their meaning or how they apply to their products. H&M launched in 2013, the clothing line 'Conscious' and marketed it as sustainable and eco-friendly. However, the garments contained more synthetic materials than natural ones, and nothing differentiated them from the other clothing lines H&M sold. H&M used vague and deceptive terminology to confuse the customer without putting much effort into sustainability (Ferris et al., 2023).

- Firms may indulge in **The Sin of Worshipping False Labels** when they use misleading or fake labels to make their products appear eco-friendly. For example, a product may falsely feature a logo or symbol implying its certification by an independent environmental organization. One of the fine examples to illustrate this sin is the change of color of McDonald's logo. McDonald's made its European logo color green in 2009 from red and claimed it to showcase its commitment to sustainability. However, McDonald's put little effort into improving its sustainability performance. Their European menu relied heavily on beef production, which produces greenhouse gas emissions. Hence, McDonald’s claim was contradictory (Terra Choice. (2010).

- **The Sin of Irrelevance** are those environmental claims that are technically correct but are not relevant or important. For example, advertising a product as free from certain chemicals, but such chemicals are not commonly used in similar products, making the claim insignificant. Coca-Cola came to the limelight for the wrong reason for introducing the Plant bottle. They claimed without producing any proof that 30% of the bottles use plant-based material. Also, it is noteworthy that the remaining 70% of the bottle uses petroleum-based plastics, which is against the sustainability standards. Hence, this kind of marketing became irrelevant to the customers (Ettinger, 2024).
- Companies use t**he Sin of Lesser Two Evils** to promote their products as an alternative to being environmentally friendly, even though both impact the environment negatively to distract consumers from the overall environmental harm caused by the product. Fast fashion brands like Zara always ignore the full spectrum of green marketing and focus on a single aspect of the production and marketing process to become sustainable organizations. They emphasize reducing the packing and being eco-friendly without giving much importance to resource consumption in the production process. Brands like Zara are well known for producing mass products of poor quality that result in a linear economy (Beavers, 2023).
- **The Sin of Fibbing** is the most blatant form of greenwashing that involves outright lying about the benefits to the environment by the use of a product or service. Companies arbitrarily claim their products as carbon neutral, energy efficient, or sustainable. Lloyds Banking Group has attempted the sin of fibbing through its unsustainable practices. Lloyds Banking Group in their advertisements have claimed its commitment to promoting sustainability by reducing the usage of fossil fuels. However, in 2023, the bank financed organizations that contributed nearly 32.8 million metric tons of carbon dioxide to the environment (Makortoff, 2024).

These sins of greenwashing create a false perception of environmental responsibility and ultimately drive sales by misleading consumers. Consumers must be aware of these deceptive practices by Companies and analyze their claims critically. Antunes et al. (2015) see the seven sins as a notice of caution to consumers in their purchase decisions to deter firms from applying these dubious green advertising strategies. Baum (2012) referred to these practices of companies to mislead consumers as the Seven Sins of Greenwashing codified by Terra Choice (2010) while using them as a framework for analyzing their advertisements. Scanlan (2017) expanded them to thirteen by adding the following.

- **The sin of false hopes:** Organizations buildup false claims to give false hope to customers, and people start believing in those claims and make purchases without a second thought. For example, PepsiCo gave false hope to customers of becoming more sustainable by using eco-friendly packaging in their beverages like Gatorade and Tropicana. However, it is true that they rely heavily on single-use plastics (ESG Today, 2024).
- **The sin of Fear mongering:** The Sin of Fear-Mongering is one of the dangerous greenwashing techniques. In this process, Corporations make customers purchase products urgently or create a feeling of guilt if they do not buy such products. The organizations exaggerate the products to make customers purchase them, assuming the organization is walking towards sustainability. For example, Tesla has adopted fear-mongering by insisting that customers switch from traditional vehicles that depend on fossil fuel to electric ones. The organization claims to aim towards the future and abides by sustainability goals. However, Tesla has received only an ‘F’ grade from CDP (organization works for environmental disclosures) since 2019. Also, battery production and energy sources are still under-covered by organizations, which makes Tesla a greenwashing company (Law, 2023).
- **The sin of broken promises:** When organizations fail to keep promises made to the customers about green marketing, this sin of broken promises occurs. Most organizations tend to make false promises to their customers by making them believe the claims they make. For instance, Amazon has taken a ‘climate pledge’ to attain carbon emission-free status by 2040. Later, Amazon deleted some of the pledges taken by the organization from its website. Also, there is an increase in the emission rate, confirming Amazon has broken its promise towards sustainability (Justice, 2023).
- **The sin of injustice:** Sin of injustice takes forms like injustice to the planet, community, or customers when the organization highlights its green marketing efforts without revealing the main effect on the environment or the

community. Nike, for instance, has claimed many of its sneakers use recycled materials without revealing the sustainability efforts carried out in its supply chain. Nike has been critiqued severely for its unfair labor practices (Brock, 2024).

- **The sin of hazardous consequences:** This type of greenwashing sin occurs due to the prolonged impact of greenwashing and the false claims made by organizations. Most organizations can be eco-friendly in the short run. However, Green marketing seems to be associated with hazardous impacts on the environment in the long term.
- For example, 'Honest' the baby diaper manufacturing company claims to be a 100% eco-friendly organization. However, their diapers are not 100% eco-friendly. Though they use wood pulp for the diapers, they use polythene for the inner layers. Such products will not negatively impact for short term but will create problems on prolonged use (Goods, 2024).
- **The sin of profits over people and the environment:** Organizations commit this sin when their green efforts prioritize profit rather than the environment. They deceive the customers to create short-term profit. The claim of retail giant Walmart of reducing carbon emissions since 2012 is an example. The percentage is too low to evaluate its sustainability efforts as their supply chain is also not 100% sustainable. Like all other businesses, Walmart also sees profit above sustainability (Choudhury, 2025).

4. Types of Greenwashing

Types of Greenwashing are related to the concepts of sins discussed and focus on different aspects of deceptive environmental marketing practices. Some of the common types include: -

- ❖ **Green but vague language**: Making broad or ambiguous statements about a company or product on the benefits to environment without providing specific evidence or certifications. Such claims showcase a lack of standardization, and consumers can always be skeptical about those claims by the organization. Advertising its airline as the ***Lowest Emission Airline***, Ryanair Airlines encouraged environmentally conscious customers to opt for Ryanair Airlines. However, the Advertising Standards Authority of the UK found these claims as misleading and vague for want of any proof for such claims by the airlines. The regulatory authority asked the airlines to remove the advertisement immediately (Hotten, 2020).

- **Misleading or false data:** Apart from irrelevant marketing communication, organizations also misinterpret false data and research to improve their brand image. For example, BP claimed to use renewable energy sources instead of fossil fuels while launching its 'Beyond Petroleum' slogan in the 2000s to attract environmentally conscious customers, However, BP is known for causing an imbalance in the environment and one of the major contributors to oil spilling accidents, (Landman, 2010).
- **Greenlighting-** This concept has emerged as one of the predominant types of greenwashing as companies highlight a minor aspect of green marketing while hiding major problems by greenwashing. For example, Amazon calls itself one of the leading sustainable brands. One such reason for such a claim is that they use electric vehicles for delivery and aim at sustainable packaging. But at the same time, it is a known fact that Amazon still relies on fossil fuels for transportation. Also, the company goes for excessive packaging and follows an unethical labor practice. All these show that Amazon follows only a few aspects of sustainability while hiding major factors concerned with environmental sustainability (Is Amazon Greenwashing? 2025).
- **Green hushing:** Green hushing is similar to Green lighting when organizations underplay and hide the sustainability goals. Apple claimed in 2023 that its new watch series could achieve carbon neutrality. However, many environmentalists have raised concerns about greenwashing. The reason for such suspicion is that Apple has instructed its suppliers not to disclose the details of greenhouse gas emission data of the production units, resulting in no substantial proof of the carbon neutrality claim made by Apple (Ku, 2024).
- **Green rinsing:** In this kind of greenwashing, organizations improvise their environmental, social, and governance targets much before they do so to show that they are accountable to the environment without achieving these targets. One of the classic examples of green rinsing is Nestle's claim of its 100% recyclable water bottles and also claimed that it is environmentally safe. Environmentalists proved them to be inappropriate as Nestle procures water from vulnerable regions facing water scarcity issues (Chow, 2018).
- **Green shifting-** Most organizations try to hide their greenwashing by blaming the consumers. For example, if unable to elicit enough responses from customers while taking a survey on consumers' preference for energy-

efficient products, the organization blames consumers by stating that they are not used to such products. Shell's greenwashing strategy is one of the prime examples of green shifting. Shell relies heavily on fossil fuels while making little effort towards sustainability and shifted the blame to customers for not being eco-friendly in 2020 (Greenwood, 2021).

- **Green crowding**- When a group of organizations comes together to hide their greenwashing, it is called green crowding. Organizations will automatically benefit when they come together and collectively fool the customers by confusing the customers. Airbnb is an example of green crowding. In 2016, Airbnb joined the UN Global Compact and enjoyed all the member privileges but failed to submit its annual sustainability reports. It tried to deceive consumers in the name of sustainability using the UN Global Compact's logo and certification without third-party verification rather than working towards sustainability (Corsini & Frey, 2024).
- **Deceptive imagery:** Consumers associate green marketing with forest, grass, or some greenery. Companies use them as tools to deceive customers by displaying all these aspects in their product promotions. ExxonMobil came up with an advertisement featuring green imagery and climate change and claimed efforts to be more sustainable. However, the organization has spent more on deceptive advertisements than on sustainability (Drugmand, 2020)

5. Why do companies indulge in greenwashing?

Organizations project a product as green by renaming, rebranding, or repackaging to increase sales. Despite knowing the aftereffects of greenwashing, many companies do greenwashing for the following reasons:

- **Changing Consumers' Concerns**: Concern over the environment is growing among consumers. Companies can attract customers by and gain a competitive advantage, appearing ecofriendly. Greenwashing is often used as a marketing strategy to take advantage of consumer trends. Marketers are taking this to promote their products as green (Jong et al.,2018).
- **Reputation Management:** Stakeholders and investors are demanding corporations to become more environmentally conscious. Greenwashing can help companies to boost their reputation in the short run by presenting them as environmentally responsible. This can gain the trust and loyalty of the customers. Organizations are more concerned about the social status/image created in the minds of the customers by them (Gupta, 2022).

- **Government and social pressure:** Growing social pressure and government intervention in business also lead an organization to worry about sustainability. By appearing proactive on environmental issues, they can deter government interventions. They use greenwashing to appease these groups by creating the illusion of sustainability (Marquis, Toffel & Zhou (2016).
- **Complex Corporate Structures:** Complex structures of large corporations make it difficult to follow a clear environmental policy. They use greenwashing to present a cleaner image.
- **Cost Savings:** Rebranding or repackaging are less costly than implementing sustainable practices. Companies choose these greenwashing tactics of tactics to maintain a positive image while saving costs.
- **Lack of Incentives for Genuine Change:** Companies may not see benefit in investing in genuine sustainability efforts without strong incentives or penalties. Greenwashing becomes an easier option to maintain public perception.

6. Case studies of Major organizations involved in Greenwashing

Most of the organizations indulge in greenwashing. Some of the organizations caught on Green washing are

- **Volkswagen:** Volkswagen scandal also known as 'Dieselgate' was a classic example of greenwashing by ignoring corporate ethics and regulatory compliances. To persuade skeptical Americans to buy diesel cars, Volkswagen promoted Clean Diesel engines as an eco-friendly car. Regulation authorities suspected some irregularity associated with the emission test of Volkswagen (Cheng, 2023). Volkswagen has cheated customers by installing an emission device controlled by software and claimed to be producing low-emission vehicles, while they were emitting up to 40 times more than the allowed limit. They used a software known as Defeat Device to rig emission tests. This software during testing activated emission controls while disabling them on normal conditions, resulting in the emission of more pollutants by these vehicles. EPA found in the scandal uncovered in 2015 that Volkswagen fitted this device in around 590,000 Vehicles. Volkswagen denied wrongdoing initially but admitted finally to using these Defeat Devices and agreed to pay over $33 billion as substantial fines and settlements. This scandal highlighted the deceptive practices of a reputable company (Jong & van der Linde, 2022).

- **KLM Airlines:** Approximately 2.5 % of global emission of Carbon dioxide is attributed to Air travel. KLM Airlines introduced in 2019, the Fly Responsibly campaign as part of their Centenary celebration. KLM Airlines claimed to be among the leading Airlines practicing sustainability by using sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and carbon offsetting. Additionally, KLM provided a Carbon offsetting scheme that enabled customers to contribute to reforestation or biofuel purchases to neutralize their flight emissions.

  A Dutch environmental group, Fossil Free NL, filed lawsuit against KLM for exaggerated claims about its sustainability efforts in 2022. They claimed that KLM flight operations using fossil fuels continue to account for the majority of their emissions. SAF comprised less than a percent of their total fuel, highlighting the significant gap between stated ambitions and real-world action. Further, the airline's overall CO2 emissions growth persisted despite their SAF investments. In comparison to the overall scale of their environmental impact the message exaggerated the impact of their sustainability efforts.

  The court ruled in 2024, that the campaign misleading, and the airline's claims were vague and overly optimistic. Due to the discrepancy between rhetoric and reality consumers and stakeholders were misled to believe KLM is significantly more environmentally friendly than its operational reality. The court found using sustainable aviation fuel and carbon offsetting by KLM had negligible impacts on sustainability. The court ordered KLM to withdraw the advertisements and communicate honestly its sustainability efforts in the future. The court ordered them to cover the legal cost of Fossil Free NL without imposing penalties. This case sets a legal precedent for greater scrutiny of environmental claims in advertising (Drugmand, 2024).

- **Unilever**: Even though Unilever has always picturized as a brand which works for sustainability, it is not the truth every time. They claimed that they are aiming to reduce the usage of plastics in their packaging and being ambitious of adopting recyclable and reusable plastics for packaging. However, Unilever has produced over 53 billion plastic sachets in 2023 that were unrecyclable.

  Unilever has of course invested in sustainable sourcing to promote sustainable products and reduce its environmental footprint. It uses terms like natural, eco-friendly, and sustainable, in its advertisements without giving supporting evidence in validating them. Unilever showcases the sustainability efforts of specific products in its communications. However, the Company's broader environmental footprint, from manufacturing and transportation including greenhouse gas emissions is not addressed.

The environmental benefits of its products and overall Corporate actions appear to be exaggerated. Like KLM's case, Unilever's carbon offsetting programs have also come under the scanner. Questions on the effectiveness and transparency of these programs are raising concerns about their genuineness. The major issues identified in this case are the use of misleading terminologies in their advertisements and packaging and lack of transparency (Greenpeace, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Marketing is the effort required to attract customers and retain them. Advertising increases brand awareness by reaching a larger audience to help jumpstart the economy by stimulating buying and increasing sales. Companies utilize Green marketing to derive value from CSR. Widespread use of eco-words has moved from its green notion into more commercial contexts. Green washing creates a false impression by playing on customer sentiments by projecting the products of the Firm as environmentally friendly.

Greenwashing is any false claim by an organization that misrepresents to the consumer that its policies and products are environmentally sound. These unverifiable claims attributing responsible environmental concern by companies are false and misleading.

Greenwashing affects society by causing market distortions, misleading customers, and monopolizing the environmental discourse through economic powers. This paper discusses the six causes, thirteen sins, and different types of Greenwashing with relevant examples. It then proceeds with the reasons for Greenwashing by firms and concludes with three famous case studies.

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