

The Evolving Face of Greenwashing: Uncovering the Dark Side of Corporate Social Responsibility

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Abstract

The act of businesses or organizations deceiving customers about the environmental advantages of their goods, services, or methods is known as "Greenwashing." Rather than implementing significant, beneficial environmental changes, they make ambiguous promises or engage in misleading marketing to give the erroneous impression that you are environmentally responsible. This essay aims to address the following inquiries for research: What are the concepts of Greenwashing conceptually and how have they changed throughout time?

- What category does Greenwashing fall under?
- What is the impact of Greenwashing on society?

The structure of the literature study is as follows, a systematic literature review is an organized, thorough review of the body of knowledge on a particular subject. One involves a systematic search, appraisal and synthesis of pertinent research with the goal of formulating an unbiased summary of the evidence, charting areas of weakness and indicating ways to further study or application.

Greenwashing caught on because current stakeholders find it intriguing, but it always betrays the positive impact on society. In this case, duty of government or authorities is to protect the public. The paper, therefore, stressed the significance of micro and macro policies and/or regulatory frameworks that the host governments and their appointed institutions together put in place, as well as strictly enforce, harking back to the existing, well established practices aimed at neutralising the negative impacts of greenwashing, focusing on publications from the social sciences mostly from wealthy Western countries.

This restriction offers a chance to expand research to the world's developing nations and in India, where it's possible for greenwashing to surface, particularly in the early stages of industrial development.

Keywords: *Greenwashing, Green Marketing, Environmental issues, Corporate Social Responsibility*

INTRODUCTION:

Environmental issues are a topic that is being debated in academic literature and the industrial sector with rising popularity and interest. Both the producer and the customer have aimed their awareness of a product that is considered "green" because it is ecologically friendly (Bhatia and Jain, 2013). This is because customers, in particular, have grown more

aware of environmental issues. Manufacturers are adopting eco-friendly practices as a result of this developing issue, which has an impact on both the end product and the manufacturing process (Kivimaa and Kauto, 2010). Thus, firms "adapt" by developing green claim or eco-friendly advertising to appeal to customers who live environmentally conscious lives (Divine and Lepisto, 2005). Green marketing is therefore selected as the finest concept and approach to satisfy the demands and preferences of the market.

Many environmental statements that highlight environmentally friendly qualities are unclear and misleading (Chen and Chang, 2012). Customers' intentions to buy its products or services have been negatively impacted by its "Greenwashing" technique (McGrath, 1992; Newell, 1998).

Establishing Credibility

Transparency: Communicate your sustainability goals, practices, and progress. This includes providing detailed information about your supply chain, materials, and processes.

Certifications and Standards: You can also get certifications from reputable third party organizations. Examples are: LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design); ISO 14001 (Environmental Management) accreditation and B Corp certification.

And they are these accreditations that can provide third party confirmation of your environmental efforts.

Data and Reporting: Back up your claims with data. Issue accurate, and comprehensive sustainability reports and publish them regularly and verified by third parties. Follow reputable reporting frameworks, for example SASB or GRI.

Engage Stakeholders: Your sustainability efforts need to involve stakeholders including customers, employees and community members. Call them out and prompt feedback for what you've done to address concerns.

Track Record: Build a history of consistent and genuine efforts towards sustainability. Long-term commitment and improvements over time will enhance your credibility.

Expert Partnerships: Collaborate with environmental experts, NGOs, and academic institutions. These partnerships can lend credibility and help you implement effective sustainability practices.

The act of businesses or organizations deceiving customers about the environmental advantages of their goods, services, or methods is known as "greenwashing." Rather than implementing significant, beneficial environmental reforms, they employ misleading advertising or ambiguous statements to fabricate an image of environmental accountability.

KEY ELEMENTS OF GREENWASHING

Misleading Claims:

- **Vague Language:** Terms like "eco-friendly," "natural," or "green" are used without clear definitions or evidence. For example, a product might be labeled as "organic" but only a small portion of its ingredients are organic.
- **Unsubstantiated Statements:** Claims that lack third-party verification or concrete data, such as "environmentally safe" without specifying what aspects are safe.

Selective Disclosure:

- **Highlighting One Positive Aspect:** Focusing on a single positive environmental feature while ignoring broader negative impacts. For instance, a company might promote new recyclable packaging while continuing unsustainable production practices.

Fake Certifications:

- **Creating Deceptive Labels:** Using misleading or fake eco-labels that mimic genuine certifications but are not backed by rigorous standards or verification processes.

Token Efforts:

- **Superficial Changes:** Implementing minor changes that do not address the core environmental issues. For example, a company might promote a small energy-efficient product while its overall operations remain highly polluting.

Greenwashing occurs in a variety of sectors, including fashion, food, energy, and transportation (Cavazos et al., 2023). It might appear in a variety of ways, such as through deceptive labelling, fake certificates, or cryptic phrases. Scholars from a variety of disciplines have made an effort recently to comprehend the characteristics and scope of greenwashing as well as to devise strategies for thwarting it (Qayyum, Jamil, and Sehar, 2022). Residents have become increasingly worried about the false claims of 'greenwashing' — the practice of telling consumers their product is good for the environment when it clearly isn't.

Its “greenwashing” strategy has severely damaged its customers’ intention to buy the goods and services. However, a simple structure might even influence consumer behavior to endorse purchase. This assertion is made by the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) that the attitude under which consumers' behavior is established from their perception.

Concerning the matter, some researchers have discovered that greenwashing may influence certain consumer perceptions, including perceived risk (Chen and Chang, 2012), perceived inconsistency (Gallicano, 2011), perceived deceit (Albayrak, Caber, and Moutinho, 2011), and perceived inconsistency.

Researchers from Terro Choice conducted a survey of in 2009, the US and Canada's "big box" retailers found that over 98% of the 2219 products they looked at exhibited evidence of greenwashing (Choice.T. 2009). This suggests that greenwashing has been recognized by industry experts for more than ten years. The academic literature on "greenwashing," however, has been obtained through a search on WOS (Web of Science). The number of articles has increased recently, but remains quite low in general, and the quantity of published papers related to this topic is completely outmatched by other hot topics. Therefore, an expansion of the knowledge body of greenwashing is an urgent and vital academic question. Meanwhile, the intricacy of greenwashing has disordered the chain of research we have already done, and systematic and scientific reviews.

As a result, we looked through the WOS for reviews of the literature on "greenwashing," of which Yang et al. are the only relevant ones. [Yang, Z.; Nguyen, H.N.; Nguyen, T.T.N.; Cao, T.T. 2020] Nguyen, T.T.H., [Montero-Navarro, A.; Gonzalez-Torres, T.; Rodriguez-Sanchez, J.L.; Gallego-Losada, 2021] Montero-Navarro et al.

Sobral, M.F.F., Ribeiro, A.R.B., Netto, S.V.D., and Soares, G.R.D 2020] Martinez, M.P., Cremasco, C.P., Gabriel, L.R.A., Braga, S.S., Bednaski, A.V., Quevedo-Silva, F., Correa, C.M., da Silva, D., Padgett, R.C.M.L 2020], et al. Agudo and Vergara [Agudo, L.F. 2021; Vergara, C.C. 2021], Pope and Wraas [Pope, S.; Wraas, 2016],

After examining these publications, we identified the following five key characteristics:

The evaluations in the past, however, have concentrated on learning studies on greenwashing conducted within a single industry. To take a more concrete example, Montero-Navarro et al. (/2021) took the food retail, farm, and food industrial sectors. The book, however, is based on greenwashing in the multinational enterprises in emerging markets in Asia focused on by Nguyen, T. T.H., Nguyen, H. N., and Nguyen, T. T.N, whereas Yang et al. (2020] examine greenwashing in multinational corporations in Asian emerging markets.

Second, the reviews that have been conducted earlier are the most focused on the conceptualization of the term greenwashing. Corporate Social Responsibility cleaning, etc., are some examples of the perceptual behaviour of

greenwashing that the customers encounter. Bednaski, A V, Quevedo-Silva, F, Martinez, M P, Cremasco, C P, Gabriel, L R A, Braga, S S, Correa, C M; da Silva, D; Padgett, R C M L 2020.

Third, greenwashing complements the research assessment in other spheres of the environment. These are green products and finance (Vergara, C.C.; Agudo, L.F. 2021), tobacco and deforestation (Geist, H.J. 2021), bioplastics (Goel, V.; Luthra, P.; Kapur, G.S.; Ramakumar, S.S.V. 2021), media to promote sustainable development (Pearson, E.; Tindle, H.; Ferguson, M.; Ryan, J.; Litchfield, C).

Fourth, the researchers before have not carried out any prior analysis on greenwashing. As one example, Yang et al. [Y., Pokrychaska, R., Baily, P., & Kyparisoglou, A. Environmental social and corporate governance and greenwashing: a South Korea case study] concentrated on the causes, classification and effects of the greenwashing, described by Netto et al., 2020.

The fifth is that no depth is taken in the previous analysis of the application of the analytic methods in the available literature in greenwashing reviews One of the studies used in the literature review of greenwashing followed the bibliometric method using a fuzzy inference system in [Martinez, M.P.; Cremasco, C.P.; Gabriel, L.R.A.; Braga, ST.; Meta-analysis [Netto, S.V.D.; Sobral, M.F.F.; Sobral, M.F.F. 2021] and systematic review and meta-analysis [Rodriguez-Sanchez, J.L.; Gallego-Losada, 2021]. As a consequence of its advantages, new problems, and chances for interdisciplinary study, greenwashing has gained increased recognition. Few studies have focused on greenwashing in MNCs in underdeveloped countries, despite prior research covering pertinent subjects.

Except for studies by Zhu et al. (2008), Du (2015), Sun and Zhang (2019) for China, and Nelson and Robertson (2010) for Brazil, almost all other studies have been completed. Thus, this study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the concepts of greenwashing conceptually and how have they changed throughout time?
- What category does "greenwashing" fall under?
- What are the social effects of greenwashing?

METHODOLOGY

Structured Literature Review Method

This study used a systematic literature review, which is a methodical, in-depth analysis of the corpus of research on a certain topic. To create an objective overview of the data, identify any knowledge gaps, and guide future research or practice, it comprises systematically seeking out, evaluating, and integrating relevant studies.

This approach provides reviewers with greater knowledge and insight into a subject than automatic screening (Centobelli et al., 2017). The following steps were really taken:

- Step 1: Obtaining Supplies: Find a bibliography of academic works. Using keywords and established bibliographic database systems, a literature search was conducted.
- Step 2: Descriptive analysis: assess the materials' different characteristics, including how they have changed over time.
- Step 3: Material evaluation: categorize and assess the study sample. List the primary problems, findings, and recommendations for further study.

Selecting the Right Databases and Search Techniques

Articles from peer-reviewed journals published between 2000 and 2021 were used for the literature review, which was conducted using databases from Ebsco, Web of Science, SpringerLink, and Emerald Insight. When searching for "greenwashing," the top result produced 1,203 results. "Greenwashing" was used to restrict the search results to 669 items, which were found through searching by keyword "greenwasher.". The databases contained duplicate articles that we overlooked. By using advanced search algorithms for keywords, article themes, titles, and abstracts, 62 papers that were

potentially relevant were found when searching for full-text publications. They underwent a thorough examination before being included in the systematic review report.

Table 1. Search results and search options of every database that was searched

Database	Using the term "Greenwashing"	1.By "Greenwashing" as a keyword 2. Type of document: Article	1. Using the term "Greenwashing" 2. Type of document: Article 3. Keywords, abstracts, subjects, and titles for articles in the advanced search
EBSCO	300	251	18
Emerald Insight	106	58	6
Springer Link	151	80	2
Web of Science	33	20	36
Total	648	409	62

Source: Compiled by Authors

Features of the Study

62 Scholarly publications were chosen for this step and meticulously sorted using a keyword search. The researcher then evaluated the various facets of the materials through a descriptive analysis. In particular, conceptual analysis and concept development were assessed, with an emphasis on the quantitative techniques applied in empirical research. The sample was analyzed in the last step to determine important topics, empirical techniques, findings, and a discussion of potential future research areas.

Table 2 lists the journal titles where the reviewed articles were published. The journals that published the greatest articles on greenwashing were, as can be seen, the Journal of Cleaner Production and the Journal of Business Research.

Table 2: Articles Retrieved

Journal Name	Qty
Environmental and Resource Economics	2
California Management Review	1
Corporate Governance: The International Journal of Business in Society	2
Energy Policy	1
Environment and Planning	1
Environmental Health Perspectives	1
Environmental History	1
Environmental Sciences Europe	1
Global Environmental Change	2
Industrial and Commercial Training	1
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	2
International Political Sociology	1

Journal of Global Responsibility	1
Journal of Business Ethics	1
Journal of Business Research	12
Journal of Cleaner Production	8
Journal of Economics and Management Strategy	1
Journal of Environmental Economics and Management	1
Journal of European Public Policy	1
Journal of Organizational Change Management	1
Journal of Regulatory Economics	1
Spanish Journal of Marketing - ESIC	1
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	1
Marine Policy	1
Marketing Intelligence and Planning	2
Journal of Business Economic Management	1
Meditari Accountancy Research	1
Organization and Environment	3
Organization Science	1
Portland International Conference on Management of Engineering and Technology	2
Research in International Business and Finance	1
Review of Agricultural Economics	3
Social Responsibility Journal	1
Tourism Management	1
Total	62

Source: Compiled by Authors

Prior researchers assessed and analyzed works until the year 2000. No research was included in our databases during the years 2001, 2002, 2005, and 2006. However, From 2010, the number of articles increased, and by 2017, it had reached a maximum of ten. While numerous scholars researched the West, the US, and other countries in general, there were few studies that specifically emphasized emerging economies.

A summary of the topic and a compilation of articles are presented in Table 3, with supplementary information on marketing being emphasized by referring to it as 'important'. In their research, researchers were primarily interested in the effects of environmental factors on human health. However not all of these studies are equally relevant and important. The subject of greenwashing was the focus of their discussion, which encompassed issues like eco-labels, environmental brand loyalty toness, ecological skepticism, and environmentally friendly confidence.

The second central topic was centered on environmental regulation and policy-making mechanisms. A significant portion of discussions centered on politics and corporate environmental policies (Alons, 2017; Sun & Zhang, 2019; Luke 2008); Coates et al, 2011; Harris (2015)).

Table 3. An overview of the topics identified and a description

Area of Study	No. of Articles	Authors	Related Description
Marketing	20	Chen et al. (2014), Nyilasy et al. (2014), Ulusoy and Barretta (2016), Blome et al. (2017), Siano et al. (2017), Chen et al. (2017), Lin et al. (2017), Brécard (2017), Guo et al. (2018), Zhang et al. (2018), Akturan (2018), Pizzetti et al. (2019), Chen et al. (2019), Nguyen et al. (2019), Wang et al. (2019), De Freitas Netto et al. (2020)	Greenwashing undermines faith in green promises, harming eco-labels, green loyalty, and company image. It erodes consumer desire for environmentally friendly products, disseminates false information, and compromises the supply chain's integrity.
Enterprise Communication	5	Lyon and Montgomery (2013), Kim and Lyon (2015), Du (2015), Bowen and Aragon-Correa (2014), Yu et al. (2020)	Sustainability Reports and Corporate Environmental Programs
Policy Frameworks and Environmental Oversight	12	Luke (2008), Matisoff (2012), Alons (2017), Guo et al. (2017), Berrone et al. (2015), Ramesh and Rai (2017), Testa et al. (2018), Zhang and Sun (2019), Harris (2015), and Guo et al. (2017) Solomon and Rhianon Pel Edgley (2008), Matejek and Gössling (2014), and Coates et al. (2011)	Greenwashing Regulations and Environmental Policy
Ecological Issues	5	Geerts (2014), Rahman et al. (2015), Gamper-Rabindran and Finger (2013), Mccrory and Langvardt (2012), Stephenson et al. (2012)	Verified Green Claims and Green Development
Corporate Social Responsibility	6	Gosselt et al. (2017), Wang and Sarkis (2017), Holme (2010), Font et al. (2012), Roulet and Touboul (2015), Uyar et al. (2020)	Ethics and corporate sustainability concerns
Accounting and finance	6	Laufer (2003), R. D. (2010), Esposito, E. (2017), Du et al. (2018), Relaño (2011), Lyon and Maxwell (2011),	The Environmental Effects of Business and Finance
Business ethics	4	L. (2021), M. G. (2018). Ariztía et al. (2014), Dahl (2010)	Greenwashing's Effect on Ethical Marketing.
Educational Programs and	4	(2018), Jones (2012), R. (2017), and Delmas, M. A. (2021)	The Greenwashing Practices of Sustainable Institutions

Eco-friendly Growth			
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Source: Compiled by Authors

CONCEPT AND CLASSIFICATION OF GREENWASHING

Concept of Greenwashing

According to Greenpeace (n.d.), greenwashing is the practice of misleading consumers about a business's environmental policies or the benefits a product or service offers in terms of the environment.

Some scholars contend that intentional and continuous manipulation of a business's environmental efforts—or lack thereof—is what causes this (Furrow, 2010; Alves, 2009, 2011). Many years ago, consumers utilized social media to start campaigns against greenwashing practices. In response, TerraChoice (2009) listed a few business wrongdoings.

1) The claim that a product is "green" based solely on a few features, neglecting other important environmental factors, is a sin of the hidden trade-off. difficulties. They use the industrial process of papermaking as an example, emphasizing it rather than the source of the

Raw Ingredients.

2) Sin of no proof: An environmental statement that lacks a reliable third-party certification or easily accessible documentation. However, maker Green's claim of free waste is unsupported by any data.

3) The sin of vagueness occurs when a statement is so general or ill-defined that the audience is likely to misinterpret it. "100% natural" or "all-natural," which implies that a product must contain another environmental ingredient in order to qualify as green, is the watchword of today's corporate environmental campaign.

4) The sin of idolizing counterfeit labels: A product that uses language or images to claim third-party endorsement when none exists. Subsequently, it will be advised that the corporation cannot simply make claims about its "greenness"; rather, a third party, impartial, must endorse specific items in their advertisements.

5) The sin of irrelevance pertains to an environmental statement that, although verifiable, lacks significance or utility for customers looking for eco-friendly items.

As mentioned previously in this study, certain consumers may have negative impressions of companies that engage in greenwashing. The five faults that TerraChoice enumerates could make consumers more dubious of products that purport to be green. Customers will feel less trusting of the company, which creates a mistrustful perception (both of the brand and the product). We, therefore, think that these practices will negatively impact consumer perception and behavior based on previous research papers that have been included in this literature review.

Classification of Greenwashing

Various research-derived criteria can be used to categorize the practice of deceiving customers about the environmental advantages of a company's or product's actions, a behavior commonly referred to as "greenwashing." This is a general framework supported by evidence:

Tokenism

In the context of greenwashing, "tokenism" refers to the practice of a business making insignificant or surface-level environmental adjustments to give the impression that it is environmentally conscious without actually improving its total environmental impact (Orange and Cohen, 2010). Tokenism is a strategy to appear as though you are committed to sustainability without actually doing much work or changing anything.

Misleading Claims

Claims that are meant to mislead or generate a false impression are referred to as misleading claims. initial thoughts (Santos et al., 2023). These assertions may be partial, inaccurate in terms of facts, or given in a manner that falsifies the facts. They frequently seek to sway people's opinions by inflating, leaving out crucial data, or unfavourably presenting the facts.

False statements can appear in a variety of settings, including politics, the media, and advertising. They can influence judgment by giving a skewed impression of the world. A business that has a track record of breaking environmental laws suddenly starts promoting a green project without making any significant improvements.



Fig1: Classification of Greenwashing

Source: Compiled by Authors

Irrelevant Claims

Irrelevant claims are statements or assertions which are unrelated to the subject and the specific arguments under discussion. They may be true in their own right however they do not add anything relevant to the topic at hand. For instance, let us say you are arguing for a particular new drug and someone cites information on how drug regulations were passed even before the invention of the drug, that would be an irrelevant claim. Irrelevant claims make it difficult to focus on the main argument, thus making it hard to have clear and productive discussions or reach a conclusion.

Hidden Trade-offs

Hidden trade-offs imply the prominence of certain benefits in a decision or activity, usually accompanied by costs or drawbacks that are less obvious. These trade-offs may not be visible, though, on an initial examination; they can often be concealed behind a looking glass of positive attributes. For instance, a marketing advertisement may claim that a product is eco-friendly because of the eco-friendly materials used in it, however, its social responsibility rating may be far from the norm metrics because of its production & logistics. In this instance, If only the green side of the product is given attention, the cost and benefits of its use in society pollution generated- remain untreated. Such an in-depth understanding of hidden trade-offs is dependent on a deeper understanding of all the attributes present and their relationships.

Lack of Proof

“Lack of evidence” implies the lack of sufficient evidence or proof to support a particular assertion mostly in argumentation or in a claim. The absence of proof in this case refers to an instance in which there is no available information that can be used to support the claim. Sometimes it can happen due to various reasons. For example:

- Low quantity of evidence: Adequate information in the form of studies, statistics, facts, etc. is missing to support the affirmation.

- Missing papers: The correspondence statement lacks supporting documents, records or sources.
- Claims without back up: The statement is made regardless of any evidence backing it up, purely on opinion or hearsay.

Especially in cases like academic arguments, scientific inquiries, or legal matters, lack of proof means that no further proofs will be considered and the statement cannot be held as true accordingly.

False Labels

False labels can be defined as labels that are misapplied or are incorrect in relation to something, thereby potentially clouding prejudice about whatever relative importance ensued upon it. This term can also be applied in various contexts, such as:

- Product Libelling: A product that is not truly organic may declare itself “organic” or “natural”. As a result, it may create consumers’ misunderstanding that the product is healthier or more environmentally sound than it is.
- Advertising: There may be some marketing promotion that could mislead consumers using wrong labels regarding either the merits of the product or the service or the features and attributes of the product or service.
- Categorization: Some things or people or even ideas may be branded in such a manner so as to paint a picture that is totally different from the actual picture, for example calling someone an ‘expert’ without evidence or credentials to back up such a claim.

Due to the not-so-pleasant consequences that may arise from the use of all labels, such as deception accompaniment and manipulation, and loss of confidence, it is imperative therefore that claims and labels be properly scrutinized to scrub out false claims.

INDICATORS OF GREENWASHING

a. Lack of Specifics

Vague or broad claims without specific details about the environmental benefits. Eco-friendly” without specifying what makes the product eco-friendly.

b. Absence of Third-Party Verification

No third-party verification or certification. The company or country’s sustainability claims lack validation from reputable environmental organizations.

c. Focus on Minor Attributes

Highlighting a small positive aspect while the overall environmental impact is negative.

Highlighting that a product is made with a small amount of recycled content and the rest is made of non-recyclable materials.

d. Inconsistent Practices

A company’s environmental claims do not align with its overall business practices or history. An organic farmer who sells non-organic grain. A company that was once a notorious environmental offender, who suddenly touts its ‘green’ philosophy, but has made none of the promised changes.

Research-Based Classification Systems

a. The “Greenwashing Spectrum”

Definition: Categorizes greenwashing based on the level of deceit and intent. Ranges from inadvertent miscommunication to deliberate deception.

Example: A spectrum where unintentional misleading claims are on one end and deliberate false labelling on the other.

b. The “Environmental Transparency Index”

Definition: Evaluate companies based on their transparency and credibility in environmental reporting. Example: Companies are ranked based on the clarity and accuracy of their environmental claims and the presence of third-party certifications.

c. The “Consumer Confusion Model”

Definition: Measures the extent to which greenwashing practices confuse consumers and distort their purchasing decisions. Example: Analysing consumer responses to green marketing claims to determine how effectively they communicate genuine sustainability.

D. Evidence-Based Examples

a. Case Studies

- Detailed investigations of specific instances of greenwashing. Example: Analysing a company’s marketing campaigns against their actual environmental performance.

b. Consumer Surveys

- Surveys and studies assessing consumer perceptions and awareness of greenwashing. Example: Research showing how consumers are misled by vague or misleading environmental claims.

c. Regulatory Reports

- Reports from regulatory bodies on greenwashing practices and enforcement actions. Example: Findings from investigations by environmental watchdogs or government agencies.

Greenwashing Affecting Society

However, greenwashing is conceptually much more relevant in the contemporary marketplace, where it is much more prevalent (Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). And it represents a serious problem that has profound effects on consumers and others alike. Two main types of greenwashing have been identified in the literature: firm-level presentation, product-level presentation, and making claims through execution, product-level claim. The various forms of greenwashing — from claims of recycling plastic to workers who pose naked for the eco-causes they market — collectively strike deep into the fabric of society.

The Impact of Greenwashing on Society

Greenwashing primarily means that the trust consumers associate with “eco-friendly” products and claims are being eroded. In both cases, it becomes hard for consumers to determine which products are truly environmentally friendly versus simply greenwashed. This can be a double-edged sword — as it can create much confusion and skepticism losing market credibility in the “green” space.

Greenwashing reduces trust in authentic environmental activities and tricks customers into thinking a company practices sustainability. Greenwashing companies often employ deceptive marketing ploys or surface-level modifications to give the illusion of being environmentally sound whilst failing to adopt meaningful sustainability practices. However, the

overall greenwash impact on consumers looking to make informed choices and actual green initiatives is of greater detriment. Therefore, obscuring the effect of so-called sustainable practices and giving the impression that one company is more committed to environmental responsibility than another.

In addition, greenwashing can hinder the development and adoption of new technologies and advances in sustainability. But when companies can obtain a "green" image without having to make real substantive changes, there is less of an incentive to spend on environmental improvement. This is what enables the cycle of surface-level sustainability to continue on, stalling meaningful action around climate change and environmental destruction. In the end, greenwashing reduces confidence in corporate sustainability voracity, diluting the larger movement for a greener society.

To combat this, increased transparency, stringent regulations, and consumer education are essential to ensure that environmental claims are credible and that genuine efforts are recognized and rewarded.

Consequences of Greenwashing

According to Jamali and Karam (2018), businesses that engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) will draw in more stakeholders, which will boost customer orientation and purchase intent. However, when it comes to multinational corporations (MNCs), corporate greenwashing hurts both consumers and possible stakeholders. Since there are two categories of stakeholders—existing and potential—the effect on them is more complicated.

By raising profits, greenwashing will help existing stakeholders (Solomon & Rhianon Pel Edgley, 2008).

CONCLUSION

The possibility of businesses in The paper identifies emerging markets that engage in greenwashing. Greenwashing can occur immediately when businesses neglect corporate ethics because different countries have different legal frameworks. especially when industrialisation was only getting started, distinct market opportunities and little competition pressure define the business environments of nations' economies. This is when you'll most likely see greenwashing. The advantages to society are always harmed by greenwashing, even if it piques the interest of current stakeholders.

Here, the government's or authorities' primary responsibility is to protect the public. The essay emphasized the critical role that legislation and/or micro and macro policies of host governments play in mitigating the adverse effects of greenwashing.

Like other papers, this one has a number of flaws. We looked at a lot of social science literature about industrialized Western countries. Because of this limitation, the study can now be extended to developing countries worldwide, such as India, where greenwashing is anticipated to happen, especially in the early phases of industrialization. In the future, researchers should definitely keep up this important work.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest related to the content, data, or findings presented in this research paper.

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