

# GREEN BRANDING STRATEGIES:

## THE PERCEPTION OF SUSTAINABILITY OF WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANIES AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE.

## INTRODUCTION

Today's societies are increasingly aware of sustainability issues. Young people are the target group with the highest awareness and level of demand towards companies' responsible performance.

Companies are responding to these demands with sustainable behavior, and applying green marketing strategies to spread the message across the general public.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

WHAT ARE THE KEY FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO YOUNG CONSUMERS' SKEPTICISM OR RELIABILITY IN A WASTE MANAGEMENT COMPANY'S SUSTAINABILITY CLAIMS?

## THEORY

Villafañe (1999)  
Hatch and Schultz (2008)

Basic structural model of the components of branding.

Sarkar (2012)  
Simula et al. (2009)

Perceived-actual greenness matrix.

Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998)

Double vortex brand spinning model.

## METHODOLOGY

Qualitative study.  
Empirical approach.  
Case study.  
Semi-structured interviews.  
Checklist exercise.

## FINDINGS

At the beginning of the interview, participants could not identify the company and were therefore very sceptical about associating sustainable values with the company.

The level of scepticism decreased when exposed to information, changes in attitude could be seen especially towards "current performance" and "CSR actions".

In the re-evaluation of the brand after the acquired information, participants pointed out the company as truly sustainable due to:

The coherence between the elements of branding, the company's intentionality (visible in its CSR actions), and the use of sustainable reports as a tool to expand knowledge about processes and benefits.

## RESULTS

**1** An aligned and balanced design and structure of the dimensions and components of branding avoids Greenwashing.

**2** CSR actions may work as drivers towards sustainability perception in users as long as it is in balance and harmony with the rest of the branding components.

**3** Sustainable reports should be used as a branding tool to show users how sustainability promises and the real benefits of products/services are been achieved.

**4** It is necessary to provide information at the viewers' level that meets their need for knowledge about the company's performance without hiding the negative factors.

## IMPLICATIONS

Direct implications for the company studied, as they can improve their image around sustainability values by making small changes within their branding. Ideas on how to leverage their role in society were also stated by the interviewees.

For companies in the service sector, which have a sustainable behavior at the core and wish to improve their sustainable image towards the general public and especially young people and young adults.