Credibility of green marketing in the fast fashion industry
Title: Credibility of green marketing in the fast fashion
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Key terms: Green marketing; Consumer perception; Green marketing claims;
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Abstract

Purpose - Existing literature about consumer perception has received substantial notice
in the field of psychology. However, less is known about consumer perception of green
marketing. To address this absence, this thesis aims to investigate how credible
consumers perceive green marketing to be, in the context of the fast fashion industry.
Additionally, the authors strived to explore which green marketing claims, portrayed by
fast fashion companies, consumers see as more credible and why. An analytical
combination of empirical findings and literature on green marketing, consumer
credibility and the fast fashion industry was conducted to generate comprehensive
results on which factors affect the credibility of green marketing, by fast fashion
companies, as well as how different green claims are perceived.

Design/Methodology/Approach - The research took a concurrent mixed method
approach, meaning that both qualitative and quantitative data was used. The data was
collected through focus groups, consisting of a general discussion and a questionnaire,
as well as a survey. The focus groups were held with Swedish students at Jönköping
University, and the survey was distributed to individuals with a Swedish cultural
background. The research approaches used for this study was inductive and abductive.

Findings - This thesis suggests that for fast fashion companies who want to understand
what affects the credibility of their green marketing, there are six factors which should
be considered; perception of green marketing; previous perception of companies and
brands; limits of the industry; price’s effect of the credibility; short-term versus long-
term solutions; and showing results. Additionally, the study suggests that fast fashion
companies should focus on product- and process oriented green claims in their green
marketing, as these were perceived as most credible. Further, environmental fact claims
were perceived as least credible, and will therefore be hard for companies to implement.

Research Limitations and Implications - Due to the limitations of this thesis, the
empirical findings need to be tested in a study consisting of a larger sample, as well as
including several research strategies. Further, the research should be tested on a larger
scale than a Swedish cultural setting and in more industries than the fast fashion
industry, in order to generalise the findings. This thesis suggests that companies in the
fast fashion industry should evaluate the claims they use in their green marketing, in
order to optimise the perceived credibility of green marketing.
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1. Introduction

In this section, the background of topics regarding green marketing and green marketing claims, credibility, consumer perception and the fast fashion industry are presented. The purpose of this thesis is illustrated along with two research questions.

1.1 Background

There has been an increase in awareness of environmental protection issues and sustainability has surfaced as an important value for consumers, which in turn has led to a growing trend of green marketing (Lu, Bock & Joseph, 2013; McIntosh, 1991; Butler, 1990). The adoption of green marketing started in the 1980s and early 1990s (Davis, 1993; Ottman, 1998) and during these years marketers overflowed consumers with green products and environmental claims. Moreover, consumers have been found to be likely to choose a brand over another if they think the brand will help the environment. Consumers are also more likely to act favorable towards companies that are perceived to be reactive to environmental concerns (Chase, 1991; Bremmer, 1989; Kirkpatrick, 1990; Weber, 1990). Therefore, many companies and organisations are working towards improving their environmental position through different kinds of green marketing claims (Gussow, 1989; Goldstein 1990; Smith, Cahan, Freundlich, Ellis & Weber, 1990). Research has further shown that credibility is one of the most important factors determining the effects of a persuasive message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981).

According to Mayer, Scammon and Grey-Lee (1993) the benefits of environmental efforts often occur in the future or cannot be seen at all, therefore there is a reliance quality to these claims. However, green marketing claims have also been regarded as an attractive area for exploitation by dishonest marketers (Mayer et al., 1993). There are four categories of green marketing claims; product orientation, process orientation, image orientation, and environmental fact (Carlson, Grove & Kangun, 1993). The green marketing claims that are more prone to confusion and perceptions of deception are
product oriented and image enhancing claims. Therefore, establishing commitment to the environment by using specific claims requires special attention to ensure the message is perceived to be credible. Moreover, it is possible that confusion and perceptions of deception caused by green marketing may negatively affect consumers perception of the sponsoring organisation and could depreciate the organisations image (Carlson et al., 1993).

In order to understand the connection between ad credibility and green marketing, it is important to determine the factors that influence customers’ perception of credibility towards ads. Furthermore, perception of credibility stems from external impressions that are internally interpreted. These interpretations are derived from schemas, that affect how you perceive brands now and in the future (Solomon, Barmossy & Askegaard, 2006). Whether a brand is seen as credible is dependant on consumers’ perception of a brand, which means that the credibility of companies’ green marketing claims is affected by already existing knowledge and perceptions of companies (Ng, Butt, Khong & Ong, 2014).

The fast fashion industry operates with a concept that is not traditionally considered environmentally conscious as it encourages disposability (Fletcher, 2008). The industry systems are characterised by having a short production and distribution lead time to more effectively meet consumer demand (Ghemawat and Nueno, 2003; Ferdows, Lewis & Machuca, 2004; Mihm, 2010). This type of production makes it possible for products to hit the market almost instantly. Therefore, fast fashion buying cycles occur frequently, compared to regular fashion companies’ buying cycles which are planned about a year in advance (Kline & Wagner, 1994; Birtwistle, Siddiqui & Fiorito, 2003; Reinach, 2005). Thus, building green marketing credibility in the fast fashion industry may be difficult. Researchers suggest that they have to focus on implementing sustainability in their business operations, such as green product characteristics and processes, and environmental contributions, in order to be perceived as green (Dickson, Eckman & Loker, 2009; Kim & Hall, 2015).

It is of importance for companies to adopt a green approach since green marketing has been identified as an important strategy, in order to reach competitive advantage in the
market. For companies, understanding green marketing does not simply mean grasping their own role in protecting the environment, but also recognising the potential profitability. Thus, making green marketing an important aspect for companies to consider (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993).

1.2 Problem

While many companies have genuinely strived to reduce the environmental impact of their business operations and products, some companies have exploited customers by exaggerating or even fabricating environmental characteristics of their offerings (Garfield, 1991). The excessive use of environmental claims have caused consumers to question the honesty and trustworthiness of companies’ environmental values, as well as perceiving green marketing as increasingly credible (Karna, Juslin, Ahoven & Hansen, 2001; Furlow, 2010; Ottman, 2011). Researchers argue that advertiser credibility and ad credibility directly influence brand attitudes, which in turn influence consumer purchase intentions (Choi & Rifon, 2002; Goldsmith, Lafferty, & Newell 2000; MacKenzie & Lutz 1989; MacKenzie, Lutz & Belch 1986). Furthermore, certain green marketing claims are more credible than others. Therefore, it is important for companies to determine their commitment to environmental issues by using appropriate claims to make sure that green messages are perceived to be credible. Additionally, if consumers perceive green marketing to be confusing or deceptive, companies’ green marketing efforts could be rendered ineffective and the organisation’s image could be damaged.

Due to the tendency to associate and generalise perceptions of brands to new products (Kim & Hall, 2015; Boush et al., 1987), there are challenges for marketers who aim to communicate new green additions to the brand image, through green marketing. Therefore credibility of green marketing could be particularly difficult to establish for fast fashion companies, as the industry traditionally lacks sustainable business operations (Fletcher, 2008).
Despite the growing use of environmental advertising, very little is known about the nature of green marketing (Carlson et al., 1993). There is an ongoing enigma regarding why positive attitudes towards environmental protection does not translate into positive green advertising responses and consumption behaviour. Consumers even express the desire to punish marketers who deceive them with false green claims (Cone, 2012). Yet, no study has been made investigating green claim credibility within the fast fashion industry. Thus, there is a need for further investigations regarding what factors influence the credibility of the green marketing by fast fashion companies and what green marketing claims made by these companies are perceived as more or less credible, and why this is.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute with new insights and understandings to existing research by exploring the credibility of green marketing in the fast fashion industry. The findings of this study can be considered by companies in the fast fashion industry to make their green marketing credible.

1.4 Research questions

In order to fulfil the purpose of this study, the following research questions were proposed as a basis for this thesis and were used as guidance and directions in this research.

*Research Question 1:* What factors influence consumer perception of credibility of green marketing, made by fast fashion companies?

*Research Question 2:* Which green marketing claims made by fast fashion companies are perceived as more credible and why?
1.5 Delimitations

This research was limited due to different circumstances, which were identified early in the research process. As the thesis was written within a strict time frame of approximately four months, time was the factor that had the most considerable impact on the delimitations of the research. The researchers chose to only target individuals in the region of Jönköping, Sweden when conducting focus groups, and did not reach out to individuals in a wider geographic area, due to the use of a convenience sampling method. The study did not take demographic factors and sociographic factors into consideration when investigating the research questions. The delimitations of the study did not restrain this thesis from generating new beneficial insights and perspectives that will contribute to existing and future research.
2. Frame of Reference

This section presents the frame of reference of this thesis. The section includes existing research within the field of green marketing, green marketing claims, credibility of green marketing, consumer perception of credibility as well as research on the fast fashion industry and sustainability in the industry.

2.1 Green Marketing

Due to factors such as increased media coverage and greater consumer awareness of environmental problems, there has been a progressive increase in consumer environmental consciousness (McIntosh, 1991; Butler, 1990). As a result of the increased value consumers place on sustainability, a growing trend of green marketing in competitive business has developed (Lu et al., 2013). As an attempt to capture the growing environmentally responsible market segment, several firms have publicised their green branding efforts (Kim & Damhorst, 1997). Moreover, green marketing can be explained as a strategic effort made by companies to provide customers with environmentally friendly merchandise (Grewal & Levy, 2008). In addition, Fuller (1999) describes green marketing as the process of planning, implementing and controlling the development, pricing, promotion and distribution of products in a way that satisfies customer needs, organisational goals and the environment. Consumer marketers should recognise their role in protecting the environment, but also understand that green marketing can be profitable. Therefore, green marketing should be a fully integrated component in a company’s strategic marketing plan (McDaniel & Rylander, 1993). However, it is difficult, yet necessary, for companies to adapt to the transformation from industrial era marketing to sustainable green marketing (Ottman, 2011).

2.1.1 Green Marketing Claims
There has been an increase in claims presented in green marketing, due to the potential for companies to generate higher profits (Stall-Meadows & Davey, 2012). Additionally, green marketing claims can be considered effective when influencing consumer behaviour (Kim & Damhorst, 1999). Carlson et al. (1993) argues that there are four different types of environmental claims within green marketing, these being product orientation; process orientation; image orientation; environmental fact; or any combination of these. Product orientation concerns a product’s environmentally friendly qualities. In this thesis, product orientation claims will regard ‘organic fibers’ and ‘recycled materials’. Process orientation focuses on the internal technology, production technique and disposal method that proceed benefits for the environment. In this thesis, it will concern ‘sustainable manufacturing’ and ‘sustainable supply chain’. Image orientation claims involve the company in an environmental activity for which there is a wide range of support from the public. In this thesis, image orientation claims will regard companies ‘collaborating with organisations concerned with environmental issues’ and ‘donating to green charity organisations’. Environmental fact claims involve independent statements that are seemingly factual regarding environmental issues. In this thesis, environmental fact will regard ‘promoting saving the environment’ (Carlson et al., 1993).

Researchers have found environmental fact claims to have the greatest potential of being perceived as credible. These ‘feel good’ claims have a greater possibility to be effective compared to product claims or claims regarding production (Carlson et al., 1993; Tucker et al., 2012). Additionally, Carlson et al. (1993) found that product oriented and image oriented claims were perceived to be more deceptive or misleading than process oriented and environmental fact claims. However, when investigating solely low-involvement products, Thorson, Page and Moore (1995) found that image oriented and environmental fact claims received more positive consumer attitudes than claims regarding products.

In previous decades, marketers have had a tendency to overwhelm consumers with both green products and claims (Mayer, Scammon and Gray-Lee, 1993). Because benefits from environmental activities occur in the long run, rather than instantly, there is a reliance quality of these claims. This means that consumers are not able to judge if there
will be any results and companies are therefore somewhat freed from the pressure of showing results of their claimed environmental efforts (ibid). It has been found that almost two thirds of consumers say that they are ‘more likely’ to purchase a product due to its environmental claims (Chase & Smith, 1992). Further, as understanding the underlying principles, issues and concepts of green claims may be complex, it is difficult for the general public to comprehend what is being said through them (Carlson et al., 1993). Many consumers care about the environment and want to improve it, therefore, consumers are more likely to be responsive toward claims regarding the environment (Carlson et al., 1993). However, companies that choose to use green marketing claims should emphasise concrete and specific links to their green efforts, as the most common type of fault in green claims is that they tend to be too vague or ambiguous (Carlson et al., 1993).

It is argued that the characteristics of green claims affect consumer response to green marketing and that substantive claims, such as product and process oriented claims present tangible benefits that enables and facilitates individual consumption decisions that help the environment (Ottman, 1995). These initiatives can help lessen scepticism of consumers who believe that such initiatives do not normally occur without economic motive from companies (ibid). Ottman (1995) suggests that associative claims such as image oriented and environmental fact claims can cause consumers to cognitively associate the two claims to create a more humane perception of a company. However, it is also argued that reliance on these claims can cause consumer confusion regarding green marketing (Ottman, 1995). These types of claims establish an environmentally friendly facade by inferring connections between an advertiser and environmentally-related information, rather than directly linking an organisation’s own marketplace initiatives to efforts that add to a better environment (ibid).

### 2.1.2 Green Marketing and Credibility

Advertisement credibility can be defined as the degree to which a receiver perceive claims about a brand in an advertisement to be truthful and believable (Goldsmith et al., 2000; Kim & Damhorst 1998; MacKenzie & Lutz 1989, Lutz, 1985). It has been argued
that there is a positive relationship between the extent to which a green marketing ad is seen as credible, attitudes towards the ad and the purchase intention of a consumer (Chan 2004; Kim & Damhorst 1998; Phau & Ong 2007). Therefore, this issue has emerged as an important precursor for development of positive attitudes towards brands and ads (MacKenzie & Lutz, 1989). However, some green marketing campaigns have been misleading because companies have falsely claimed to be environmentally friendly. Thus, the competitiveness of companies that are true to their environmental values have been harmed (Furlow, 2010). The issue of dishonest green marketing can lead to greenness of products becoming meaningless to consumers and can therefore undermine the green movement (Ottman, 2011). Other research findings indicate that different types of green advertising generates different responses from consumers, which means that some green advertising has more favourable influences on consumers while others do not (Kim & Damhorst, 1997).

2.1.2.1 Factors affecting green marketing credibility

Credibility of communications such as advertisements are dependant on several aspects including the characteristics of the receiver and the message content (McGuire, 1976). Buda and Zhang (2000) argues that the credibility of the source and how the message is framed are two important factors that will influence a consumer’s response to an advertisement. Further, there has been an explosion of green products and green marketing (Ottman, 2011). Therefore, customers have started to question companies’ corporate honesty and consider most green ads to be deceptive due to vague and misleading environmental statements (Furlow, 2010). This criticism has caused a ‘green backlash’, which explains scepticism’s negative effect on the response to products (Davis 1993; Moore 1993; Ottman 1998).

Further, do Paco and Reis (2012) argue that scepticism towards green communications affect green marketing credibility, making it an issue for marketers. Another factor that has been found to influence perceived credibility of green marketing is endorsement signals in the form of eco-labels or seals. However, the source of these labels and seals need to be credible for the claim to have a positive effect on green marketing credibility.
(Hansen & Kull, 1994). Additionally, it has been suggested that the credibility of green claims has weakened due to the exaggerative use of terms such as ‘environmentally friendly’, ‘natural’, ‘sustainable’ and ‘recycled’ (Karna et al., 2001).

2.1.2.2 Greenwashing

To attract the growing environmentally aware market segment, several manufacturers use claims that sound environmentally conscious but are actually vague and sometimes even false, when promoting their products or themselves (Furlow, 2010). This has caused greenwashing to become a common concept used in the today's marketplace (Kalafatis, Pollard, East & Tsogas, 1999). Greenwashing can be defined as the “dissemination of false or incomplete information by an organisation to present an environmentally responsible public image.” (Furlow, 2010 p. 1). Due to the growing consumer scepticism of green ads, companies with legitimate endeavours to be environmentally responsible will lose that competitive advantage (Furlow, 2010). Additionally, consumers are likely to ignore all environmental claims if they find one to be unreliable (Mayer, Scammon & Zick, 1993). Using environmental claims within green marketing is a serious commitment as they need to be honest, real and an actual reflection of the company’s mission (Furlow, 2010). The risk of being dishonest in these claims is high, as the entire marketing campaign can be ruined if it is considered to be greenwashing (Miller, 2008).

2.2 Consumer Perception and Credibility

Perception is defined as the process by which physical sensations such as sights and sounds are selected, organised and interpreted (Solomon et al., 2006). Further, the interpretations gathered from perceptions stem from schemas, which can be explained as organised collections of beliefs and feelings (Solomon et al., 2006). Schema theory explains that humans tend to group objects that are perceived to have similar characteristics. Further, the schema to which an object is assigned is a crucial factor of how humans choose to assess the object in the future (Solomon et al., 2006; Boush et al., 1987). This means that previously shaped assessments of a brand could influence
consumers’ impressions of new products (Boush et al., 1987). This could create challenges for marketers who aim to communicate new additions to the brand image such as environmental consciousness and responsibility, through green marketing (Balderjahn, 1988; Schwepker & Cornwell, 1991).

The effect of consumers’ previous perceptions could be an especially important issue for fast fashion companies, since they traditionally do not have sustainable manufacturing nor participation in socially responsible activities (Jang, Ko, Chun, & Lee, 2012). However, according to Thorson et. al (1995), former perceptions and attitudes towards the environment are not effective predictions of attitude concerning environmental ads. Rather, issues related to sincerity of business motives could be a complication when attempting to generate positive consumer response. A brand’s credibility also influences consumers’ perceptions of the brand, which means that the credibility of a company’s environmental standards is influenced by whether the new green branding-based knowledge fits into the existing consumer schema (Ng et al., 2014). Therefore, credibility of green marketing could be difficult to establish for companies in the fast fashion industry (Kim & Hall, 2015). Moreover, fashion brands can be perceived as green based on characteristics of the apparel product, production process and environmental contributory business practices (Dickson et al., 2009).

2.3 Fast Fashion

A fast fashion system combines three components; short production cycles, a quick distribution lead time, and highly fashionable product designs (Ghemawat & Nueno, 2003; Ferdows et al. 2004). Fast fashion aims to make the retailer have “five fingers touching the factory and five fingers touching the customer” (the founder of Zara cited in Ferdows et al., 2004). Fast fashion companies do not directly invest in design, but rather create products inspired by the most prominent and auspicious trends at fashion shows, as well as by cues given by the mainstream consumers (Agins, 1999; Reinach, 2005). These products make it possible for trends to hit the market virtually immediately, giving consumers an alternative to the ‘seasonal collection trap’ (Reinach, 2005). Moreover, fast fashion requires that retailers have rapidly increasing number of
stores worldwide and that there is a need to combine customers’ demand with the upstream operations of design, procurement, production and distribution (Reinach, 2005).

Fast fashion demands short development cycles, small batches, rapid prototyping and variety in order to give customers the latest designs (Tokatli, 2008). The fast fashion industry also has lower manufacturing and labour costs that lead to overall lower costs of production. This ultimately result in the ability to produce higher volumes, as well as charge low prices for their products (Tokatli, 2008). Lastly, fast fashion requires a highly responsive supply chain, making sure that deliveries are adequately frequent (Ferdows et al., 2004, Reinach, 2005; Dunford, 2006). Traditional fashion buying cycles are usually based on long-term forecasts from previous sales and occur one year before a season (Birtwistle et al., 2003). However, for fast fashion companies buying cycles occurs frequently, sometimes on a weekly basis, resulting in continuously new production lines (Kline & Wagner, 1994).

2.3.1 Fast Fashion and Sustainability

Several factors determine whether a product can be seen as environmentally friendly or not, where efforts supporting environmental protectionism are particularly highlighted in products that are perceived this way (LoMenzo, 1993). There are many sustainability issues directly related to the fashion industry, for example, the industrial pollution of water and air, the use of synthetic fibres and fibre manufacturing from unsustainable resources (ibid). Nonetheless, there are ways of addressing these concerns, including chemical free alternatives such as organically grown cotton, stone-free denim and items dyed with natural dyes (Evans, 1990; McNamara, 1994; Ortega, 1994). Moreover, fibres made from recycled materials make it possible to eliminate waste, and are also seen as a factor that contributes to the environmental-friendliness of a product (Kim & Damhorst, 1999). Further, recycling has become a popular alternative in the fashion industry since it requires small changes from the companies (Fletcher, 2008). However, the fast fashion industry, with rapid production lines and low-cost clothing, is in essence a fast-response system that encourages disposability (Fletcher, 2008). Additionally, fast
fashion companies compresses the regular turnaround time of about six months into merely weeks (Tokatli, 2008), and flourish on these fast cycles (Skov, 2002). These factors characterises the fast fashion industry as unsustainable (Fletcher, 2008).
3. Methodology

*This section includes our choice of research philosophy, research purpose, research approach and research strategy. Moreover, the process of collecting data and analysing empirical findings is outlined as well as trustworthiness of research. Further, the chapter begins with a summary of the methods.*

3.1 Summary of Methods

This thesis applied a pragmatism scientific philosophy, and the study was identified as descriptive and exploratory. The inductive and abductive approach were used in the study, which applied two types of research strategies; focus groups and survey. The focus groups were conducted with a general discussion and a questionnaire. When selecting the sample for the data collection processes, convenience sampling was used. Consequently, the data was analysed with a generic analysis approach. Conclusively, the thesis trustworthiness and quality were based upon credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Moreover, in order to gain a deeper level of analysis, concurrent triangulation was applied by using a concurrent mixed method approach with both qualitative and quantitative data collection.
3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy relates to the development and nature of knowledge and consist of important assumptions about how researchers view the world. Which method to use when conducting research is selected based on the philosophy of the research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). The first thing that should be identified in the methodology are paradigms, which can be defined as a way of examining social phenomena and guiding how decisions within research are made and how the research is carried out (ibid).

Due to the nature of the research questions, which research philosophy to apply was ambiguous since it could have been measured both qualitatively and quantitatively. Based on this factor, a pragmatic research philosophy was used leading to that the research took a mixed method approach (Saunders et al., 2012). As concepts are only relevant when they support actions, a pragmatic philosophy allowed the researchers to
work with different philosophical positions as well as permitting credible, well rounded and relevant data to be collected which advanced the study (ibid). Further, from a pragmatist position it is argued that the most important determinant of the research philosophy adopted is the research questions, and that it is possible to work from both a positivist and interpretivist perspective. Additionally, the pragmatist position allowed the authors to apply a practical approach by integrating these different perspectives to help collect and interpret data (ibid).

3.3 Research Purpose

An investigation could be differentiated through three main research approaches; explanatory, descriptive and exploratory (Saunders et al., 2012). As an explanatory research approach focuses on finding causal relationships between variables, it focuses more on numerical data (ibid), and was therefore not used in this thesis. The main objective of the descriptive approach is to cast light on current issues through a process of data collection in order to get an accurate picture of situations, persons and events. The descriptive approach can be used as a forerunner to the exploratory approach (ibid), which is the case in this study and was implemented through a survey. The exploratory study seeks to clarify the understandings of a problem by asking open questions, which is advantageous since it allowed the authors to gain deeper insights about the research topic (ibid). This was implemented through focus groups. By combining both the descriptive and exploratory approach, this study has the opportunity to determine ‘what is’ as well as understanding ‘why it is that way’, which allowed the authors to draw more convincing conclusions when evaluating the collected data (ibid).

As illustrated above, the research design of this thesis combined several elements of data collection, which is known as a multiple method research design (Saunders et al., 2012). A concurrent mixed methods research includes collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data within a single phase. This provided the investigation with richer and more comprehensive results of the research questions, as it allowed the results from both data collections to be interpreted parallel to each other (ibid). Due to
the time constraint, this method was appropriate for this study since it allowed the researchers to collect both qualitative and quantitative data within the timeframe.

Qualitative research is used in order to understand different factors such as thoughts, values and actions. Therefore, in a practical study where there is a need to explore questions such as ‘how’, ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘why’, interpretivism is preferred (Saunders et al., 2012). Quantitative research is related to positivism where the aim is to collect data about an observable reality and thereafter explore relationships to be able to create generalisations (ibid). Using a concurrent mixed methods research design allowed this study to use a qualitative method to gain a deeper understanding of the research questions and a quantitative method to reach a larger sample and further enhance the findings and conclusions. Further, the qualitative data was used to explain the findings from the quantitative data.

3.4 Research Approach

The chosen research approach should correlate to the framework of the thesis. Further, when selecting a research approach, there are two main types of approaches which can be used; inductive and deductive (Saunders et al., 2012). An inductive approach focuses on collecting data, then identifying patterns and generalisations or developing a theory based on the results. A deductive approach focuses on initially developing a hypothesis and then testing it in order to determine the outcome (ibid). This study collected data of the qualitative nature, which is why the inductive approach was used. However, as the quantitative data in this thesis is of a descriptive nature, it followed an inductive approach. Therefore, a deductive approach was not used in this investigation (ibid).

The inductive approach is particularly useful when the aim is to allow meanings to emerge from data collected in an investigation (Saunders et al., 2012). The inductive approach is suitable and applicable as this thesis intended to use the empirical findings to enhance and draw connections to existing literature. Moreover, the use of an inductive approach gives insight into how people interpret social aspects in society (ibid), which further connects to the research questions.
Both inductive and deductive data tends to, in some situations, limit the research by being one-sided opposites (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). Therefore, in order to hinder this limitation an additional approach was introduced to the research. This approach, called an abductive approach, has qualities from both the inductive and deductive approaches and includes both identifying patterns and aiming to explain existing understandings (Saunders et al., 2012). However, it is important to differentiate this approach from both the inductive and deductive approach, and not refer to it as a combination of the two (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The main purpose of an abductive approach is to include patterns in order to explain understandings (ibid), which made it applicable for this research. This approach made it possible for the researchers to move between existing literature and empirical data during the research while comparing and interpreting the findings, in order to answer the research questions. This was particularly important in this study as it aimed to answer questions which required a flexible approach, where initial statements may need to be altered depending on the findings that occur during the research.

3.5 Research Strategy

To make it possible to meet the objectives of this thesis, as well as answer the research questions, a clear research strategy was systematically applied (Saunders et al., 2012). In this thesis, two different approaches were combined. A focus group approach was appropriate since it allows researchers to gain more in depth answers and insight regarding specific topics. Focus groups are particularly useful when there is a need for collaborative discussions, which addresses a specific topic (Saunders et al., 2012). As the aim of this thesis was to gain deeper knowledge about the topic as well as to reach insightful understandings, this method was seen as particularly relevant and helped when drawing conclusions about what factors influence the perception of green marketing credibility. The focus groups were executed with a general discussion and a questionnaire.
The second strategy that was chosen for this thesis was the survey strategy, which is usually used in order to answer ‘what’, ‘who’, ‘where’, ‘how much’ and ‘how many’ questions (ibid). Adding a quantitative data collection was beneficial for the purpose of the study since the data generated from the survey could, in combination with qualitative data from focus groups, allow findings to be elaborated, enhanced, clarified or confirmed (Saunders et al., 2012). Quantitative data can be divided into two groups, categorical and numerical data. Categorical data was regarded to be most suitable for the research purpose since it refers to values that cannot be measured numerically, but can be classified into categories according to characteristics, or describe and rank variables (Saunders et al., 2012; Berman Brown & Saunders, 2008). The survey approach usually gives more control in the research process by collecting data that represent the whole population in a shorter timeframe (Saunders et al., 2012; Berman Brown & Saunders, 2008). Although conducting a survey and analysing data may be time-consuming (Saunders et al., 2012; Berman Brown & Saunders, 2008), the relative simple nature of the survey used in this thesis made it possible to complete it within the timeframe. Further, this type of quantitative data was suitable for the purpose of the thesis as it is a more precise form of categorical data and collects information from questions which allowed the respondent to rate or scale questions (Saunders et al., 2012).

3.6 Time Horizon

Considering that this thesis had a strict time constraint and was performed during a time period of about four months, there was limited time to collect empirical data. Therefore the concurrent mixed method study was based on focus groups and a survey to explore consumer perception of green marketing credibility. To ensure that enough time was scheduled to analyse the results of the focus groups and survey together, the interviews were held in mid April during a period of three days and the survey was open during the same period.
3.7 Data Collection

3.7.1 Sampling

Non-probability sampling was regarded as the most appropriate sampling technique for this study since the thesis adopts an exploratory approach, which was in accordance with suggestions from Saunders et al. (2012). Within non-probability sampling there are several sampling types, for this study however, convenience sampling was regarded as the most suitable technique.

The convenience sampling technique enabled the authors to select the most reachable participants, meaning that there was risk of this method being biased (Saunders et al., 2012). However the investigation was based on the effortlessness of obtaining the participants, and the technique is a commonly used method of sampling (ibid). Further, convenience sampling was suitable for this study due to the time constraint, which limited the authors from collecting data from a larger geographical area. For the focus groups, the authors investigated a sample of individuals aged 19 to 26 in the region of Jönköping, Sweden, as this group was the most accessible to the authors. Furthermore, convenience sampling was also used when collecting a sample for the survey.

To establish contact with survey and focus group participants, channels such as Facebook, phone calls, text messages and personal contact were used. The aim was to get a focus group sample of 24 participants which was divided into four groups with six participants in each group. Another aim was to have both females and males in order to avoid a too homogeneous sample as it could create bias answers and since the study investigated this topic with no specific gender in mind.

3.7.2 Primary Data

The aim of using primary data collection was to provide the research with empirical input and was in this thesis collected through multiple focus groups, which is in line with the purpose of this thesis and suggestions from Saunders et al. (2012), as well as
through a survey. The results from the focus groups and the survey contributed with insight to the topic and created the core of the research (Saunders et al., 2012).

The focus groups were held at Jönköping University, a central location for the convenience of the participants. Further, the focus groups were offered a choice between conducting discussions in English or Swedish. The reason for two alternatives in language was to make the participants more comfortable in order to retrieve more elaborate and insightful answers. The participants were selected from Jönköping University and were divided into four groups. With permission from the individuals in the focus groups, the sessions were recorded, and later transcribed in English.

The survey was conducted through the website Qualtrics and was distributed through the authors’ personal Facebook profiles, as well as Facebook groups where the authors were members. Each researcher distributed the survey link on different occasions, making sure that the responses from the previous distribution had ebbed away, in order to reach the widest amount of people. The survey was distributed the same week as when the focus groups were held, and was finally closed after 8 days.

When collecting literature for the frame of reference, two databases were used; Google Scholar and the Jönköping University library database, Primo. The keywords used when searching for literature were; Green marketing; Credibility; Green marketing claims; Fast fashion; Consumer perception; and Sustainability.

3.7.2.1 Focus Groups

During the focus group sessions, all three authors were present. One of the authors acted as moderator of the discussion and the two remaining authors took notes of the general opinions that emerged from the discussion as well as controlled the recording. Further, the focus groups commenced with a short introduction to the topic and were then divided into two parts; General Discussion and Questionnaire (Appendix 2).

Part 1: General Discussion
The first section of the focus groups was the general discussion which included the general views of sustainability within company operations, green claims and the perception of green marketing amongst the participants. The link between green marketing and credibility, the link between credibility and different green marketing claims and their connection to the fast fashion industry was investigated with the questions asked. As focus group discussions are easily swayed by the moderators, questions were prepared beforehand in order to get broad and relevant answers and followed the guideline in Appendix 1. If the discussion got off topic or if participants were not elaborating their opinions in an efficient manner, the moderator interfered. However, the interference was only to ask the participants to elaborate their points or to remind them of the question at hand, and not to try to push the discussion in one direction. The assistance and participation of the moderators was kept at a minimum level, in order to keep an unbiased discussion.

Part 2: Questionnaire
The second section of the focus groups contained a questionnaire (Appendix 2) which was sent out electronically to all participants to answer through their mobile phones. The questions in the questionnaire was the same as the survey questions (Appendix 3), except of one additional question where the participants were asked to fill out their name. This, however, was simply added in order for the researchers to be able to link the participants’ questionnaire answers to their general discussion opinions, thereafter all answers were kept anonymous. The questionnaire contained eight questions, which touched upon the same topic as the general discussion, however the questionnaire put more focus on the specific green claims which this thesis is investigating. The participants were asked to rank these claims in the order of which they saw them as credible. A short discussion question followed the questionnaire, were each participant was asked to motivate his or her reasoning for choosing the most and least credible claim.

List of Focus Group Participants
### 3.7.2.2 Survey

The survey consisted of similar questions as from the discussion in the focus groups. This enabled the authors to analyse the results from the survey together with the discussion from the focus groups to see if any key themes appeared. In order to make sure the survey sample somewhat resembled the focus group sample, a question asking the respondents to choose their age group was included.

### 3.8 Analysis of Data

#### 3.8.1 Generic approach to analysis

When analysing data in an inductive manner, there are several methods which can be applied; Analytic Induction; Narrative Analysis; Discourse Analysis; Grounded Theory
Method and Template Analysis (Saunders et al., 2012). However, these methods were not suitable for this thesis since they would restrict the research to only one theoretical approach (Saunders et al., 2012). Moreover, Corbin and Strauss (2008) argue that inductive analytical approaches may take months to complete, and it is noted that it is important for research limited by a strict time constraint to consider this when choosing how to analyse the data. Due to the time constraint of this thesis these approaches were not suitable.

In order to analyse the qualitative data a generic approach was applied. This follows a structure of: identifying categories; unitising data and recognising relationships; developing categories and testable propositions; and drawing and verifying conclusions (Saunders et al., 2012). This way of analysing data is not restricted to one theoretical approach and it may provide appropriate means to be able to analyse the qualitative data (ibid).

The first step of the analysis was to put terms that frequently arose in the collected data into categories, which were applicable to the analysis of the purpose of this study. Secondly, the authors attached different units of data, such as quotes from the transcripts from the focus group into the different categories. When all useful data had been divided into the different categories, the next step was to recognise relationships and patterns within these categories. By searching for key themes the authors managed to find patterns in the data which lead to that conclusions could be drawn. When relationships from the data were recognised it was linked to already existing literature and theories from the frame of reference.

To analyse the quantitative data, a system was conducted to give each green claim a score of credibility. The system was constructed so that each time a green claim was ranked as number 1, it received a score of 7, when it was ranked as number 2, it received a score of 6, and so on. Finally, the scores from all responses were combined in order to give each green claim a final score of credibility. The quantitative data from the survey was analysed in a descriptive manner, as the data is of a categorical nature. Thus, the authors were allowed to not only identify which green marketing claim was
perceived as most and least credible, but to also draw connections between the factors that affect green marketing’s credibility and the claim itself.

3.9 Trustworthiness of Research

In a thesis, trustworthiness and quality are two of the major challenges researchers face (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Reliability of the research depends upon whether the data collection techniques and analytic procedures yield consistent results if replicated on another occasion by different researchers (Saunders et al., 2012). Since findings could be affected by the adopted method, it is recommended to use a concurrent mixed method and collect data within a single phase to cancel out the ‘method effect’ and gain greater confidence in the conclusions (ibid). Since a qualitative research by itself could lead to less trustworthy findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), a quantitative data collection method was added to the research. This is referred to as concurrent triangulation and was one of the measures taken to attempt to gain a deeper level of analysis of the results, which is in line with recommendations from Saunders et al. (2012).

Additionally, the three authors attempted to ensure trustworthiness by utilising their different viewpoints in the analytical process. Moreover, there are four techniques that together generate a reflexive and reliable journal; credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (ibid).

Credibility

Credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness and demonstrates to what extent the primary data reflect reality (Shenton, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure that the qualitative data collected from the focus groups was honest, the researchers sought to make participants feel comfortable and encouraged them to be frank from the outset of each session as recommended by Shenton (2004). By conducting voluntary focus groups, in which the participants could choose not to answer, and introducing each session with friendly conversation, the researchers aimed to create an atmosphere in which the participants could feel comfortable sharing their opinions and thoughts.
**Dependability**

A way to ensure the dependability of the research is by constructing and reporting processes of the thesis in detail. This is to make it possible for future researchers to recreate the work and allow readers to comprehend the chosen methods and their effectiveness (Shenton, 2004). The dependability of this research is assured through the methodology chapter and is also brought up in the discussion chapter.

**Transferability**

Transferability regards the degree to which the findings can be applied to different situations. Obstacles often arise when showing that the result can be applied to a larger sample or wider population (Shenton, 2004). This issue is especially relevant for qualitative research as samples can be small compared to quantitative research, and are specific to a number of particular environments and individuals. This makes it difficult to ensure that the results would be the same in different populations and situations (ibid). A concurrent mixed method was therefore introduced to this thesis to generate more trustworthy conclusions and results. The quantitative method was conducted as it enabled the authors to reach a larger sample which would have been difficult if only qualitative methods were used (Saunders et. al., 2012). Further, the results of this study are transferable as the thesis investigated the fast fashion industry as a whole and not one single case.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability is described as the qualitative researcher’s comparable concern to objectivity. It means that action must be taken to ensure that the findings and discussions are a result of the ideas and experiences of the participants, rather than researcher bias (Shenton, 2004). To minimise that the characteristics and preferences of the researchers affected the results, beliefs underpinning decisions and methods adopted were recognised and argued for in this thesis. The authors also acknowledged reasons for choosing one approach over another and discussed limitations in section 1.5 to further ensure confirmability.
4. Empirical Findings

In this section the empirical data gathered during the research is presented. The empirical findings start with the findings from the survey and questionnaire. The second part of the empirical findings include findings from the focus groups.

4.1 Survey findings

The survey (Appendix 3) provides information about a larger part of the population. The final sample consisted of 108 responses.

4.1.1 Green Marketing Claims

One of the intents of the survey (Appendix 3) was to be able to see if the respondents ranked the different green claims as more or less credible. When evaluating the scores, recycled materials was ranked as the most credible claim. The green claim that received the lowest score, and therefore was seen as least credible was promoting saving the environment. In order to further analyse the credibility of different green claims, the scores were evaluated according to the different categories of green claims. The mean of all claims in each category was calculated, after using the analysis method described in section 3.8. The credibility score system showed that product orientation claims, was seen as most credible. Further, environmental fact claims was seen as least credible with the distinctively lowest score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of claims</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recycled materials</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable manufacturing</td>
<td>522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic fibres</td>
<td>427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainable supply chain management</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborations with organisations concerned with environmental issues</td>
<td>390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donating to green charity organisations</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting saving the environment</td>
<td>276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Summary of Green Claims credibility scores in Survey
4.1.2 Green Marketing Credibility

Another intent of the survey (Appendix 3) was to investigate if the respondents perceive green marketing from fast fashion companies to be credible or not. A straightforward question with several answer alternatives was used in order to gain insight to this topic. As can be seen in Table 3, the most common answer was ‘Probably yes’, followed by ‘Neutral’. Overall, the answers show that the respondents lean more towards seeing green marketing from fast fashion companies as credible, than not credible. However, it is important to remember that the alternatives ‘Probably yes’ and ‘Probably not’, although leaning in one direction or the other, indicate some sort of uncertainty.

![Bar chart showing responses to green marketing credibility question]

*Table 3 Responses to “Do you consider green marketing by fast fashion companies as credible?”*

4.2 Questionnaire findings from focus group

The questionnaire (Appendix 2) answers provide information about the focus group participants, and Table 4 shows what each participant answered during the questionnaire. The answers regarding if they perceive green marketing as credible differed among the participants. Below you can see how the focus group participants ranked the different green marketing claims. These questions were further discussed in the discussion part of the focus group interviews.
Table 4 Summary of questionnaire answers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Group 1</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you raised with a Swedish background?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I care about the environment...</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>A great deal</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Where do you see ads?</td>
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<td>TV/Online</td>
<td>TV/Online</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Recycled materials</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donating to green charity organisations</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Promoting saving the environment</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider green marketing as credible?</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Probably not</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Do you consider green marketing as credible?</td>
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<td>Probably not</td>
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<tr>
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<td>A lot</td>
<td>A bit</td>
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<td>Promoting saving the environment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Do you consider green marketing as credible?</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<td>Are you raised with a Swedish background?</td>
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<td>I care about the environment...</td>
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<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>A little</td>
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<td>Where do you see ads?</td>
<td>TV/Online</td>
<td>Other [in-store &amp; Products]</td>
<td>Online/Posters</td>
<td>Online/Other [in-store]</td>
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<td>Ranking:</td>
<td>Organic fibres</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Recycled materials</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sustainable manufacturing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Sustainable supply chain management</td>
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<td>Promoting saving the environment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do you consider green marketing as credible?</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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Table 4 Summary of questionnaire answers
In order to evaluate which green marketing claim that was perceived to be most credible in the focus groups, the credibility score system (as described in Section 3.8) was used. Similar to the survey results, the questionnaire from the focus groups shows that the participants found recycled materials to be the most credible. Lastly, as in the survey, promoting saving the environment was perceived as the least credible green marketing claim, as can be seen in Table 5 below. Furthermore, the claim category product orientation received the highest score whilst the environmental fact category received the lowest score, which again is the same ranking as in the survey.

![Table 5 Summary of Green Claims credibility scores in Focus Groups](image)

### 4.3 Findings from Focus group discussions

**4.3.1 Sustainability within company operations**

When discussing sustainability within company organisations, focus group participants highlighted the importance of implementing a long-term strategy when working towards becoming more sustainable. The common theme was that companies need to think about how their actions affect the environment in the future. The following quotes illustrate this topic:

*Sustainability for me means that you think with a long-term perspective and are aware of what you do today will have an impact in the future.*  (M3)
"...I would say that sustainability isn’t only about the product, but also about the organisation, salaries, working conditions, logistics etc. That you do something that will be sustainable in the long run." (M12)

The general view was that short-term solutions regarding sustainability efforts is not enough, and participants said that companies need to adopt a long-term perspective in their operations and throughout the organisation:

"Maybe a specific campaign that they promote can be sustainable, but not the company itself." (F4)

It was then further discussed, particularly in Group 4, that implementing sustainability in all steps of the operation is particularly important in cases when production is distanced by many intermediaries:

"...I think that it is easy to cheat, and skip the first steps in the country where the production is operated, and to only mark the last step as environmentally friendly." (M11)

Participants further expressed a belief that companies promote themselves through green marketing, not because they care about the environment, but rather to maintain a good image. This is illustrated in the following quote:

"It’s straight up negative not being green, previously it’s been positive to be green, but now it’s rather turned negative not being it. Companies can really lose by not being green, as it has become a trend as mentioned." (M11)

4.3.2 Perception of green marketing

Participants expressed scepticism towards green marketing throughout all focus group discussions. All groups discussed that they believe that companies in some cases use green marketing in order to cover something up, hide something, or to portray themselves in a better way. Further, participants said that they believed that in some
cases companies use false green marketing. This criticism is illustrated in the following quotes:

*There is a tendency to trick customers, companies promote that they care about the environment instead of marketing the product. It seems like they care more about looking good than thinking about the product first.* (M8)

*It feels like they only market green in order to cover up that they are doing something wrong.* (F3)

### 4.3.3 The fast fashion industry and green marketing

All groups discussed that the fast fashion industry concept, with rapid production, makes it difficult to be sustainable in manufacturing and throughout the supply chain, which makes their green marketing feel less genuine. The participants expressed that fast fashion companies’ credibility regarding environmental consciousness was limited due to lack of green business practices. The following quotes illustrates this view:

*In the case of fast fashion, since companies are changing their inventory so quickly I could consider their green marketing as greenwashing. Because even if you say you are green, you are still shipping clothes and changing your collections, which will harm the environment in some way.* (M7)

*It is not natural for the industry’s business model to be sustainable since that would hinder them to get products to their stores fast and cheap enough. So no matter how much they market it as green... ...I won’t believe they are completely sustainable.* (F4)

Group 2 discussed that fast fashion companies’ green marketing efforts appear less credible as they generally make one green collection and do not work towards the bigger picture. Participants said that fast fashion companies need to oversee all parts of their operations. This is more important than one single effort as it highlights the unsustainable practises rather than making their green marketing efforts appear genuine:
It’s not enough with just one sustainable collection for a company to say that they are sustainable, they have to do it all the way. I think it can harm a company if they only have one sustainable collection while the rest of the clothes are not. (M3)

It was expressed in the discussion that low prices are common in the fast fashion industry. Further, participants perceived these low prices to reflect less environmentally friendly procedures. Participants therefore argued that the price of a product affects how credible they found the green marketing regarding this product to be. It was discussed in all groups that price also reflects the perceived quality of materials used in production. The following quotes illustrate this topic:

... all green claims become less credible to me with a low price tag. If you have the same price on a green product compared to a regular product, it doesn’t feel feasible. Either they have to lower their profit margins, but companies don’t do that, or they have to increase the price. (M7)

It’s hard for fast fashion companies, since they have cheap prices and simple products, to choose sustainable materials as it will be more expensive. (M4)

4.3.4 Green marketing credibility within the fast fashion industry

When discussing the credibility of green marketing from fast fashion companies, participants argued that previous perceptions towards a company affect the trustworthiness of their advertisement. All groups agreed that a company’s history and previous actions have an effect on if the advertisements will be considered credible or not:

I think it depends on what company it is, and what they have said and done before, because that effects if you trust what they say now. I don’t shop at H&M for example, I don’t trust them, so if they say they use ecological cotton I will question it. (F4)
Further, it was expressed more in depth in Group 1 that it is hard for fast fashion companies to successfully market a new sustainable image. As it is hard to change consumers’ previous perceptions, it will influence how credible the new action is perceived to be. This topic is illustrated by the following quotes:

*I think it is more difficult for fast fashion companies since there has been so much questionable behaviour in the past that has surfaced nowadays about how and where they produce things. I think that is why I am more questioning towards their campaigns.* (M1)

*I think that you keep the first impression of the store, if you don’t think that it is sustainable initially, it’s hard to change that.* (F3)

Additionally, all groups mentioned that they find it difficult to trust green messages since fast fashion companies do not show results of their sustainable activities. The participants said that they rarely see the impact of companies’ green efforts and therefore the credibility is lost. This is portrayed in the following quotes:

*I think it’s difficult for a company to show the customer what they are actually doing. If you want customers to trust you, you actually have to show them the results, I think it’s hard to give that message through green marketing.* (F1)

*You never get any proof if they actually do something through their green marketing claims, because that never becomes visible.* (M13)

It was also expressed that if fast fashion companies have the wrong motives for considering sustainability, it makes their green marketing less credible:

*They are doing it in order not to look bad, rather than doing it for the environment, which makes it non-credible.* (M4)
Further, the majority of groups mentioned that they perceive green marketing to be a concept that has become a trend, which companies feel pressured to keep up with. Therefore, participants argued that fast fashion companies force this change, by only implementing one collection or campaign, to simply follow the trend. It was expressed that this affects the credibility of their green marketing negatively:

*People think it is trendy to be environmentally conscious and then the companies might think they have to be that too. But you don’t become sustainable because you have one campaign about it, it demands hard work and it can be perceived as pretty fake if companies state that “now we are sustainable, or working with sustainability” if we as consumers think that they aren’t.* (F4)

### 4.3.5 Credibility of green marketing claims

#### 4.3.5.1 Product orientation

**Recycled materials**

Throughout the discussions, all groups expressed trust towards claiming to use recycled materials. The general theme was that they saw this claim as a well-established concept, which is easy for companies to execute, therefore making it credible:

*I took recycled materials as number one, because it’s probably the thing that I recognise the most. As we said before, as it is so well established to recycle nowadays, it feels more credible.* (F7)

**Organic fibres**

The organic fibres claim was perceived as credible throughout all groups. Therefore, several groups stated that they believed that fast fashion companies would benefit from using this claim. Participants argued that the consequences of lying about this claim would be too severe and that companies wouldn’t take that risk, which further lead to the claim being perceived as credible. This is illustrated through the following quotes:
I put Recycled materials and then Organic fibers as the most credible claims because it think it is difficult to lie about... (M10)

I have put Organic fibers as the most credible claim because I think it is difficult to fool people that it is that material which they used in production. If they did, I think they would have suffered big consequences. Since they use so much of it, it would be hard to lie about. (F5)

4.3.5.2 Process orientation

Sustainable supply chain

Participants perceived the sustainable supply chain claim to either be most or least credible to a large extent. The findings show that the participants who perceived sustainable supply chain to be the most credible claim placed great importance on the effort fast fashion companies make by implementing sustainable practises throughout the organisation. This is illustrated by these quotes:

*I took sustainable supply chain management as number one because it becomes more credible if sustainability is operated throughout the whole supply chain, then I don’t think there is any doubt as it would be if it is only half, or not green throughout the whole supply chain...* (M3)

*I have sustainable supply chain as the most credible because when it comes to green marketing it is a pretty difficult thing to market and you have to integrate it throughout the company, so that feels genuine and credible to me. It feels like they actually care about the environment if they do it.* (M9)

Further, the discussion also showed that the participants who perceived the sustainable supply chain claim to be least credible, put emphasis on the difficulty of implementing sustainability throughout the entire supply chain. This is illustrated by the quotes:
Last I put sustainable supply chain and sustainable manufacturing, because anyone can say it but it is a lot more difficult to implement. If a company would have claimed to have that I would not have believed them. (M10)

As number seven I took sustainable supply chain management, because there are so many steps and processes and it is probably hard to make it completely green. (M13)

**Sustainable manufacturing**

The general view was that the sustainable manufacturing claim is less trustworthy and participants expressed concern regarding the difficulty for fast fashion companies with many intermediaries and with little control over manufacturing to become green. Another theme from the discussion was that sustainable manufacturing is difficult to implement. These themes are illustrated by the following quote:

...I would say that companies are too big for it to be easy to follow all steps of the production. I think that it is easy to cheat, and skip the first steps in the country where the production is operated, and to only mark the last step as environmentally friendly. (M11)

**4.3.5.3 Image orientation**

**Collaborating with organisations concerned with environmental issues**

The discussion showed that the credibility of this claim increases because the green effort is regulated and controlled by multiple parties. This is illustrated in the following quote:

I also think that collaborations with green charity organisations are trustworthy, since the company you are cooperating with will probably put requirements and control so that everything is right, otherwise they both will lose from it. (M3)
Further, it was discussed that collaborating with organisations concerned with environmental issues was considered more credible and genuine since the action shows that fast fashion companies are willing to put more effort towards being sustainable. This was illustrated through the following quotation:

*I thought about what is more credible claim-wise. I like the idea of collaborating with organisations because then you’re actually doing something rather than only donating money.* (F1)

**Donating to green charity organisations**

Several groups stated that fast fashion companies donate money simply to appear in a good light, however they were sceptical towards how much of the money that is actually being donated:

*...partly we don’t know how much they are donating, it could be only a promille of what they are actually earning, or do we even know if they do it at all? It could be something used to cover up something else, or to make themselves appear better than the things they are actually doing.* (M3)

*I’m not sure where the money goes when I donate, I just don’t know what they actually do and what happens.* (F1)

Further, several groups discussed that donating money is a very easy action to undertake, but it does not feel genuine. It was stated that fast fashion companies do this because they have to and not because they are truly sincere when it comes to sustainability:

*You have to be green through everything, so if a company just claims to donate money, they are actually not doing anything, they don’t really want to be environmentally friendly but they do it to be in line with what is expected from them.* (M7)
At the bottom, I took donating to charity organisations, as we said before it is something you say just to follow everyone else’s example. (M4)

4.3.5.4 Environmental fact

Promoting saving the environment
Promoting saving the environment was considered the least credible claim in the majority of the groups. The re-occurring theme was that this claim was seen as too vague and that fast fashion companies do not show any concrete results. The following quotations illustrate the general view:

Promoting saving the environment was ranked last, it could literally be anything. (M2)

Last I took promoting saving the environment. It is all about actually doing something, but in this claim they aren’t doing anything concrete. You are actually not making a difference, more than maybe opening up someone’s eyes regarding environmentally friendliness. (M6)
5. Analysis

This section analyses how different factors affect the credibility of green marketing made by fast fashion companies. The section also analyses why the green claims were perceived to be more or less credible. The analysis is based on the empirical findings and strengthened by the frame of reference.

From the empirical data, six main themes were identified; perception of green marketing; previous perceptions of companies and brands; limits of the industry; price’s effect of the credibility; short-term versus long-term solutions; and showing results. These were identified as factors that affect consumers’ perceptions of credibility towards green marketing by fast fashion companies, as well as their green claims.

5.1 Perception of green marketing

5.1.1 Scepticism towards green marketing

Scepticism caused by believing that fast fashion companies use false or partly false information in their green marketing, was a prominent theme in the discussions and affected the perceived credibility of green marketing. This is in line with observations from do Paco and Reis (2012) who suggest that the credibility of green marketing is affected by scepticism towards the concept. Further, the empirical findings indicate that participants perceive green marketing from fast fashion companies to be too vague to trust completely. This confirms Carlson et al.’s (1993) view that the most common shortcoming of green marketing claims is that they are vague or inconclusive. Our empirical findings indicate that consumer scepticism partly originates from insufficient disclosure and ambiguity of information about different green marketing claims. This is in line with Furlow’s (2010) view that numerous companies in fact are vague, misleading and dishonest in their green marketing, in essence practising greenwashing.
Furthermore, when customers perceive a company to be practising greenwashing it will affect their view on the whole industry:

_In these cases, that a company have used false green marketing, it would probably drag down everyone in the industry._ (M11)

Therefore, although fast fashion companies may be honest and truthful in their green marketing, they may still face scepticism and resistance. This result is consistent with Furlow’s (2010) view that even companies that are honest and truthful in their green marketing are negatively affected by greenwashing practices of other companies.

### 5.1.2 Green marketing as a trend

Researchers argue that companies have increasingly been publicising their green brand efforts (Kim & Damhorst, 1997; Ottman, 2011), which gives suggestions to why the focus group participants perceive green marketing to be a trend among companies. The majority of participants believe that fast fashion companies engage in the trend not because they care about the environment, but to ensure they do not appear in a bad manner. It was highlighted that these motives make green marketing efforts appear less credible. Therefore, it could be argued that for consumers to perceive fast fashion companies’ green marketing as credible, focus need to be put on showing that their green efforts are not executed with alternative motives. Accordingly, if a fast fashion companies can show that they actually care about the environment, their green marketing would appear more credible. This is illustrated through the following quotes:

_In order for me to believe that it is sustainable, I have to think that they are doing it because they actually care, not just to increase their profit. Then it’s just a marketing strategy._ (F3)

_It’s a stronger message if they actually care._ (M2)
5.2 Previous perceptions of companies and brands

The focus group discussions revealed that credibility of green marketing depends on which company that communicates the message. Therefore, if they don’t trust the company they will not trust their green advertisements. This is in line with the findings from Buda and Zang (2000), who suggest that consumer’s response to an advertisement is based on the credibility of the source. Further, the participants argued that if a company has a sustainable image, have shown previous efforts or been truthful in the past, their green marketing will have a greater chance of being perceived as credible. This is in line with the view of Ng et al.’s (2014), who argue that if a company engages in green marketing, it must fit into the customer's existing consumer schema of the brand to be seen as credible. Therefore, establishing a sustainable image could be a long and difficult process for fast fashion companies, since it is hard to change consumers’ perceptions. Throughout the discussions, the fast fashion industry concept was perceived to be unsustainable by highlighting questionable behaviour in the past. This perception is why doubt towards fast fashion companies’ green marketing was expressed by participants:

*I agree with what have been said, companies’ history and previous actions and incidents affect if I trust the company or not.* (M8)

Due to consumers’ negative perception of sustainability in the industry, fast fashion companies face challenges when trying to establish a credible green image. This confirms Kim and Hall’s (2015) view that fast fashion companies will have difficulties in establishing credibility of their green marketing due to previous perceptions of the industry. The empirical findings further support the view by Jang et al. (2012) that previous perceptions could be an especially important issue for fast fashion companies to deal with since it has not been sustainable in the past.

5.3 Price’s effect on credibility of green marketing
The low price of fast fashion products was perceived to reflect low-cost manufacturing and supply chain practices to make production as cheap and fast as possible with little regard for its negative impact on the environment. These are industry characteristics which confirms Fletcher’s (2008) view on low cost production in the fast fashion industry.

*It feels like fast fashion companies are pushing on their environmental consciousness, but it feels pretty forced and not genuine. They always use the cheapest material in their production and because of that you can assume that they don’t use 100% organic cotton because they need to keep the prices down.* (M6)

Therefore, to be perceived as more credible in their green marketing, fast fashion companies could consider raising the prices of their green products, as the empirical findings suggests that low prices reflect cutting corners in production. They could alternately motivate how they could achieve low prices, and still be environmentally conscious, through their green marketing.

### 5.4 Limits of the industry

The participants claimed that the industry concept made it difficult to perceive fast fashion companies’ green marketing as credible. This is in line with Fletcher’s (2008) view that rapid production and low cost clothing that encourages disposability, characterises the fast fashion industry as unsustainable. Further, this indicates that the industry concept could be a large obstacle for companies if they continue to operate in a similar manner as they are currently, since it affects their green marketing credibility.

The discussions also highlighted that the perceived motivation for why fast fashion companies pursue green marketing stemmed from companies’ need to follow a trend. In combination with the industry’s unsustainable practises, fast fashion companies’ green marketing was perceived to be less credible. This confirms Kim and Hall’s (2015) view that the fast fashion industry could face obstacles when trying to establish green
marketing credibility. Further, the empirical findings indicate that the credibility of green marketing by fast fashion companies was negatively affected by promoting only one green collection, rather than focusing on making their business operations more sustainable from within.

5.5 Short-term solutions versus long-term solutions

One of the themes found to affect the credibility of green marketing, is whether a company’s green efforts are seen as long- or short-term oriented. The empirical findings indicate that consumers value long-term solutions regarding sustainability and this type of solutions made the green marketing appear more credible. However, in the fast fashion industry where focus is put on short production lines and development cycles, long-term sustainable operations is harder to implement in production.

Participants expressed that in order for fast fashion companies’ green marketing to be perceived as credible, they need to consider sustainability in the long run. However, in the industry as it is characterised today, being sustainable is difficult as fast fashion buying cycles occur frequently, rather than a year in advance which is the case of the regular fashion industry (Kline & Wagner, 1994). Thus, to make their green marketing be perceived as credible, fast fashion companies need to put more weight on green claims that emphasises long-term solutions, rather than rapid production and short-term solutions.

5.6 Showing results

The majority of the participants agreed on the importance for companies to present results from their green marketing activities, to be perceived as credible. This is not in line with Mayer, Scammon and Gray-Lee (1993) who argue that green claims have a reliance quality, since the effect of green efforts often occur in the unforeseen future, which allows companies to not show results. Further, participants expressed that if companies show results of their green marketing efforts, even with green claims that
received a low credibility score in the investigation, it would be perceived as more trustworthy. This is exemplified in the following quotation:

*I would trust if I could see the result of donating, and that my money would benefit to something good.* (F2)

It becomes particularly important to show results as it was found that consumers do not trust the claims alone. This phenomenon could occur because environmental terms have been overused, which has caused lack of credibility when it comes to green marketing claims (Karna et al., 2001). Therefore, if fast fashion companies present concrete results, which creates a genuine and relatable image, the empirical findings suggest that the credibility of green marketing will increase.

5.7 Credibility of specific green marketing claims

Using the different factors identified above, the seven green marketing claims investigated in this study were analysed in order to understand and bring light to why consumers perceive them as more or less credible.

5.7.1 Product orientation

**Recycled materials**

Recycled materials was ranked most credible in the questionnaire and the survey. The focus group participants expressed the importance of long-term solutions and they perceive green marketing claims that will affect sustainability in the long run as more credible than short-term oriented claims. Since recycling materials eliminate waste by encouraging fast fashion companies to make use of leftover materials from production and incorporate sustainable thinking into their business operations, recycled materials was perceived as a long-term solution, which increased the credibility of the claim. However, it is important for fast fashion companies to not only make use of recycled materials sporadically, but to implement it in company operations to continue with the long-term characteristic of the claim, and to make it more credible.
The participants expressed that they want to see concrete results in order to perceive a green marketing claim as more credible. Recycled materials is an example of this as it is used in physical items and is something tangible for the consumers (Ottman, 1995), which is in line with the empirical finding that this type of claim is seen as more credible.

The participants had the impression that lower prices on products makes claims regarding these products appear less credible also arose. However, when discussing the price of products made by recycled materials, it appeared that this claim may be an exception, as participants perceived this claim to be profitable enough for companies to pursue without raising the price:

*I put recycled materials as the most credible claim because I think that you would save money as a company by doing it, and that would be motivating for companies.* (M8)

*As number one I took recycled materials. It feels like companies can do it without much effort, you can make a shirt into mittens, not much is needed and it feels like something that is feasible for companies. They should want to do as much as they can with their money in order to maximise profit.* (M7)

**Organic fibres**

Organic fibres was ranked as one of the most credible green marketing claims in both the survey and the focus group questionnaire. Although, the claim received a slightly lower score in the survey where it was seen as the third most credible claim, compared to in the questionnaire where it was the second most credible claim, the conclusion was that the claim was perceived as credible. It was expressed that the organic fibres claim focuses on long-term solutions, as well as gives the consumer concrete results through tangible products, which were both factors that increased the perception of credibility.
I took organic fibers first, as we discussed that it's a long term change, and it feels like you are actually doing a difference, not only giving money, but actually caring. (F3)

However, what differentiates organic fibres from recycled materials, and give it a slightly lower credibility score, could be the low-price factor. Recycled materials was seen as a profitable operation for fast fashion companies as they recycle existing materials rather than producing new ones. However, when it comes to organic fibres, the production process need to ensure that the material is of the organic nature which can be costly. As discussed, if a product with a green claim does not have a higher price, and isn’t perceived as a source of profit for the company, the claim will not be perceived as credible. Since organic fibres is a costlier process, the claim loses its credibility when it has a lower price tag.

These findings are not in line with what Carlson et al. (1993) said about product oriented claims being perceived as least credible, due to them being deceptive and misleading. However, since Carlson et al. (1993) investigated green claims in a general setting, it could be argued that the industry influences the extent to which this is true or not. As the fast fashion industry put more emphasis on products, since companies constantly replace their collections, claims regarding products could be of more importance. Thus, when communicated efficiently, this claim is perceived as more credible.

5.7.2 Process orientation

Sustainable supply chain
Sustainable supply chain was ranked as the fourth most credible green marketing claim in both the survey and the questionnaire from the focus groups. The empirical data reveals that some participants perceived this claim to be credible because it indicated that fast fashion companies worked with sustainability from within, as well as throughout the organisation. This confirms Ottman’s (2011) view that green marketing should be fully integrated and a part of the company’s strategic marketing plan.
The findings also reveal that credibility is negatively affected by only promoting single sustainable collections and not working on making business operations more sustainable. Therefore, claiming to have a sustainable supply chain was credible to some participants as it was perceived as making a proper effort. Having sustainable supply chains could also indicate that fast fashion companies work towards long-term solutions, which was another important factor when trying to establish credibility of green marketing:

*I have sustainable supply chain as the most credible because when it comes to green marketing it is a pretty difficult thing to market and you have to integrate it throughout the company, so that feels genuine and credible to me. It feels like they actually care about the environment if they do it.* (M9)

Ng et al. (2014) states that previous perceptions of a brand influence credibility of the company’s environmental standards. As the fast fashion industry is traditionally characterised as unsustainable it affects how the customer perceives the new green efforts made by companies in the industry. Ng et al., (2014) also state that the credibility of a company’s environmental standards is influenced by whether the new green branding-based knowledge fits into the existing consumer schema. This may be why the sustainable supply chain claim, was perceived as not credible by participants of the focus group and survey sample, since sustainable supply chains are rare for fast fashion companies. The empirical data gathered from the focus groups also shed light on that the lack of credibility of this claim is due to the perception that sustainable supply chains are difficult to fully integrate. The reason for this perception could be due to the business concept of fast fashion companies, as stated in the frame of reference. As it is based on short production and transportation lead times, generally associated with higher environmental impact.

*In big companies it’s hard to know what factory everything is coming from. It’s easier for a local business to control their supply chain, but within bigger companies it’s harder to detect if something isn’t done the right way.* (M7)

**Sustainable manufacturing**
Sustainable manufacturing was ranked as the fifth most credible claim in the questionnaire and second most credible claim in the survey. The results indicate that there were large disagreements concerning credibility of this claim between the survey and the questionnaire.

In Group 1 it was discussed that this claim was seen as credible since sustainable manufacturing reflects that a company is working with sustainability from within their own operations. It was perceived that fast fashion companies make a greater effort to be sustainable rather than promoting something they are selling. If this perception was accurate for the survey respondents who ranked the claim second most credible, connections to the factors which affect credibility of a green marketing claim can be made. Therefore, fast fashion companies that make efforts to change their own operations, are perceived to have more credible green marketing:

*I had sustainable manufacturing first. I think sustainable manufacturing is really important and it is really important working towards it, rather than promoting something external. Emissions are reduced, and the side effects on the environment around them. Lakes etc. It is better in the long term.* (M1)

However, the majority of focus group participants did not perceive sustainable manufacturing to be a credible claim. This was because of the suspicion shown towards fast fashion companies and their manufacturing not being fully sustainable. Participants were particularly critical towards fast fashion companies which had many intermediaries as they were associated with less control over operations. The schema theory, as described by Solomon et al. (2006) and Boush et al. (1987), explains that humans tend to group objects that are perceived to have similar characteristics and that this schema is crucial to how humans assess objects in the future. This is in line with the findings of this study, which suggests that previous perceptions of a company is a factor that influences the degree to which a green marketing claim is perceived as credible. Therefore, the perception of this claim is negatively affected, if negative previous perceptions exist. The following quote illustrates this issue:
In the fast fashion industry, they keep prices low, for example H&M, they used to have child labour in their factories so that affects how credible I think they are considering sustainability. (M9)

5.7.3 Image orientation

Collaborating with organisations concerned with environmental issues

In the questionnaire, collaborating with organisations concerned with environmental issues were considered the third most credible claim. The focus group participants expressed the advantage for fast fashion companies to collaborate with organisations, as it allows more parties to control the processes and makes it more credible. Further, it was found that this claim shows dedication and engagement from the company which creates a more genuine feeling.

However, the results from the questionnaire contradicts with the results from the survey. According to the survey, collaborating with organisations concerned with environmental issues was considered less credible and was ranked the fifth most credible claim. Participants who expressed scepticism towards this green marketing claim questioned the credibility not only from fast fashion companies, but also from the green organisations they collaborated with. This may further be the reason for why the respondents did not perceive it as credible:

"It is also about companies that says that they are green from the start, such as Greenpeace, how would we know if they really are? You don’t get any proof. Is it actually someone who has investigated these companies?" (F7)

It is important to acknowledge that this claim did not provoke a lot of emotions from the participants, and was for the majority not considered the most nor the least credible claim.

Donating to green charity organisations:

The focus group participants ranked donating to green charity organisations as the second least credible claim, which was also the case in the survey. Furlow (2010)
argues that green marketing is a serious commitment that need to be honest, real and an actual reflection of a company’s mission. However, the empirical findings suggest that claiming to donate money was considered a simple action for fast fashion companies. Therefore, it was perceived as not genuine and honest, making this claim considered as less credible.

Another important factor in order for green marketing to be perceived as credible was showing results. The participants expressed a dissatisfaction towards companies’ ability to show results from their donation activities. This has caused a mistrust from customers since consumers cannot be sure if the money is getting donated or not, creating an uncertainty of the credibility of the claim.

Another important factor influencing credibility of green marketing was showing results. The participants expressed a dissatisfaction towards fast fashion companies’ ability to show results from their donation activities. This has caused a mistrust from customers since consumers cannot be sure if the money is getting donated or not, creating an uncertainty of the credibility of the claim. Furthermore, the participants expressed that donating money is a temporary solution and that fast fashion companies do not work towards a long-term perspective, which is considered another important factor influencing the credibility of green marketing.

Image oriented claims were according to Carlson et al. (1993) a category of claims that was not perceived to be credible, which is in line with the results of this thesis. However, Thorson, Page and Moore (1995) found when specifically investigating low involvement products, that this type of claim was perceived as the most credible. Therefore, it is important to note that characteristics of the fast fashion industry and their products could be an additional factor affecting the credibility of green marketing claims.

**5.7.4 Environmental fact**

**Promoting saving the environment**
Promoting saving the environment was ranked as the least credible green marketing claim, both in the questionnaire and the survey. It was expressed throughout the discussion that promoting saving the environment was too vague and simply empty words. This is in line with that green claims without clear and concrete results are seen as less credible, which was identified as a factor affecting green marketing credibility.

Participants perceived promoting saving the environment as a vague claim as it does not specify what the intentions are, thus they found it hard to determine whether it is long- or short-term oriented. Participants perceived promoting saving the environment as a vague claim as it does not specify what the intentions are, thus they found it hard to determine whether it is long- or short-term oriented. Further, lack of clear intentions and vagueness makes it hard for consumers to grasp the motive of the green marketing claim. Therefore, the claim is not perceived as credible. This is in line with Thorson et al.’s (1995) suggestions that a company’s motive affects the credibility of the claim. As this is a claim that has little to no credibility, it can be argued that it will be troublesome to make this claim appear as credible. Therefore, in order to make this claim credible, the suggestion would be for companies to combine it with green activities.

These findings are not in line with Carlson et al.’s (1993) statement that environmental fact have the most potential to be credible. It can be argued that this is because this type of claims is seen as too vague and that there are no results, particularly in the fast fashion industry.

5.4 Effect of trusting green marketing from fast fashion companies

As can be seen in the empirical findings, most respondents answered ‘Probably yes’ followed by ‘Neutral’, and ‘Probably not’ when asked if they consider green marketing by fast fashion companies as credible. This indicates scepticism as few respondents answered ‘Definitely yes’. This was reflected in the focus group discussions, where respondents expressed that the degree to which they trusted green marketing from fast fashion companies depended on several factors.
From the survey result it was found that the sample had divided answers regarding if they trust green marketing from fast fashion companies. Further, when investigating the difference between the ranking of green marketing claims from the ones who answered ‘Definitely yes’ and ‘Probably yes’, to the ranking from the ones who answered ‘Definitely not’ and ‘Probably not, no apparent difference could be seen. Thus, no distinct connection between trust of green marketing made by fast fashion companies and the two groups’ ranking were made.
6. Conclusion

This section provides answers to the research questions and conclude the findings from this thesis.

This thesis generates interesting findings where the authors explored what factors influence consumer perception of green marketing credibility and which green claims promoted by fast fashion companies are perceived as credible. The factors that were identified are ‘perception of green marketing’, ‘previous perceptions of companies and brands’, ‘limits of the industry’, ’price’s effect on credibility of green marketing’, ‘short-term versus long-term solutions’ and ‘showing results’. Certain claims used in green marketing by fast fashion companies are perceived to be more credible, consequently certain claims are perceived to be less credible. The claim that is perceived to be most credible is recycled materials, whilst the least credible claim is promoting saving the environment. The findings suggest that if a company is able to create a trustworthy image regarding sustainability, their green marketing will be perceived as credible.

Since the purpose of this thesis is twofold, the authors first intended to identify different factors which influence the credibility of green marketing made by fast fashion companies. Secondly, the authors wanted to illustrate why certain green marketing claims are perceived as more or less credible in relation to these factors. This thesis further illustrates challenges for companies in the fast fashion industry that attempt to communicate green additions to their brand image. Additionally, opportunities were also brought up in the analysis which highlight what companies can do to be perceived as more credible regarding their green marketing.

The findings suggest that if fast fashion companies work towards sustainability with a long-term perspective, as well as with honest and sincere motives of their green efforts, it positively influenced consumers’ perception of credibility of their green marketing. In the same manner, showing results had a strong positive influence on credibility. Consequently, not considering these factors would have a reverse effect on perception of credibility of green marketing. The findings also suggest that previous perceptions of
consumers play a large role in if fast fashion companies’ green marketing is perceived to be credible and that negative previous perceptions of companies will negatively affect the credibility of companies in the future. Other factors that were found to negatively influence the credibility of fast fashion companies’ green marketing are the traditional characteristics of the industry, the low prices of their products and scepticism towards green marketing as a concept.

Moreover, the empirical findings show that product orientation claims were regarded as the most credible throughout the investigation, followed by process orientation claims and image orientation claims. Environmental fact orientation claims that was regarded to be the least credible category of claims. The rank of the categories was the same in the survey as in the questionnaire. The survey and questionnaire generated small differences in the results of individual claims. However, these differences were not large enough to make changes to the order of which the categories of claims were ranked. The green marketing claim that was perceived to be most credible in both the survey and the questionnaire was recycled materials, as companies are perceived to work towards a long-term perspective and showing results of their green efforts. The green claim that was perceived to be least credible in both the survey and the questionnaire was promoting saving the environment, as this claim did not show results of any green efforts made by companies and was believed to be too vague. It was also perceived to be a short-term solution and lack sincere motive, which are main challenges for companies attempting to communicate green messages. Our findings show that the factors found to influence the perception of credibility of green marketing, also influence the credibility of the individual green marketing claims.
7. Discussion

This section includes a general discussion of the outcomes of the research. Hence, the implications, limitations and suggestions for future research are addressed.

7.1 Implications

This thesis provides both theoretical and practical implications. It focuses upon green marketing, green claims, credibility and perceptions, specifically within the fast fashion industry, and is one of few research efforts that combines these factors. The theoretical and practical implications will be discussed below.

Theoretical Implications

This study suggests that there are six factors which influence how credible green marketing by fast fashion companies is perceived to be. The factors regarded consumers’ perception of the industry, companies’ green efforts and green marketing as a concept all affected how they perceived green claims from this industry. Further, as previous research argues, scepticism is common within all of these elements, which is confirmed by the findings of this thesis. Based on the empirical findings of this thesis and existing literature, the suggestion that previous perception has strong impact on how consumers currently perceive credibility of different green claims was made.

Existing literature argues that environmental fact is the category of green marketing claims which has the largest positive impact on consumers and that they perceive it as most credible. It was also argued that price- and process oriented claims were seen as less credible. However, the findings of this thesis indicates the opposite as environmental fact claims were seen as least credible and product- and process orientation was seen as most credible. Thus, a suggestion from the authors, which is in line with previous research, is that the fast fashion industry has more focus on their production processes, and constantly distributing new products. Therefore, claims regarding these aspects are valued more by consumers.
**Practical Implications**

This thesis first intends to make contributions to the empirical body and provide normative suggestions for practitioners. Therefore, suggestions of factors that affect the credibility of green marketing, as well as which green marketing claims within the fast fashion industry are perceived as credible were highlighted. Further, suggestions on areas where fast fashion companies should focus their green marketing on were made. Firstly, the study suggests how the companies should handle each factor in order to optimise their green marketing and be seen as credible. Secondly, propositions regarding which green marketing claims fast fashion companies should focus on and why were also made. In other words, the thesis proposes how fast fashion companies’ green marketing activities affect the level of credibility perceived by consumers.

**7.2 Limitations**

During this thesis, the authors encountered shortcomings and limitations. During the research, particularly when analysing the data, it was important to take into consideration that perceptions are individual opinions and a psychological concept. Further, how consumers perceive credibility may be affected by individual factors such as culture, personal characteristics and values.

The investigation was limited due to several circumstances, which were identified in the beginning of the research process, but also throughout. Since this thesis was conducted with a strict time constraint of approximately four months, time was one of the main limitations of this research paper. The time constraint caused this thesis’ empirical research to be limited with selection bias. This meant that the researchers only targeted individuals who lived in the region of Jönköping, Sweden, as it would not have been achievable to reach out to individuals and conducted focus groups in a wider geographical area. Therefore, the findings of this thesis are based upon a small part of the population. Further, a selection error arose as the participants for the focus groups were selected beforehand by the researchers, and not at random. As the authors used their personal contacts and immediate surroundings to conduct the focus group, the selection further contained errors, as the participants could have similar characteristics.
All participants were undergraduate students, between the ages of 19-26, studying economics or business administration.

Since the focus groups’ general discussions were open and not regulated in one way, participants’ opinions and expressions were occasionally interrupted as another participant began their own assessment. Further limitations arose in the transcribing process due to data loss. As most of the general discussions were held in the participant’s native language Swedish and later transcribed into English, possible translation-issues might have occurred. Additionally, as the discussions were recorded and fully transcribed at a later time, information loss may have occurred in two ways. Aspects such as non-verbal cues and facial expressions does not translate into text, and may have been lost in the transcribing process. Secondly, as some participants spoke at the same time, it was difficult to determine what was said and who said what at times, causing further data loss.

The data that was not discussed in the empirical findings was seen as irrelevant for this study as the purpose had slight changes throughout the process. This meant that although most questions and discussion topics were applicable, some were not. These topics were not being discussed in the empirical findings nor analysis, however they can be found in the appendices.

7.3 Suggestions for further research

Due to the limitations of this thesis, there are specific cases of further research that can be suggested. As the findings of this thesis cannot be generalised, the initial suggestion is to further investigate the findings of this thesis using a larger sample and more strategies of data collection. This larger sample should consist of individuals located in different parts of Sweden, and should possess differentiated characteristics. As the focus group participants, and the survey respondents, were only between the ages of 18-37, a suggestion would be to explore a wider selection of the population.
Research regarding the factors that were determined to influence green marketing credibility, is a field where additional research could be made. An example of this could be to investigate these factors in another industry, to determine if they are applicable outside of the fast fashion industry, or investigate the topic in another geographical area.
References


Appendix 1

Questions for the focus groups
Brief unbiased explanation of the topic of this thesis. Ask the participants if they prefer a discussion in English or Swedish. Ask the participants if they are okay with the discussion being tape recorded.

Start the discussion with these questions.

Questions regarding RQ1: What factors influence consumer perception of green marketing credibility in the fast fashion industry?

1. Do you know what fast fashion is?
Vet du vad fast fashion är?

2. What does sustainability in company operations mean to you?
Vad betyder hållbarhet inom företagsverksamhet för dig?

3. What is your perception of green marketing? Explain.
Vad är din uppfattning om grön marknadsföring? Förklara.

4. Do you generally trust messages you see in green marketing from fast fashion companies? Why?
Litar du oftast på information från grön marknadsföring från fast fashion företag? Varför?

5. Because green marketing has become more and more apparent in media, would you say it has affected your perception of credibility of green marketing?
Eftersom grön marknadsföring har blivit ett stort ämne i media och flera företag använder det i sin marknadsföring, har det ändrat eran uppfattning om grön marknadsförings trovärdighet?

Explain that we now are moving into the second topic of our thesis.

Continue the discussion with the following questions.

Questions regarding RQ2: Which green marketing claims made by the fast fashion industry are seen as more credible and why?

6. Do you know what a green marketing claim is? Explain.

7. Does different claims of green marketing made by fast fashion companies affect your perception of credibility differently? If yes, if no - why? What are these claims?
Har olika påståenden inom grön marknadsföring från fast fashion företag olika effekt på din syn på deras trovärdighet? Varför ja? Varför nej? Vilka är dessa påståenden?

Explain that we are now going to send out a questionnaire link via Facebook and make sure all participants have access to their phones. Tell them to not yet submit the answers as we will discuss them in the next question. Give them sufficient time to answer the questionnaire.

Finish the discussion with the following question.
8. As you could see in the survey, we mentioned some green claims. Can you elaborate on which claim you saw as most and least credible, and why?

Som ni såg i vår undersökning så bad vi er ranka vilka gröna påståenden som ni ansåg vara mest och minst trovärdiga. Kan ni berätta vilka ni ansåg vara mest/ minst trovärdiga och varför ni tycker så?

Ask the participants if they have anything else to add. If not, thank them for participating in the focus group and end recording.
Appendix 2

Questionnaire with answers

Q1 - What is your full name?

Q2 - Gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65.00%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3 - Age?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>95.00%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>31-37</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>38+</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Q4 - Are you raised in Sweden or have a Swedish cultural background?

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<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5 - Which of the following describes you the best? I care about the environment...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>A great deal</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A lot</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A moderate amount</td>
<td>60.00%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>A little</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>None at all</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6 - Where do you usually see advertisement? (Pick two)

<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1</td>
<td>TV</td>
<td>55.00%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>95.00%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>20</td>
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</table>

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

On products and in store

In stores
Q7 - Which of the following green marketing claims made by fast fashion companies, do you perceive as more credible (trustworthy)? (Please rank by dragging)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Organic fibres</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Recycled materials</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sustainable manufacturing</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>1.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
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<td>25.00%</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sustainable supply chain management</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Collaborations with organisations concerned with environmental issues</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Donating to green charity organisations</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>45.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Promoting saving the environment</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>25.00%</td>
<td>5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q8 - Do you consider green marketing by fast fashion companies (such as H&M, Zara and Lindex) as credible?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Probably not</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Definitely not</td>
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Appendix 3

Survey questions with answers

Q1 - Gender?
Q2 - Age?

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Q3 - Are you raised in Sweden or have a Swedish cultural background?

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<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
<td>108</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Q4 - Which of the following describes you the best? I care about the environment...

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<td>4</td>
<td>A little</td>
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<td>0.93%</td>
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Q5 - Where do you usually see advertisement? (Pick two)

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<td>Posters</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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</table>

Other (please specify)

Other (please specify)

Lunarstorm :ppp

Social media like Facebook, Instagram, Snap and Twitter

Youtube
Q6 - Which of the following green marketing claims made by fast fashion companies, do you perceive as more credible (trustworthy)?
(Please rank by dragging)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Recycled materials</td>
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<td>22.86%</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Collaborations with organisations concerned with environmental issues</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>10.48%</td>
<td>12.38%</td>
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<td>Donating to green charity organisations</td>
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<td>8.5%</td>
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<td>Promoting saving the environment</td>
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<td>5.7%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>16.19%</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
<td>43.81%</td>
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</table>
Q7 - Do you consider green marketing by fast fashion companies (such as H&M, Zara and Lindex) as credible?

<table>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<td>Probably yes</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Probably not</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Definitely not</td>
<td>7.48%</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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Appendix 4

Summary of focus group general discussion

M1:

Q1: No
Q2: Keep something going in the long-run perspective
What you do with the waste, how you handle the waste
It’s working towards improvement
Thinking more in a local sense
People don’t want to give up the way they’re living, so they do small stuff
Q3: I guess that you market that you are green
It’s hard to know what kind of impact company operations actually has.
Maybe they are doing less, but at least they’re doing something.
Q4: They mix good with the bad (response to greenwashing)
Not really to be honest. Let’s say they’re gonna donate, you don’t actually know how much they make a difference, so I don’t really trust it.
I feel that green marketing may be a response to something going wrong and they messing up, instead of doing it from the start.
I see that they have donated 10 kr, when you buy something. But I would mostly be skeptical to that, we don’t know what the results will be.
Q5: It’s more social than environmental
If you are just thinking about the sustainability and being green, and then compare it to fast fashion, they focus more on mass-producing.
It is of course profitable for companies to use green marketing, since it will make more companies pursue it.
If they invested with their own money, that would increase their trustworthiness. If they take their own money in order to start an initiative.
They could do it (green marketing) to have a competitive edge.
If they took time to show the whole process, I would trust them more. If they have more transparency, saying “we implemented this, then this happened”.

Q6: -
Q7: We always come back to that we don't see any results from their claims, and that's important.
I would believe it, but I wouldn't know how much it would actually change
You don’t know if the good they are doing is balancing out the bad.
I want a long term solution
Q8: I had sustainable manufacturing first. I think sustainable manufacturing is really important and it is really important working towards it, rather than promoting something external. Emissions are reduced, and the side effects on the environment around them. Lakes etc. It’s better in the long term
Last thing I had was donating to charity, because I rarely think it’s doing something, and I don’t think the money they are donating is nearly enough money. And that these green organisations don’t have the resources to handle it. It doesn’t have a long term effect.

M2:
Q1: No, I never heard about it
Q2: How is it produced and what effect does it have on the environment. What you do with the waste so that it has minimum impact on the environment. You can see a growing trend in like electric cars.
Q3: Agrees with the rest
Q4: I think, like with H&M, people become more aware after a scandal, they become more questioning.
Q5: It’s about how they present and communicate their green marketing. It is easy to just say they’re gonna donate money. They should show it through their core values, not just because they have to, that would create more trustworthiness for me.
We can of course look up the effect, but if the companies really want to present this, they shouldn’t expect customers to do hard research on if it is sustainable or not.
You see more and more stamps telling you something is ecological, but what does that really mean, how can we know it is? To be trustworthy you have to work with sustainability throughout the whole company.
If it is profitable to become more sustainable, so of course they will gain from it. I don’t know it it’s ethical, but at least you can trust that they are doing it.
It’s a stronger message if they actually care
Q6: Recycling old clothes like H&M.
Q7: Yes, you always have to see the result to believe it.
Instead of giving out water, one time, help them be able to have water in the long run, through generations.
Q8: Promoting saving the environment was last, it could literally be anything.
I took number one as collaborating with organisations because they don’t really have a reason not to do it. But then if I see it as good or bad is something else.
We know about little about manufacturing and supply chain and therefore I’m unsure about if it’s credible.

F1: No
Q1: I don’t think it’s about changing your lifestyle, it’s about improving it. Like using other materials that can be recycled or used again, trying to find better ways to travel etc. Finding sustainable ways to do things we normally do
Q3: I’m pretty sceptical about it,, but it could be a win win as long as they’re doing something.
Some companies do it for profit but I don’t mind if they profit and help the environment at the same time.
Q4: I think it’s difficult for a company to show the customer what they are actually doing. If you want customers to trust you, you actually have to show them the results, I think it’s hard to give that message through green marketing.
It is difficult because we know so much now, with cotton production and production with cotton it is so bad for the environment. It is the same with
strain on water supply in already poor countries that don’t have a lot of water and the use of chemicals, everything is bad about it. Because of that it is difficult to make people think the product is good when we know this.

Q5: It is hard to know the effect, because we do not know enough.
If it says that they are using less chemicals, then we know more about that. Sometimes I still think that it is trustworthy (even if it is an aftermath) as it is very costly to become sustainable.
Why do someone ever market something? They want to gain something from it.
I think it’s really hard to build trust in these types of things, as we have previously seen companies used a lot of money for their own gain.
Companies are forced to be more green and sustainable because of trends (such as McDonalds joining the trend of being healthy).
The more I see it, the more I hear about it, the more important I think it is (green marketing).
I haven’t thought about it being for covering something up, but maybe I want to believe fast fashion companies, because if there is a scandal that arise and come up in the media, it will have such a large impact for the companies.

Q6: -
Q7: I’m not sure where the money goes, when I donate, I just don’t know what they actually do what happens.
If an organisation is credible and has a lot of eyes on them, if they have chosen a credible organisation to give their money to, I would trust that.

Q8: I agree with M2 and took the same one.
I thought about what is more credible claim-wise. I like the idea of collaborating with organisations because then you’re actually something than only donating money.
Lastly I put sustainable supply chain, because I don’t know what can really be done there.

F2:

Q1: When they mass produce H&M I think
Q2: I think it means to recycle for me, and what I can do in my life to make society sustainable.
People travelling less and reduce emission.
Q3: For example when you buy a product and donate a sum of the money to help the environment.
It does not have to be founded on a social or environmental issue, they are just promoting environmental sustainability.
Q4: When you buy a product, do you actually think about the environment? I think about the quality and the price more, I’m not that concerned about the environment when purchasing clothes.
I would trust if I could see the result of donating, and that my money would benefit to something good.
Q5: For example with H&M, I already have an image about them, and I do not see them as sustainable. In recent years, they have tried to adopt and
joined the green movement, however, I still have this old perception of their company. Maybe this is the problem, you should found your company based on sustainability. For example if you buy a organic t-shirt, they could inform you about how much you have decreased emissions by buying that shirt. Maybe if I was more informed about the the green impact I would trust it more. It helps if they have a trust seal (everyone agrees). Now, our generation is more aware, we have a lot of information, so we question if we can trust things? We have to be very careful what we believe. You see it when you walk into a store. Based on if they have a history of doing something bad… I think it is more difficult for fast fashion companies since there has been so much questionable behaviour in the past that has surfaced now a days that about how they produce things and where they produce things. I think that is why i am more questioning towards their campaigns more. Bigger companies can loose, but still have the resources to gain the trust again. That’s valuable as well. If someone has done something bad, then mass produce green marketing, I would think that something was up. If a company has done something bad I want them to market that they are working to fix it with their marketing. If we see action and result then I would trust them. It is hard for an already established company to earn this kind of trust since perhaps their customers are not into environmentally conscious products, they buy it because they think it looks nice and because it is cheap. (Paradox) They don’t really have a choice, they have to follow the trend. That’s what H&M is trying to be more involved in sustainability, but we still have the same perception of the brand. It’s easier to relate if I have a company that I look up to.

Q6: Maybe if you buy this shirt you will donate this amount could be a green marketing claim.
Q7: If you buy a shirt and the company says they will donate a certain amount I wouldn’t believe it.
Q8: I would like a company to have sustainable manufacturing, but if they claim to have it I’m not sure if I’d believe it
I choose donating money as the first, as then I can actually make a change and to see that they are actually doing something too. Last I put promoting saving the environment, if someone is promoting it I want to see results. I don’t actually know what will happen.

F3:
Q1: I think it is when we order online for just a party night or something
Yeah, it arrives quickly and doesn't have high quality
Q2: Sorting your trash.
I would say so (that it is important)

Q3: Cause we are becoming more conscious about the environment, companies are realising that it’s a really good marketing strategy to market that they are green.
To me it is more that they market that they are green, but maybe they are not, just because it’s a big selling argument. It is not wrong for them to promote it, but I think maybe they promote it more than they are actually doing.

Q4: I also think that H&M, you’re doing something, but you are earn such a profit, so it’s just a teardrop in the ocean, because you could do so much more.
It feels like they only market green in order to cover up that they are doing something wrong.
I think that some people will dig into their production line, because they care about the environment.

Q5: I think that you keep the first impression of the store, if you don’t think that it is sustainable initially, it’s hard to change that. Even if they are doing sustainable things now, I will still not see them as sustainable.
Then it says that it is organic, but is that really good or can it be bad.
In order for me to believe that it is sustainable, I have to think that they are doing it because they actually care, not just to increase their profit. Then it’s just a marketing strategy.
It can’t be an aftermath action
This generation is more critical than previous ones, we are always questioning things.
Gina tricot just had an ad on TV that they are using good dyes in India, but I feel that the more they promote it the less I trust it, because then it feels like they covering something up. The fact that it has increased doesn’t make me trust it more.
Since it’s been so many scandals, I don’t trust it.

Q6: -

Q7: That they plant a tree, but I don’t believe it as it is mentioned so often. The claim has been overused.
I think that donating money is credible, but every year they mention such a big amount, but then you don’t see any results. Sure, they probably gave that money to the charity, but why isn’t anything happening.
It doesn’t matter how much money we give, it needs to be political.
Instead of just giving money, we need to do a social structural change.

Q8: I took organic fibers first, as we discussed that it’s a long term change, and it feels like you are actually doing a difference not only giving money but actually caring.
And the last one I took was sustainable manufacturing. I don’t even know what it is, it feels like everyone says they does this.

M3

Q1: No
Q2: That you think in a long-term perspective and are aware of what you do today will have an impact in the future.
Q3: People will of course say that they want to buy ecological products that are good for the environment, but when they go to the store I don’t think they will act on buying green products, I guess it’s because they are not willing to pay a higher price or that they just don’t feel like they have to, but they still want to appear to care about the environment.

Agrees on that companies simply want to make a profit.

Q4: You are wondering what happens to all of the clothes that doesn’t get sold within the fast fashion industry, since they change their collection every week.

It’s important for companies to listen to what the customers demands. If the customers demand more sustainability, which is the trend right now, companies have to adapt to it. But if no one will buy it, the company won’t do it.

It’s not enough with just one sustainable collection for a company to say that they are sustainable, they have to do it the all the way. I think it can harm a company if they only have one sustainable collection while the rest of the clothes are not.

I feel like companies are using green marketing only for PR.

Q5: I believe you do it for PR and not for the environmental cause.

Q6: -

Q7: Some companies promotes that with every product you buy, they will plant a tree, because “even if we are bad towards the environment, we are still nice since we are planting a tree” and then you think it’s just wrong. If they are saying that a shirt is made out of 100% organic cotton I would probably trust it, but I don’t know if I would have bought it, even if I still saw it as credible.

I think that if they say that something is 100%, then the risk of lying is too large. If someone would investigate the claim and find out that it is not true, it would be a hard hit for the company.

Q8: I took sustainable supply chain management as number one because of the reason that it becomes more credible of it is operated throughout the whole thing, then I don’t think there is any doubt if it is only half, or not green throughout the whole supply chain, and then I feel that it is credible.

As number 7 I took donating to charity organisations, because as M4 said and as we said before, partly we don’t know how much they are donating, it could be only a promille of what they are actually earning, or do we even know if they do it at all. It could be something used to cover up something else, or to make themselves seem better than the things they are actually doing.

I also think that collaborations with green charity organisations are trustworthy, since the company you are cooperating with will probably put requirements and control so that everything is right, otherwise they both will lose from it.

Of course you can’t know if the whole supply chain is green, but you have to trust it and then see a pattern that this company have invested in being green the whole way through. They only have green collections, and then they have had a unique selling point (USP) and most control their factories extra carefully. You can see that it is green throughout the whole chain, so it gives trustworthiness.
M4
Q1: No
Q2: FN 17 sustainable goals – is something companies follow
I think about taking responsibility. That you take responsibility for the
environment and not only choose the fastest and cheapest option and
instead do something that you proudly can show.
Q3: Personally, I don’t see a difference in marketing now compared to five
years ago.
Even if everyone says that they are doing green marketing the advertising
comes from the same channels as before, so I don’t feel like there is any
difference really.
Q4: When I was shopping I saw a pair of jeans that was “svanenmärkta” and
shirts made by recycled material. So I would say that you trust that kind of
green accreditations more. You have learned since you were a kid to be
critical about marketing.
It’s hard for fast fashion companies since they have cheap prices and
simple products to choose sustainable materials since it will be more
expensive.
As long as there is a “bad, ordinary” option and it’s cheaper, people will
always choose that one.
I would say that it is extremely hard for a company within the fast fashion
industry to change their niche towards sustainability.
Q5: -
Q6: It’s less credible
They are doing it in order not to look bad, rather than doing it for the
environment, which makes it non credible.
Q7: It depends on each case
Q8: I have most credibility towards recycled materials, it is pretty simple to
examine if it is true or not, so I don’t think anyone would state that they
are using it if they are not.
At the bottom I took donating to charity organisations, as we said before it
is something you say just to follow everyone else’s example.

M5
Q1: No
Q2: I agree with the rest, I think you should take responsibility to contribute to
the environment.
Q3: It feels like it has become very important for companies to do it, since it
has been in focus and everyone aims to maintain a sustainable image. It
feels like companies are doing green marketing to be considered as a good
company, but it’s actually just for profits, so that feels fake.
Q4: Not really
If you want to shift the company towards the “green way”, it can be a bit
risky. You don’t know if the customers will buy it when it becomes more
expensive.
I think the best solution is to do it “in secret”, and then market it after a
couple of years it show what you have done.
Q5: The later you adapt to it, the less credible it is. It’s hard to stand out from the crowd if you’re the last one to adapt to it. There are different ways to work with green marketing but I wouldn't say different ways is more or less credible than others.

Q6: -

Q7: If someone would dig into a company, they would find a lot of stuff that is just bullshit. I would believe the claims “this shirt is made by 100% organic fibers”

Q8: As number one I took recycled materials. It feels like something that has been around for long and it has become a credible thing. Last I took donating to charity organisations, as previous have said, it feels like something you just say. I feel the same about supply chain, if everything is right, then it is probably the claim that has the most effect, so it is more credible.

M6

Q1: No

Q2: I’m actually pretty bad when it comes to this with sustainability. Right away, I think about the environment but I assume there is other perspectives as well, e.g. you are supposed to have a sustainable source of labour. But I also think about being environmentally conscious, a company that is sustainable maybe don’t produce clothes made by polyester and other dangerous chemicals that destroys the environment, and instead more natural products.

Q3: I know that I’m not susceptible to environmental consciousness because I know it will have a bad impact on the environment anyway. If i would have a company I wouldn't see what I have to win by using green marketing since it’s actually not green. I don’t see it as a unique selling proposition. Agrees with that people and companies claim to be green but they are not.

Q4: It feel like fast fashion companies are pushing on their environmental consciousness, but it feels pretty forced and not genuine. They always use the cheapest material in their production and because of that you can assume that they don’t use 100% organic cotton because they need to keep the prices down. If you need to keep the prices down it’s extremely hard not to use material that won’t effect the environment. Green marketing is hypocrisy, even if there are a lot of people who think green marketing is great because it shows that companies takes good initiatives, it doesn't matter, because it will still harm the environment, they say it’s better for the environment but actually it is not. After discussing this, I wouldn’t say that I trust green marketing. It’s extremely hard for a company to re-brand. They might have to pay 1 billion on the marketing for the re-branding, but at the same time they could have used that billion two pay for better production material.

Q5: -

Q6: -

Q7: I get extremely sceptical when a company claims that their products are made by 100% organic materials, because there is no chance for
consumers to actually look this up as there are so many different suppliers. If you instead do like HM, where you can leave old clothes and in return get 50kr, I think it’s trustworthy since that’s simple and something concrete, it gives me a positive feeling. I don’t think that companies would care enough to control the last part of the supply chain. I think it is important to get face to connect to the purpose, this creates a feeling and a bit of passion around the marketing. If you buy fair trade coffee for example, you always get to see a picture from a farmer in south america, they create a story around which make it feel more real.

Q8: First I took recycled materials, even if it’s not something I would buy myself. Last I took promoting saving the environment, because it is all about actually doing something, but in this claim they aren’t doing anything concrete. You are actually not making a difference, more than maybe opening up someone’s eyes regarding environmentally friendliness.

M7

Q1: Never heard of it before, but is it like Zara where they change their collections all the time?
Q2: It the depends what context you’re putting it in. I think that it has to be a sustainable business/industry, if you think about the oil industry you know that it’s not sustainable in the long run, you can’t keep doing it forever because it can’t last that long.
Q3: It feels like a trend to point it out, I mean you can market a lot of different stuff but now it feels like there is a lot of focus about being green. I feel like it matters what kind of image you have about the company from the beginning. Since I don’t value green marketing that much I prioritise my own needs first when I buy products, and if it is green it’s just a bonus. I don’t think about the green marketing as the main purpose since it’s often just about that companies want to be seen. I think it’s the same thing with both people and companies, they say that they want to be green but then they are actually not. It depends on if the company has claimed to be green from the beginning, because then it’s their niche, compared to if a company start with green marketing just because they “have to” because it has become a trend.
Q4: Since I have read about green washing, I’m more aware of that topic which make me more critical about the green marketing. In the clothing industry it’s more focus on child labour and fairtrade than green marketing, but right now I wouldn’t say that I have experienced greenwashing in the clothing industry. Considering fast fashion, since companies are changing their inventory so quickly I could consider it as green washing. Because even if you say you are green, you are still shipping clothes and change your collections, which will harm the environment in some way. As a company, if you really want to be considered as truly green, you shouldn’t just only product one green collection. Instead you should change the whole assortment and higher all the prices, because as long as
an ordinary t-shirt will be less expensive than a “good” one, people will always take the cheapest option. It also depends on what image you had about the company before, I mean you consider HM as fast and cheap clothes, so if they want to do a green initiative and want me to believe in it they have to change their whole image. If they keep the cheap price, it will still be the price that’s in focus. I think you trust it if it is done in “secret”. It will be more credible if it’s later become big news from another source. Otherwise it feels like “empty promises”.

In big companies it’s hard to know what factory everything is coming from. It’s easier for a local business to control their supply chain, but within bigger companies it’s harder to detect if something isn’t done the right way.

You won’t benefit by having a green department in the store, because customer associate it with being more expensive. You should instead blend it out with the rest of the clothes in the store, and when you happen to buy a pair of green jeans for example, you get a note in your bag saying that you have made a good choice.

Q5: If you’re first, absolutely. But if you’re not, then you’re just a follower, like you do it because you have to. It’s not beneficial for a company to adapt to green marketing too late. Because then, they cannot motivate their margins, like we said before. They won’t benefit from it if they are not the first to adapt to it, because they won’t stand of from their competitors.

Q6:

Q7: To donate money to organizations is bullshit. You have to be green through everything, so if a company just claim to donate money, they are actually not doing anything, they don’t really want to be environmentally friendly but they do it to be in line with what is expected from them.

If they would mention a name and a face, etc. “Meet Jamal from Africa” that would feel real and genuine. A company has to work to make it sound like they are smaller and has control over everything.

Another thing is that you should be able to see it on the products, for example Icas sustainable plastic bags, they have a bit of a yellow colour because it wouldn’t be possible to make them 100% white without using any chemicals. It should be the same with clothes.

Q8: As number one I took recycled materials. It feels like companies can do it without much effort, you can make a shirt into mittens, not much is needed and it feels like something that is feasible for companies. They should want to do as much as they can with their money in order to maximise profit.

I took donate to charity organisations last, companies doesn’t really care about the environment, but they do it anyway.

I agree about the supply chain, if it truly is done correctly in a green order, it’s probably the one with the largest effect. It becomes more trustworthy if it’s done throughout the whole chain.

I started thinking about something, all green claims becomes less credible to me with a low price tag. If you have the same price on a green product,
it doesn’t feel feasible, either they should lower their profit margins, but companies don’t do that, or you have to increase the price.

M8
Q1: -
Q2: How you choose to consume things and not just think two weeks ahead, but having a long term perspective.
Q3: There is a tendency to trick customers, companies promote that they care about the environment instead of marketing the product. It seems like they care more about looking good than thinking about the product first.
Q4: I can imagine that it is portrayed in a way that makes it look better. But I think that they would defend everything they say because they would not risk lying completely.
Q5: -
Q6: No
Q7: I agree with what they have said, companies’ history and previous actions and incidents affect if I trust the company or not.
Q8: I put recycled materials as the most credible claim because I think that you would save money as a company by doing it, and that would be motivating for companies. I am pretty rational and I don’t think that companies donate their money to look good, I think it is a strategy, that is why I put Donating to charities as the least credible claim. I always think that companies have a secret motive and wouldn’t just donate a large sum just because.

M9
Q1: Yes, I think the products are updated every week.
Q2: I agree with F4. It is not just wear and tear. I also think of the triple bottom line.
Q3: I guess they are promoting that they are sustainable in some way. I think there are two ways to do it, the new way is that green marketing is trendy. I think the other way is to combine being green with a good product, so that they don’t say choose us because we are sustainable, but choose us because we are sustainable and have a good product. That should really be obvious but I think many companies use green marketing to brag.
Q4: In the fast fashion industry, they keep prices low, for example H&M, they used to have child labour in their factories so that affects how credible I think they are considering sustainability.
Q5: I think it is a bit different for guys, but generally I think we buy less items but at a higher price.
Q6: No, but I kind of understand
Q7: If a company has a business model like say Toms, that every time you buy a pair of shoes, they donate another pair to someone who needs it, it feels more credible. A company can claim that they use ecological cotton but that could for example be only 2% of the garment, so one can question that claim since it doesn’t feel as sincere or real. They just want to be able to use it in their marketing.
Q8: I have sustainable supply chain as the most credible because when it comes to green marketing it is a pretty difficult thing to market and you have to integrate it throughout the company, so that feels genuine and credible to me. It feels like they actually care about the environment if they do it. Last I put donating to charity and I agree with M8 on his points.

M10
Q1: No.
Q2: I think you work with some organisation that works with green marketing, you team up with another company. You could also use sustainable materials for example, that is what I think about first.
Q3: I think it easily sounds like the company is bragging and that makes me angry instead.
It can’t be that hard in a country like Sweden to get a seal saying that you are sustainable I guess. But if you import materials and goods then it becomes more difficult.
Q4: I don’t think I would question if it said that a product was made out of organic fiber, at least not at the stores I shop at. Maybe I would have questioned green marketing abroad, but not in Sweden.
Q5: I think it is different for guys and girls, we don’t shop at the same stores as girls do and the price is often different, more expensive. So if I know that the store is different and that the quality of the fabric is better I perceive the claims differently.
Q6: -
Q7: I agree on the organic materials, if it says that it contains good materials I believe it.
Q8: I put recycled materials and then organic fibers as the most credible claims because it think it is difficult to lie about. After that I put donating to charity organisations, even if you other don’t agree, I actually trust the company if they say they do that. At least from the companies I buy from. Last I put sustainable supply chain and sustainable manufacturing because anyone can say it but it is a lot more difficult to implement. If a company would have claimed to have that I would not have believed them.

F4
Q1: Yes, I think the clothes are exchanged every two weeks.
Q2: That it is not just wear and tear. Tripple bottom line comes to mind.
Q3: People think it is trendy to be environmentally conscious and then the companies might think they have to be that to. But you don’t become sustainable because you have a campaign about it, it demands hard work and it can be perceived as pretty fake is companies state that “now we are sustainable, or working with sustainability” if we as consumers think that they aren’t.
I work at Lindex and they promote sustainability a lot and it feels like it is not just something they say because they have education for the employees to make them understand what sustainability is about so it feels more real. They are transitioning into ecological cotton.
Q4: -
Q5: The thing about sustainability in fast fashion is that it is practically impossible for fast fashion companies to be completely sustainable. It is not natural for the industry’s business model to be sustainable since that would hinder them to get products to their stores fast enough, cheap enough. So no matter how much they market it, work towards it and what campaigns they have I won’t believe they are completely sustainable. Maybe a specific campaign that they promote can be sustainable, but not the company itself.

Q6: -

Q7: I think it depends on what company it is, and what they have said and done before, because that affects if you trust what they say now. I don’t shop at H&M for example, I don’t trust them, if they say they use ecological cotton I question it.

Q8: I put organic fibers as the most credible, closely followed by recycled materials because I think they are pretty coherent. The materials are what is most credible to me because they use so much of it. Last I put promoting saving the environment because it is very vague. You can say what you want but you also have to show that you are doing something, so that won’t take you far when talking about credibility of a claim.

F5

Q1: I think it is fashion that is updated and changed fast, like H&M’s products. You consume a lot of the products and by new ones often.

Q2: It also depends on how they produce and work, they have to think about being environmentally conscious in every part of the organization in some way.

Q3: I think it depends on what they are marketing. Are they donating money to something it feels like they just do it to look better, but if it is the product that is green is feels more credible in some way because then they did the job, for example if they use ecological cotton.

Q4: -

Q5: I think so, as i mentioned earlier, some things you trust and some you don’t. It depends a bit on how they use them too, I notice pretty fast if the company only has a logo to have it for show or if they actually work for it.

Q6: -

Q7: Like i said before, if it says that they donate money you think ”okay maybe you do, but to what extent?” But if they use ecological cotton i don’t question it.

Q8: I have put organic fibers as the most credible claim because i think it is difficult to fool people that it is that material that they used in production, if they did i think they would have suffered big consequences. Because they use so much of it it would be hard to lie about. Last it put donating to charity organisations, and as mentioned earlier it feels like they do it just to get a green seal and not because they really care.

F6

Q1: -
Q2: It is a lot of focus on what materials companies use, either if it has been recycled before or if it can be recycled.

Q3: I agree with F5, if you market a product you the company worked on to be green and they put more effort on, it feels more credible.

Q4: I agree with the arguments made earlier. H&M for example, lets you hand in old clothes but I wonder where those clothes go? It is hard to know if it actually does any good which make me question the credibility more.

Q5: -
Q6: No.
Q7: -
Q8: I put organic fibers as the most credible claim because it feels like it is the first thing you see as a consumer and then you believe it. If you think about supply chain, if companies would market it more i think it would become more credible, but it is not done in the same way so consumers don't understand what it means, only if you have knowledge about the subject.

Last I put Donating to Charity Organisations because it feels like something companies have to do but not what they really want.

M11
Q1: -
Q2: Environmental consciousness, particularly in the production, in the clothing industry it’s mainly about chemicals, dyes etc.
Q3: It’s straight up negative not being green, previously it’s been positive to be green, but now it’s rather turned negative not being it. Companies can really lose by not being green, as it has become a trend as mentioned.
Q4: No, I would say that companies are too big for it to be easy to follow all steps of the production. I think that it is easy to cheat, and skip the first steps in the country where the production is operated, and to only mark the last step as environmentally friendly. As we’ve mentioned before, with the use of chemicals and the dyeing of clothes.

More information would make me trust the green marketing more, to clarify the positive aspects from the start, because that’s the area that is lacking.

It’s very vague what the companies stand for

Q5: In these cases, that a company have used false green marketing, it would probably drag down everyone in the industry.
Q6: No
Q7: The things you see more of are probably less credible and you don’t consider them as trustworthy as they are stating to be, the ones you see less of are more trustworthy, because more is needed for these.

Q8: As number one I put donating to green charity organisations, because sending money feels like such a simple thing to do for companies. As number 7 I put sustainable supply chain management, meaning that you take it from the beginning, because it takes a lot of reformating from the companies, which is harder to achieve in the long run.

I don’t really have any insight into the clothing industry, but small companies have it easier when it comes to changing a whole collection or how they manufacture things. Like H&M that manufactures so much
clothing, it would be harder changing their production or to cancel contracts.

**M12**

**Q1:** Yes, now you’re talking about clothes. It’s like H&M and Zara, clothing companies that makes a lot of collections in a year, that keeps to trends.

**Q2:** No, I would say that sustainability isn’t only about the product, but also about the organisation, salaries, working conditions, logistics etc. That you do something that will be sustainable in the long run.

**Q3:** It’s a fairly newly established concept, that hasn’t existed before, it’s a trend among the most modern companies.

**Q4:** I’m thinking about the information you receive, I don’t know if a large fast fashion company have gone out with green marketing in this way. That to some way turn towards certificates, that it’s some organisation that would handle the controlling of the company operations within the production, that would make green marketing more trustworthy. When it is an external organisation that controls, that doesn’t have anything to win by cheating.

**Q5:** In a way, like F7 said, it can lead to something good, but there must also be a negative side, maybe there are companies that doesn’t possess the knowledge about how to do it, and think that some aspects will create value for the company, by saying that you are green, which can have a negative side too, that they think “how can we create value, by saying that we are green”, but it can make the statement lose it’s value. Then people get more critical about if it actually is credible green marketing or not.

**Q6:** -

**Q7:** I agree with M13, it is about information and knowledge. You don’t really know what it means.

**Q8:** As number one I took donating money to green charity organisations, because it feels like something you cannot lie about, because if it arises that you have cheated with it, the consequences would be so large. As number 7 I took promoting saving the environment, because it feels like if you are are making a promotion about it, it feels like the marketing team is trying to catch consumers. It has to do with profit margins, the ones with higher profit margin would be more credible in their green marketing, as they would have less to lose by changing their marketing. I would see them as more trustworthy, than the ones with less profit margin.

**M13**

**Q1:** -

**Q2:** Company operations that doesn’t only work in the current moment but also will be sustainable in the long run.

**Q3:** It’s become something that you use more actively in order to market yourself. For example, like Ben and Jerry, that you do not only put a stamp on the product and say “Our product is good, oh, and by the way, we are also environmentally friendly”. But rather that you promote “Buy our product because we are environmentally conscious”.
Q4: It is almost so that you receive more information about the opposite, if you look on Facebook there are a lot of videos regarding the negative aspects, where you see scandals. You can see H&M and Zara using this bad thing, you rarely see the positive.

Q5: If all companies know that there are more people that are being critical and are investigating the credibility of the company, they would fill in their own mistakes.

Q6: -

Q7: I feel the same way as F7. It could be that you don’t have enough knowledge about it. You may recognise the (green) logotypes, but you are not informed about which one is better. The drawback is that if you see it less often, it means less to me.

Q8: I misunderstood the question a bit, so I took promoting saving the environment first, as it is probably the easiest thing to implement, but it’s mostly empty words, because you don’t really know if they really stand for it. As number 7 I took sustainable supply chain management, because there are so many steps and processes and it is probably hard to make it completely green. You never get any proof if they actually do something through their claims, because that never becomes visible. Fast fashion is more price sensitive. If you take H&M and Zara, you partly shop there as it is cheap, you care more about the price than that it is environmentally friendly.

F7

Q1: -

Q2: Right now, the thing in focus is to recycle and use recycled materials, which is something a lot of companies have adopted.

Q3: It’s kind of starting to become more of a competitive advantage than something you work towards for the greater good.

Q4: I think that you should be critical, if you look at the criteria of what being environmental is, there are loopholes. When you talk about the chemicals, for example that your item that is seen as sustainable and environmentally friendly if you do not use these chemicals, but then that your item is produced or transported in other bad environments doesn’t matter, because you will be able to be classified as green anyway. So it is very few companies that succeed to cover all aspects. Few companies are able to cover all types of environmentally friendly options.

It is already a lot of certificates, for example “svanenmärkt”, but I still think that they have loopholes. It says a lot of things on plastic shopping bags, that they are produced using recycled plastic. Then you think “That’s so good!”, but somewhere there needs to be a negative aspect, it can’t be so that they are able to make such nice plastic bags, completely sustainable.

Q5: Since more are using it, it has become a trend that creates a trend, that creates development. The more companies that works towards this, the
better the conditions that are created will be. If everyone wants organic cotton, I think that it will become better because it is demanded, which in turn will lead to progress.

Isn’t it that if more companies does it, if everyone say that they are green, then everyone will start digging into the company and confirm this, and in this way it become more investigated, which leads to it becoming more credible.

If it arises that a company have used false green marketing, perhaps other companies in the industry will benefit. In time, maybe you’ll start to identify all companies that have used false marketing.

Companies need to stop wangle. Who will be best the fastest?

Q6: No

Q7: If I see on the clothing tags that it says it is organic cotton and recycled polyester, then I think in the same patterns, of course a shirt can be really sustainable, but I still think that somewhere it will crack.

Q8: I took recycled materials as number 1, because it’s probably the thing that I recognise the most. As we said before, as it is so well established to recycled nowadays, it feels more credible.

Lastly I took sustainable manufacturing, because I can’t see how that can be completely sustainable.

It is also about companies that says that they are green from the start, such as greenpeace, how would we know if they really are. You don’t get any proof. Is it actually someone who has investigated these companies? You can buy a recycled item, but you never actually check if it is, so you kind of don’t really give a fuck.

If you look at the larger chains, you can see that they have started to become more sustainable and raised their prices.

But if you check the companies, they have changed their collections. If you compare it to 10 years ago, the prices have been raised. Some products price have gone up as it is more expensive to buy materials for sustainable clothing items, but then it can go down again if you reach higher quantities.