

JQSS: (Journal Of Quranic and Social Studies)  
 ISSN: (e): 2790-5640 ISSN (p): 2790-5632  
 Volume: 3, Issue: 2, July-December 2023. P: 168-183

Open Access: <http://jqss.org/index.php/JQSS/article/view/109>

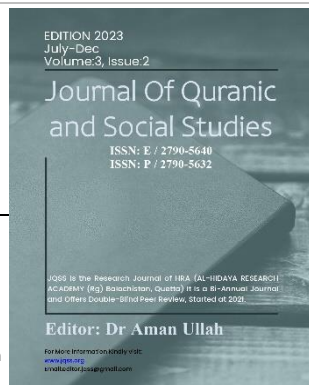
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10752100>

Article History:	Received	Accept	Published
	24-09-2023	13-11-2023	03-12-2023





Copyright: © The Authors

Licensing: this work is licensed under a creative commons attribution 4.0 international license



## Analysing The Discursive Tools Employed in Advertisement Campaigns of National and International Commodity Products; Linguistic Exploration of the Phenomenon of Greenwashing

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. <b>Sidra Shaikh</b> <br><a href="https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2000-0716">https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2000-0716</a> | PhD scholar, English Linguistics, IIUI, Islamabad |
| 2. <b>Gul Khanda</b> <br><a href="https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9849-1026">https://orcid.org/0009-0008-9849-1026</a>   | PhD scholar, English Linguistics, IIUI, Islamabad |

*How to Cite:* Sidra Shaikh and Gul Khanda (Analysing The Discursive Tools Employed in Advertisement Campaigns of National and International Commodity Products; Linguistic Exploration of the Phenomenon of Greenwashing (JQSS) *Journal of Quranic and Social Studies*, 3(2), 168-183.

### Abstract and indexing



Publisher  
 HRA (AL-HIDAYA RESEARCH ACADEMY) (Rg)  
 Balochistan Quetta





# Analysing The Discursive Tools Employed in Advertisement Campaigns of National and International Commodity Products; Linguistic Exploration of the Phenomenon of Greenwashing

**Sidra Shaikh** 

PhD scholar, English Linguistics, IIUI, Islamabad

**Gul Khanda** 

PhD scholar, English Linguistics, IIUI, Islamabad

Journal of Quranic  
and Social Studies  
168-183

© The Author (s) 2023

Volume:3, Issue:2, 2023

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.10752100

[www.jqss.org](http://www.jqss.org)

ISSN: E/ 2790-5640

ISSN: P/ 2790-5632

**OJS** **PKP**  
OPEN JOURNAL SYSTEMS  
PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE PROJECT

## Abstract

Advertisements are considered as a form of persuasive communication employing rhetoric art. It has become a necessity for consumers and producers, to have an idea of what eco-friendly products and services can be catered. This study follows qualitative approach and analyses the discursive techniques and linguistic tools that are being used for greenwashing in selected advertisements, since, the fact that a lot of companies make use of greenwashing has a negative effect on the trust in green products and green advertisements (Chang 2013; Aji, 2015) and consumers must be enlightened. Greenwashing not only erodes consumer confidence but that it also creates skepticism on green products in general (Aji 2015). Six flyers/ ads of different national and international commodity products' campaigns make up the data for the present study, selected via purposive sampling. For the analysis, the Wagner and Hansen's (2002) measurement model for advertising greenness, and TerraChoice's model (2009) are used as theoretical-frameworks. Some of the linguistics choices found in analysis, are enlisted as follows: natural, organic, eco-friendly, green, sustainable, organically derived, free of allergies, biodegradable, etc., where green claims and print advertisements served as the groundwork for the analyses. Furthermore, findings suggest that the most common sin occurring in the category of household commodity products is the sin of vagueness since all the ads use statements that lack explanatory data of the claims. Additionally, sin of no-proof is found since the verifiable data or certification was not found during the analyses. Moreover, the sin of hidden-tradeoff is found since the product's greenness is based on a narrow set of attributes, as suggested by analysis, lastly, sin of lesser two evils, the sin of irrelevance, fibbing, worshipping false labels are also employed for greenwashing, as suggested by the analysis. Although green is a symbol of nature, ecology, and the environment; however, it does not imply that the product is inherently ecological, thus it is recommended that this domain needs further exploration in its own right.

**Keywords:** Advertisements, Commodity Products, Ecology, Greenwashing, Seven Sins

**Corresponding Author Email:** [sidra.phdeng212@student.iiu.edu.pk](mailto:sidra.phdeng212@student.iiu.edu.pk) / [gul.phdeng209@student.iiu.edu.pk](mailto:gul.phdeng209@student.iiu.edu.pk)

## **I. Introduction**

Advertising is a necessity of the modern world. Advertisements are considered as a form of persuasive communication, as Bredenkamp (2009) defines advertisement as “a process of communication in which a communicator succeeds in voluntarily forming, sustaining or changing the attitudes of a recipient in accordance with what the communicator intends to achieve by his or her message”. Thus, without advertisements, consumers would not have an idea what products, options and services are available to them. Sinclair (2001) notes that “advertising deals in ideas, attitudes, motivations, dreams, desires and values, giving them cultural form through its signifying practices- a process by which the words and images are given meanings”. This shows that advertisements cannot be separated from the culture in which they are constructed. Advertising is important for every product as it helps the producers to persuade their consumers it also has powerful effect on consumer decision making. Advertisers use media discourse in order to manipulate the minds of their customers. Harris and Seldon (2009) define an advertisement as “designed to spread information with the view of promoting marketable goods and services”. For that, language functions as a source to attract, convince and persuade consumers for a product. Linda (1985) asserts that mostly advertisements are constructed by following the AIDA principle; which stands for: attracting attention, creating interest, leading to decision making, and taking of an action on the consumer’s part. The products are advertised by shaping the belief of the target audience that the product is beneficial and useful. Sinclair (2001) explicates that people spend more than 16 hours to see advertisements of various commodity products every year, calling it a challenge for consumers to distinguish between valuable and useful advertisements from the otherwise dis-honest advertisements. To curtail and curb companies from making fraudulent claims about their products, many acts and guidelines such as: Pure Food and Drug Act, the Green Guides by the United States’ Federal Trade Commission, the Australian Consumer Law by the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission and the United Kingdom’s Green Claims Code by the Advertising Standards Authority, have been passed.

However, there are still several ways through which advertisers try to influence the consumers. One of the ways is showcasing the product as eco- friendly or environment friendly via green marketing or green washing. The present paper intends to explore the later phenomenon i.e., green washing. Many corporations are manufacturing environmentally friendly products or at least greening their marketing campaigns. The business of green marketing is booming. Visionary green marketing has changed the landscape of the commercial world and taken industries by surprise (Marty, 2007).

### **I.1 Statement of the Problem:**

Companies get involved in greenwashing practices for reasons such as increasing their sales and market share (Baum, 2012, TerraChoice, 2010; Dai et al., 2014). However, enforcement of the curtailing guidelines is limited (Delmas & Cuerel Burbano, 2011) and

the compliance for brands becomes difficult amid differences in guidelines and regulations between countries. Consequently, greenwashing exploits consumers' genuine environmental concerns, causing problems such as: limiting consumers' capability to make actual environmentally friendly decisions, creating ambiguity and skepticism towards all products endorsing eco-friendly, including those that are genuinely more environmentally friendly. Greenwashing has a greater societal cost than other deceptive marketing practices; it not only affects consumers and companies but the environment as a whole. Ultimately, greenwashing threatens the progress of real improvements to sustainability. Thereafter, it is imminent to uncover linguistic choices made in green washed advertisements, and highlight tools and techniques used by advertisers to execute green washing.

Moreover, existing literature is suggestive of the fact that there are numerous ways through which advertisers try to influence the consumers and their opinions. One of the ways is showcasing the products as eco- friendly or environment friendly via employing techniques such as green marketing. While green marketing may aid consumers in making better-informed choices, it is also a strong marketing tool for companies, as they capitalize on green marketing opportunities. Since it is a marketing tool at the hands of advertisers, hence the probability of it being deceptive or being misleading-green-claims remains there. These deceptive or misleading claims, termed as green washing, often cannot be distinguished from the genuine claims, specially by the masses, which is concerning. It is because, apart from misleading the customers, the dishonest marketing done in greenwashing might leave serious negative effects on the environment in the longer run, since it consequently sabotages and corners the environmental issues, while highlights false sustainable qualities of the products. This is alarming because instead of working in favor or for the benefit of environment, it shifts the focus away from it, which in turn remains unaddressed in the longer run. For example, arguments such as 100% natural, recyclable, biodegradable and chemical free, are often used in an exaggerated manner, when they may in fact, be false or trivial and simply camouflaged as a proxy for credentials of actual environmental significance. This study thus, looks into the language employed and linguistic tools used for greenwashing advertisements.

Simply put, Greenwashing is the act of misleading consumers on the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or service (Delmas 2011). Greenwashing and green advertisements reach the consumer in the same form (Schmuck 2018), and therefore consumers may fail to distinguish them from one another.

## **1.2 Research Objectives:**

The research objectives of the present study are:

- I. To determine the relationship of advertisement and green-ness in the selected advertisements.

2. To explore the linguistic tools used for greenwashing in selected advertisements, (identified as sins of green washing).

### **1.3 Research Questions:**

The research questions of the present study are:

1. What is the relationship of green advertisement and language in the selected advertisements?
2. What are the various linguistic tools employed in the in selected advertisements making it fall under the category of green- washed ads?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study:**

Greenwashing is a real-world problem affecting the real world (i.e. people, animals and the environment). There yet is no obvious answer to the issue of greenwashing, effecting the real world. This study being directed towards practicality, focusing on the outcomes of the research rather than the antecedent conditions is one of its contributions in its own right (Creswell, 2013). As stated by Powell (2001), the mandate of science is to facilitate human problem-solving, hence this study is focused on solving problems in the real world. In addition, it will aid consumers to distinguish the good from the tricky traps of greenwashed products and help them to avoid renouncing the green world and using of greener household cleaning and laundry products.

## **2. Literature Review:**

Environmentalist Jay Westerveld created the term "greenwashing" to describe a type of green marketing tactic in which customers are misled by a company's environmental claims, obligations, activities, and policies. It is described as the act of deceiving customers about a company's environmental policies or its environmental performance and positive communication about environmental performance, in accordance with Terrachoice (2010) definition. Companies engage in a phenomenon known as "greenwashing," which is used to conceal unsustainable corporate agendas (Karliner, 2001). The goal is to improve the company's perceived green image and draw consumers to their brands and business (Condon, 2020; Darke & Ritchie 2007), ultimately increasing profit (Du, 2015).

Green discourse, according to Muhlhausler and Peace (2006), is environmental discourse that articulates arguments regarding the interaction between people and the environment using language. Green discourse also encompasses a range of discourses related to environmental management and governance. Backstrand and Lovbrand (2006) contend that environmental rhetoric falls into three broad political categories: civic environmentalism, green governmentality, and ecological modernization. Diverse viewpoints exist within the green discourse categories regarding approaches to tackling environmental issues and safeguarding the environment. Corporate green advertising is impacted by these green discourses.

Multiple aspects of green advertising, including its nature, structure, content, effect, and development patterns, have been brought to prominence as a result of advancements in green advertising methods (Leonidou & Leonidou, 2011). According to Banerjee et al. (1995), green advertising is commercial advertising that promotes goods, services, or company public perceptions using an environmental theme. To put it another way, they use environmental advertising to highlight the items' eco-friendliness. The discourse surrounding green advertising expresses how people think and perceive the environment. Additionally, the discourse and its embodied meanings need to be viewed as diverse and heterogeneous. Despite having its origins in environmental activism, the green discourse has experienced semantic expansion and spread over other public spheres, as stated by Banerjee et al. (1995).

In particular, there are two strands of research on the subject of green advertising content. One stream (e.g., Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer 1995; Grillo, Tokarczyk, and Hansen 2008; Wagner and Hansen 2002) focuses on the structure of green advertising and the amount of environmental information covered in the commercials. In order to account for variations in the environmental advertising, Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer (1995) divided environmental advertisements into three categories: shallow, moderate, and deep. Based on a combination of textual and executional elements, Wagner and Hansen (2002) further expanded this classification into five categories of ad greenness. According to this research, the majority of ads were mild or superficial (Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer, 1995), and over time, ads' overall greenness decreased (Grillo, Tokarczyk, and Hansen).

The other stream focuses on greenwashing, which is the practice of deceiving customers about a company's environmental policies or the advantages and benefits of a product or service from an environmental standpoint (Furlow, 2010). Organizations that engage in this activity, known as "greenwashing," make unfounded or deceptive claims about the environmental and social qualities of a good or service, or the firm itself. Greenwashing is the practice of using resources—money, time, and effort—to promote a product as "green" rather than reducing its negative environmental effects in order to give the impression that the company is more environmentally conscious than it actually is.

The consequences of "green washing" are the focus of another stream of research on green advertising. Examining green marketing and advertising literature may be done from two primary perspectives: one looks at green marketers and the advertisement itself from the perspective of the corporation, while the other looks at green consumers or the interaction between advertisers and recipients of advertisements. Therefore, another line of research on green advertisements focuses on how environmental advertisements affect customer behavior. Researchers examine consumer attitudes and responses to green advertising in this stream, primarily using a quantitative method. They also identify the most persuasive types of green advertising appeals for consumers (D'Souza and Taghian, 2005; Chan et al., 2006).

Carlson, Grove, and Kangun's significant study from 1993 was an early attempt to methodically look into deceit in green advertising. Their examination of the content of American periodicals released in 1989 and 1990 revealed that although most environmental claims made by organizations did not contain false information, the majority of them did contain aspects of deception, like omissions or vagueness. Nevertheless, there haven't been many efforts to qualitatively look into how common false green advertising tools are.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This section elaborates methodology, framework used and sampling technique.

#### **3.1. Design**

Researcher has conducted a quantitative analysis of the selected advertisements. Research design is the plan or strategy for the research that span the selections from extensive assumptions to exact strategies of data series and evaluations. (Creswell, 2017). The present research is centered on Qualitative design and the data has been analyzed through descriptive analysis, employing Wagner and Hansen's (2002) measurement model and Terra Choice's framework (2009).

#### **Green advertising**

Adopted from Wagner and Hansen's (2002) measurement model for advertising greenness, referred to as its executional framework, an ad is categorized as green advertisement if it contains one or more of the following elements:

- a) images of wildlife, vegetation, forests, natural landscapes, or children;
- b) green colors and tones, and
- c) symbols, logos, or graphics that signify an environmentally friendly orientation (e.g., organic, recycling, a green leaf)

Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer (1995) iterate the same in other words. They explicate that green advertising is defined as any ad that meets one or more of the following criteria: (1) explicitly or implicitly addresses the relationship between a product/service and the biophysical environment, (2) promotes a green lifestyle with or without highlighting a product/service, and (3) presents a corporate image of environmental responsibility" (Banerjee, Gulas, and Iyer 1995).

The aim of green advertising is to (a) inform consumers about the environmental aspects of a company's products and services (Pranee 2010), (b) create awareness of and positive attitudes toward environmentally friendly brands and businesses (D'souza and Taghian 2005), and (c) stimulate the demand for green products (Carlson et al. 1996).

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), established a set of guidelines for green advertising claims in 1992 as a response to the continuing demand from several states and organizations (Carlson, Grove, and Kangun, 1993, Federal Trade Commission, 1999). The guidelines consist of four

general principles (FTC News, 1992; Federal Trade Commission 1992): 1. Be clear, prominent and understandable; 2. Clearly state whether any assumed environmental attribute or benefit applies to the product, the package, or both; 3. Avoid exaggeration of an environmental attribute or benefit; and 4. Ensure comparison statements in claim be clear and understandable, not deceptive, to the consumer.

## **Green washing**

Greenwashing, according to Halverson (2009), is a real-world phenomenon in which businesses emphasize their green attributes so much that they even make up claims to deceive customers into buying their products. It is described as deceptive or misleading environmental claims, which are false, vague, omit key information, inaccurate, ambiguous, missing important details, or any combination of these, and it pertains to misleading or deceptive environmental claims.

In order to detect greenwashing, a list called the seven sins of greenwashing given by TerraChoice (2009) is employed as theoretical basis of the study. This list consists of seven criteria on the basis of which scientists and consumers can test claims made by companies (TerraChoice 2009). If a company meets any of the criteria, it is often guilty of greenwashing (Dahl, 2010; Delmas 2011; Aji 2015). The sins are based on the regulations made by the U.S. Federal Trade, which is elaborated in coming paragraphs.

## **Seven Sins of Greenwashing**

Due to a prevailing number of greenwashing cases, a Canadian based company Terra Choice created a greenwashing framework called “seven sins.” The framework is used in order to evaluate companies’ claims and products for greenwashing.

### **Sin of the Hidden Trade-off**

A claim that a product is green but is only supported by a small number of characteristics and leaves out other important environmental issues; an example of this would be to promote a product's recyclability without addressing resource waste. Businesses shouldn't exaggerate one aspect to cover up other faults in order to avoid this sin.

### **Sin of No Proof**

These are the kinds of statements, which cannot be validated by a trustworthy third party or by easily available data. Stated differently, businesses do not have the supporting data necessary to justify, for example, the statistical claims they make regarding the product's percentage of post-consumer recycled content.

### **Sin of Vagueness**



It is considered a sin for an organization or producer to make broad claims or poorly defined features that lead potential customers to misinterpret the claimed features, as this is known as the "greenwashing" problem. It Claims make use of vague and ambiguous language, which causes consumers to become confused and misunderstand the true meaning. Using the terms "all-natural" or "nature-friendly," for instance, neither of which is inherently green. As a result, companies must make these kinds of statements and speak in a way that customers can comprehend without confusion. For example, non-toxic, natural, or eco-friendly.

### **Sin of Irrelevance**

Images and statements that are true but do not give customers any useful or pertinent information when making decisions about purchasing green alternative items are considered sins of irrelevance. More precisely, a claim that suggests the product is free of a material that is illegal and so cannot be used in any form is irrelevant. Hence, businesses shouldn't make claims about things that are prohibited or unimportant. Statements made by the corporation that seem plausible but are not helpful in determining whether the product is truly more ecologically friendly. Claims like these divert customers' attention and encourage them to use products with ecologically friendly labels. For example, in the USA, firms' assertions that their products are free from chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).

### **Sin of Worshipping False Labels**

It is the most recent sin to be incorporated into the Terra Choice framework. In simple terms, it refers to the use of eco-labels that either do not exist or imply third-party verification. Brands should adopt eco-labels from accredited programs to avoid greenwashing. Put differently, this constitutes a false label in which a product may have utilized words or graphics to imply the presence of a fraudulent third-party endorsement. One example would be the adoption of utterly worthless eco-labels, like Certified Green, to make the product appear more respectable so that consumers will purchase it. Businesses frequently put labels on product packaging stating that it has been examined by a certain laboratory or accredited by a certain research organization.

### **Sin of Lesser of Two Evils**

While it may be true for a given product category, sin's emphasis on being green diverts buyers' attention from the category's overall broader environmental problems. Rather, companies should present consumers with appropriate items that are actually less dangerous and benefit the environment.

### **Sin of Fibbing**

Such incorrect and fraudulent claims, Thankfully, are the least common. The most common case involves products that falsely declared to be "Energy Star certified". To avoid this sin, businesses should never make false claims.

### **3.2. Population and sampling**

The technique known as purposive sampling was used to choose the data. By using purposeful sampling, the researcher can intentionally select samples. A selection technique like this enables the researcher to concentrate intently on a certain problem, topic, or phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) asserts that the rationale and efficacy of deliberate sampling reside in the selection of cases with a wealth of information for in-depth analysis. Research on deliberate sampling has been shown to be appropriate for studies including online content (Creswell, 2003).

The criteria for data collection are as follows: 1. All advertisements are online and available on websites and social media platforms. 2. The texts in the selected ads focus mainly on the ecological aspects of the advertised commodity

In order to select the most suitable samples, those ads are selected where products are communicated as: a) having environmental protection features, such as pollution reduction or energy efficiency enhancement, or b) launched in green campaigns for advertising their green products, or c) it is from the industries which have received the most environmental pressure and have had prominent environmental impact i.e., real estate development, automobile manufacturing, chemical industry, or machinery manufacturing. In short, ads are selected if it contains one or more of the following elements: (a) images of wildlife, vegetation, forests, natural landscapes, or children; (b) green colors and tones, and (c) symbols, logos, or graphics that signify an environmentally friendly orientation (e.g., organic, recycling, a green leaf).

For this paper the category of household commodity products of is chosen due to the fact that a vast number of revealed greenwashed products belong to this category, according to Terra Choice's report. In sum, there are 6 advertising samples (national and international) collected for analysis. Greenwashing happens in every industry but household commodity products are one of the hardest to spot, since the consumers are lay-man and cannot identify if its green adv or green washed one. Secondly, the words 'natural' and 'eco-friendly' are not regulated. So, the brands are able to advertise a product as 'natural' even if it contains potentially toxic ingredients that are harmful to health. The unit of advertisement samples is either an advertisement introducing a product, or the website of company having flyers of claimed green products having an image with inserted texts.

## **4. Data Analysis and Discussion**

This section provides discussion and analysis of selected ads, perpetrating one or more sins. The individual analyses are based on greenwashing sins which are discussed descriptively to analyze the green claims to see why the accusation of greenwashing can be yielded. The researcher has focused on textual information; the discourse from advertisement introducing a green product, or the company's website corroborating its environmental responsibility and its overall green businesses in an adv/flyer/ image with inserted texts.

Every industry is susceptible to greenwashing, but household commodities are among the hardest to detect since customers are not aware of the difference between green advertisements and greenwashed items. Second, there are no rules governing the terms "natural" and "eco-friendly." Therefore, even if a product contains potentially dangerous or health-harming components, the makers can still promote it as "natural."

### **I. Green Works:**

The usage of certain greenwashing sins determines whether or not the business can be charged with greenwashing. Green Works states that all ingredients in its products are organically derived, biodegradable, and free of allergies. It also says that its packaging is environmentally friendly and that its cleaning agents are produced from plants and minerals. This ambiguous word falls under the category of ambiguity sins. When they make the claim that something is "natural," they imply that it has "natural ingredients, avoid any ingredients with suspected human health risks, and use environmentally sustainable packaging along with biodegradable ingredients." It indicates that 95–99% of the product is derived naturally. They merely state that their "products come from bio gradable ingredients," but they don't specify which or how they are bio gradable. There is also no justification or supporting data for this assertion. Therefore, this adv can be accused of committing the sin of vagueness for not providing verifiable data to explain the ambiguous terms they use.

The following factors make the Green Works advertisement susceptible to the sin of hidden trade-off, which is defined as exaggerating one claim in order to conceal other shortcomings. While Green Works asserts that their products are 95–99% natural and contain only 1–5% synthetic and preservative-based material, they fail to disclose that ethanol, a common ingredient in GW products, has a higher greenhouse gas footprint than petrochemicals and that the use of coconut oil damages rainforest habitats. So, the advertisement is concealing its negative environmental effects.

Furthermore, Green Works says that its products "clean with conscience," yet there is no proof to support this claim because the company never tests its products on animals. This claim is false, and thus commits the sins of lying by asserting something that is untrue and lacking evidence. When looking for proof to refute the sin of lying, GW was discovered to be on a list of businesses who do animal testing for their products. Therefore, the business

may be held accountable for lying due to this reason. In reference to the fallacy of the lesser of two evils, such assertions might hold water within a particular product category, but taken as a whole, as with detergents, for example—they are deemed detrimental.

## **2. Mountain Green:**

Although the company states that it does not believe in advertising hype that makes half-true claims about being green, natural, or organic, when one visits their website, one finds that in addition to an advertisement that reads, "Earth-friendly, mommy approved," there are other ambiguous claims made, like "naturally safe," "naturally clean," or "environmentally friendly." The company's assertions are in conflict with one another, which gives rise to the charge of greenwashing, more precisely, the sin of ambiguity. Businesses should refrain from making ambiguous claims in their branding and advertising, but if they must, they must do it with sufficient clarification to prevent confusing customers. Terms like "all natural," "earth friendly," "naturally safe," and "biodegradable" are used by Mountain Green. The word "biodegradable" is the only one that came up when looking for evidence to explain those terms, but even that explanation is a little unclear because, according to Mountain Green, "all of our products are plant-based with no harsh chemicals; therefore, they biodegrade quickly with minimal environmental impact." There was no convincing explanation or proof found. As so, all of the claims lack a precise justification, making them all unclear. As such, Mountain Green has sinned by being ambiguous.

However, after looking for proof to support the company's claims that it uses little packaging, is 100% recyclable, and is a green product, neither the company's website nor the advertisements for individual products offered there contained any proof to support these assertions. Therefore, the lack of evidence turns it into a greenwashed product.

Regarding the sin of the hidden trade-off, the advertisements assert that their products are natural, biodegradable, and non-toxic. However, the website does not give easily available evidence. It is therefore charged with the sin of hidden trade-off.

The advertisement makes an irrelevant statement about a number of commodities. To demonstrate that a product is truly green and has not been green washed, there are far more significant factors to be asserted on goods, such as the ingredients used, recycling, or the usage of third-party logos and labels.

## **3. Sunlight:**

Sunlight Laundry/ Sunlight produces a range of conventional laundry products. The claims were analyzed to find out if the company claims/ ads can or cannot be accused of the greenwashing.

The following are the reasons why vagueness is a sin here. According to the product description, the Green Clean products are made with plant-based materials and have an

environmentally friendly composition that biodegrades in 28 days. Nevertheless, neither of the assertions is supported by readily available data. The product is biodegradable after 28 days, according to the business, however neither an explanation nor any supporting data are given for this claim. The advertisements merely specify that "Green Clean includes plant-based ingredients and is biodegradable" as a means of being kinder to the earth, and this holds true for the remaining promises. There is no mention of any information on the plant-based substances. Consequently, it is charged with perpetrating the sin of vagueness.

Regarding the sin of no proof, Sunlight Green Clean is also culpable for this sin. As was indicated in the preceding study of confusing statements, Sunlight makes use of terminology that are difficult to independently verify through credible third-party certifications or readily accessible statistics. While Sunlight asserts that the packaging for their "laundry and fabric care products use 25% or more post-consumer recycled plastic and paperboard packaging," no supporting data was discovered; instead, the claim is merely a plausibly false one. Making a claim without readily available supporting evidence puts one at danger of being accused of the sin of lacking proof.

Regarding the sin of worshiping false labels, it was discovered that Sunlight Green Clean possesses an eco-label that is fictitious and does not exist. The product's label indicates that it is biodegradable, but when we looked for proof, researcher couldn't find the eco label used on Green Clean products. Because of this, Sunlight Green Clean could potentially be charged with committing the sin of worshiping false labels.

Regarding the remaining sins, irrelevance, fibbing, hidden trade-off and of lesser two evils, it can be argued that two of them, the sin of lesser two evils and the hidden trade-off, can be linked to the Sunlight Green Clean product line. The other two, however, cannot, as the business does not make false and irrelevant claims (a material data sheet is provided).

#### **4. H&M:**

Analysis indicates that it was engaging in greenwashing because of sin of vagueness. It employs sustainability labels like "Conscious" and "Conscious Choice" without defining the words or outlining the advantages of the items' sustainability and greenness. With over 3 billion pieces of apparel sold annually, H&M, one of the leading fashion shops in the world, is often associated with fast fashion. This garment company feeds into the loop of low-quality clothing production, frequently at the expense and peril of the workers who produce it. H&M uses deceptive labels to fool consumers in their numerous campaigns centered around recycled materials and circular fashion, all in an effort to promote sustainability and being green. Initiatives such as the "Conscious Collection" made vague claims about being composed of more environmentally friendly materials, but they withheld additional details regarding the products' production process and material composition. H&M just highlighted how their premium collection uses innovative plant-based sustainable materials to provide "high-performing, beautiful, and fashionable" statement items in place of providing specific

numbers. Conveniently, H&M omitted the information that, on average, "it takes about 20,000 liters of water to produce that shirt," despite the fact that one of their men's "green" long sleeve shirts is made of 100% organic cotton.

Furthermore, it has no information about the source or certification of the organic cotton. There are just two "conscious" things in the 16-piece collection: a t-shirt and a pair of joggers. According to a list of sins, a brand that claims to be sustainable but is then so brief and unclear is engaging in green washing. Putting a keyword like "sustainable" in the forefront and deceiving the public with vague terminology is outright greenwashing.

### **5. Nestle and fiji:**

The advertisement highlights a brand-new, distinctive characteristic of the plastic bottle its eco-shape, which, they believe, accelerates biodegradation. It pledges that all of their packaging will be recyclable or reusable by 2025. However, as stated by FTC complaints, Nestle is essentially achieving this by burning plastic waste and producing pollutants that affect people's health, wildlife, and the environment in the process, rather than drastically lowering the amount of plastic waste they create.

In response, Greenpeace released a statement of its own in which it claimed that Nestle's remarks on plastic packaging included attempts to combat "greenwashing," a situation that it had contributed to. Setting a very low threshold as the world's largest food and beverage corporation will not actually result in a major reduction in the use of single-use plastics. For the third consecutive year, Nestlé, Coca-Cola, and PepsiCo were listed as the top plastic polluters in the world in Break Free from Plastic's 2020 annual report. It is discovered that the greenwashed advertisement is the result of vagueness and deceptive labeling.

### **6. Tide's detergent:**

The item is depicted in the advertisement perched in the fronds of a robust, green tree. The product visuals feature images of a healthy ear of corn and a tasty coconut over a background that is designed to seem like improperly recycled cardboard. It displays the company's own claim that it is the "first plant-based detergent with the power of traditional cleaning products" in addition to fresh grass organized in the shape of the logo. Tide PurClean laundry detergent, a long-standing "green" substitute for Tide detergent, is a prime example of greenwashing. The bottle has a jaunty natural name, a sticker with leaves, and a green color—all characteristics of a greenwashed product.

"A powerful, plant-based clean you can feel good about" was the description found on the bottle itself. Sin of Hidden Trade, however, claims that just 75% of the detergent was made of plants. The remaining elements were made of non-plant materials, such as

petroleum, which is an oil. "It's important for customers to trust that the product they're purchasing is what it says on the label," The National Advertising Division suggested in August 2020 that Tide change the claims made on the box; as a result, the product is now a green-washed commodity due to the use of deceptive labels.

## 5. Conclusion

The most prevalent sin in the category of household commodity products/ home goods is vagueness, as all of the advertisements make such promises without providing supporting information. Second, since the verifiable data or certification was not discovered throughout the studies, the second most common fault—the sin of no proof—is also present in all of the chosen advertisements. Thirdly, study suggests that the product's greenness is reliant on a limited set of features, which is where the sin of hidden-tradeoff is located. However, the greenness (Green Works, Sunlight Green Clean) lacks backup data. Fourthly, because Green Works and Sunlight Green Clean are made by businesses that primarily produce environmentally harmful conventional chemical cleaning products—their greener lines are merely supplementary, they are accused of committing the sin of lesser two evils, which is not a very common sin. Lastly, all the remaining sins were also detected i.e., the sin of irrelevance; Mountain Green, fibbing; Green Works, worshipping false labels; Sunlight. Here are some words and phrases found making them greenwashed ads: Natural, organic, eco-friendly, green, sustainable, biodegradable.

To put it another way, greenwashing brands attempt to market their products as being greener, which may be the case, but they also make claims that can mislead customers because they don't provide enough information or an adequate explanation to support their claims about the product's greenness. One of the most common greenwashing instruments and indicators, as well as a sin, is ambiguous wording. Product packaging frequently makes claims like "eco-friendly" or "future friendly," but these don't actually demonstrate a relationship of good will between the environment and the consumer. They contend that since we do not contribute chocolate to the environment, green products can only be less damaging to it.

In addition, a large and continuously growing number of new labels that confuse customers with marketing claims and label categories also make bogus eco-labels a tool of greenwashing. Because green has symbolic importance, it is also a tactic used in greenwashing. Although green is a symbol of nature, ecology, and the environment, this does not imply that the product is inherently ecological. The utilization of natural imagery has the potential to evoke favorable emotions and sentiments in customers toward brand attitude. Due to the fact that many businesses employ natural imagery despite the fact that there is no actual relationship between the offered product, brand, and nature, this sign becomes an extremely effective tool for greenwashing. Fluffy language is synonymous with ambiguous wording, irrelevant claims imply that only a portion of the product is green, while the

remainder is not; there is no evidence that the product is green other than the absence of supporting data; outright lying denotes claims that are blatantly false, signifying that though a company asserts a third-party verification, but this does not make the product safer, for example, eco-friendly. Although there are many tools, as was previously mentioned, one thing is certain, they are all intended to deceive customers.

### **References**

1. Creswell, J.W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed Methods approaches*. Sage publications.
2. Carvalho, A. (2005). *Representing the politics of the greenhouse effect: Discursive strategies in the British media*. *Critical discourse studies*, 2(1), 1-29.
3. Glasser, H. (2011). *Implications for the human prospect and challenges for the future*. *Inquiry*, 54(1), 52-77.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174x.2011.542943>
4. Hulme, M. (2007). *Climate conflict*. *New Scientist*, 196(2629), 26.  
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s0262-4079\(07\)62834-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0262-4079(07)62834-6)
5. Kress, G. R., & Leeuwen, T.V. (2006). *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. Psychology Press.
6. Sedlaczek, A. S. (2017). *The field-specific representation of climate change in Factual television: A multimodal critical discourse analysis*. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 14(5), 480-496. doi:10.1080/17405904.2017.1352003
7. Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. Routledge