

Greenwashing in Bangladesh: How to Combat its Spread

Md. Bazlur Rahman*

Associate Professor, Department of Marketing, University of Chittagong, Chittagong – 4331, Bangladesh

Email: bazlur@cu.ac.bd

Abstract

Greenwashing is the skepticism in marketing communications where the companies provide information regarding their eco-friendly products to gain more customer attraction, but they are far behind the truth. With the global trend, the Bangladeshi firms also produce and market environment-friendly goods and services. However, taking the opportunity of consumers hovering towards green products, many Bangladeshi firms have started deceptive practices in their production and marketing that severely negatively impact sustainability. Nevertheless, public organizations, civil societies, and social media pressure can restrict greenwashing. The paper aims to identify how greenwashing is practiced in producing and marketing goods and services in Bangladesh. Also, the study investigates how social and legal frameworks can be used to combat greenwashing. The study examines 100 self-declared green products produced and marketing in Bangladesh through a seven-scale index. The results indicate that greenwashing is extensively practiced in Bangladesh. The 98% of products examined are involved in greenwashing with at least one scale of the index. The study has important implications for business, society, and policymakers.

Keywords: Eco-friendly product; greenwashing; green products; seven-sins model.

1. Introduction

Climate change and environmental conservation have emerged the societal concerns and public discourse around environmental issues, as a moral obligation, have increased markedly over the past two decades [33]. Over the same period, the environmentally aware market segment and the trend of eco-friendly product consumption have increased in manifolds. For example, the growth in green products has flooded the US markets due to the continuous hike in energy prices and the consumers' awareness of environmental issues [18]. Therefore, the global rise of corporate social responsibility (CSR) awareness around the corporations and environmental concerns among the people have led to a boom in green or social advertising. Most companies take the "environment" topic as hot in their marketing policies to attract the environmentally aware segment. Over the last twenty years, the acts of promoting 'greenness' increased ten folds [40].

* Corresponding author.

We notice a similar trend in the firms operating in Bangladesh, where consumers are also becoming increasingly concerned about the environmental performance of products. Like consumers, the other stakeholders (e. g., media, government, and environment activists) are also seeking environmental information on goods and services. Bangladeshi companies took the environmental issues as their moral obligation and are producing and marketing environment-friendly products known as “green products” to address the demand of stakeholders.

The central theme of the environmental concept is whether the goods do not damage the environment in their production, use, or disposal [42]. In other words, green products help preserve the environment by significantly minimizing the pollution they could produce or low carbon emission. On the one hand, the emphasis on sustainability has been a mainstream issue for consumers [36]. On the other hand, sustainable production and consumption have been organizational imperatives in today’s world [28]. Skilled marketers have capitalized on this emerging trend. As a result, the public has raised questions about the advertisements extolling the benefits of the “greenness” of their goods or services [33]. Manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers, or anyone will likely benefit from the environmental claims. However, by taking the opportunity of consumers hovering toward environment-friendly products, many firms started deceptive practices in their production and marketing policies. Also, the public pressure on a firm’s environmental claims contributes to the skepticism among the stakeholders about the reality of the social and environmental commitments of firms [3]. As a result, most companies that promote environment-friendly products deliberately mislead consumers about their environmental performance or the environmental benefits of their products, i.e., their environmental claims are far behind the truth – which is commonly known as greenwashing [33].

With the global trend, Bangladeshi firms are also producing environment-friendly products. However, if few firms hide their activities and communicate to the public that they practice “greenness,” the stakeholders will doubt the sincerity of green marketing of all companies [42]. Therefore, these environmental claims must be verifiable to the consumers and other stakeholders to understand the value of the environmental information that the firms represent. Based on these considerations, it is helpful to conduct an empirical study to measure how Bangladeshi firms are engaged in greenwashing and what factors influence the firms to practice greenwashing.

Nevertheless, greenwashing has important implications for the public and policymakers. The greenwashing practice in corporations puts sustainability into a severe contemporary challenge, and society’s failure to reverse it could potentially endanger life on the planet. The political and economic tools can positively impact this situation. However, the instances of greenwashing seriously impact society’s ability to successfully use these tools, infiltrate the public domain, and influence the behaviors of governments, businesses, and consumers [33]. For instance, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the USA released Guides for the use of environmental marketing claims (Green Guides) in October 2012 [31]. Also, the United Kingdom’s Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) offered the Practical Guidance in 2003 and updated it in 2011. The guidelines address the best practice for avoiding misleading environmental claims. Although these guidelines are not enforceable by law, the FTC has recently filed complaints against companies whose claims seem misleading to the consumers. In February 2010, for example, the FTC warned against labeling paper plates and other biodegradable products when they most often end up in landfills [31].

The products engaged in greenwashing can lead to an inefficient market, such as under and overtreatment and even market breakdown [14]. If the development and introduction of innovative, environmentally sound goods and services is vital to the sustainability of society and the world, then ways to prevent or mitigate concerns such as greenwashing are important [33].

In addition, it is essential to review how Bangladeshi companies adopt greenwashing behaviors while the rapidly deteriorating environment requires that tangible steps be taken to restrict the incidence of greenwashing. Moreover, considering the merits and drawbacks of the existing government's role in restricting greenwashing, it is emerged to build a new regulatory framework where government and other stakeholders work together to process and disseminate information on sustainable business practices. Therefore, the objectives of the study are to review how Bangladeshi firms practice greenwashing in marketing and to construct a legal framework that can restrict the greenwashing practice in Bangladesh.

This paper spots the greenwashers among the companies using the "Seven Sins of Greenwashing" model in a sample of Bangladeshi firms who use self-declared environmental claims in their marketing. Moreover, the study reviewed the significant causes of greenwashing to develop a legal framework to restrict the spread of greenwashing in Bangladesh. As a result, the study found many greenwashing attributes in environmental claims by Bangladeshi firms. Also, the study results reveal that 98 percent of the sample products are involved in greenwashing with at least one sin on the Seven-scale Index.

1.1 What is greenwashing?

The Greenwashing concept emerged in the 1970s, coinciding with the rise of environmental movements in different countries [3]. About two decades passed to develop the definition of greenwashing. The term "greenwashing" initially evolved in the 1990s in response to a rapid increase in products justifying green claims [18]. The Oxford English Dictionary included the word 'greenwashing' in 1999 with meaning as the "disinformation disseminated by an organization to present an environmentally responsible public image: while they can be useful, these sorts of standards are sometimes used quite cynically", where "disinformation" refers to deliberate misleading information [23]. Before Oxford Dictionary, [22] defined greenwashing as "a green-talk and a green practice promoted by the fundamentally unsustainable firms or other uncaring organizations, they easily congeal into a deceptive ideology." [29] does not define greenwashing but rather precisely mentions a set of three greenwashing elements include (1) confusion, (2) fronting, and (3) posturing. A clear definition of greenwashing is offered by [12] as "poor environmental performance and positive communication about environmental performance" (p.65). [32] defined greenwashing as "selective disclosure of credible information about a company's social and environmental initiatives, concealing of embarrassing news on these aspects, in order to build an excessively positive corporate image" (p.9). Greenwashing is also indicated as misinformation by an organization intending to establish an environmentally conscious image and reputation in the market [41]. [51] propose another definition of greenwashing as metaphorical information emerging from internal organizations lacking actual activities or a difference between green talk and green walk. [7] argues that the academic literature on greenwashing is limited by four assumptions: (1) greenwashing is only about information disclosure, (2) greenwashing is deliberate, (3) greenwashing is initiated primarily by companies, and (4)

greenwashing is beneficial to firms and costly to society. [31] addressed greenwashing as misleading communications. They concluded that greenwashing is a range of communication that induce customers into forming highly optimistic attitudes about an organization's overall green policies, practices, or goods. On the other hand, [42] compare greenwashing to skepticism. They define greenwashing as the "skepticism in marketing communications where the companies provide information regarding their eco-friendly products to gain more customer attraction, but they are far behind the truth."

1.2 Means of Greenwashing

A good number of studies documented the forms and attributes of greenwashing. For example, [50] found the seven different ways (sins) of greenwashing commonly used by corporations which are: no proof (no third-party certification – consumers cannot verify marketing claims); hidden trade-off (from a sustainably harvested forest, environmentally preferable product); smoke and mirrors (it shifts the attention away from the eco-unfriendly heart of the product); vagueness ("all-natural" does not always mean "healthy"); false labels (beware of "green" logos: they often do not represent legitimate organizations); irrelevant (CFC free: this is misleading—law already bans CFCs); and bold lies (lax government oversight leads many companies to slap seemingly legitimate labels on poorly tested products). Likewise, [24] provided ten signs of greenwash to recognize the greenwashing practices by the firms. Ten signs are: first, using words or terms without clear meaning, e.g., 'eco-friendly'; second, producing green products polluting the environment; third, using green images indicates an unjustified ecological impact; fourth, emphasizing tiny green attributes while everything un-green; fifth, self-declaration as slightly greener than the others even if the others are pretty terrible; sixth, greening dangerous product as eco-friendly; seventh, providing information that only expert could check or understand; eighth, using a 'label' looks like third party endorsement; ninth, claiming green without proof; and tenth, entirely fabricated claims or data.

1.3 Drivers of Greenwashing

According to [2], companies are motivated to be ecologically responsive to the market for three reasons: competitiveness with potential portfolio, legitimacy with legal constraints, and environmental accountability. The importance of environmental responsibility is affected significantly by the two other factors to have eco-friendly products. Capitalizing on a new environment-friendly product market is the pressure that goes far beyond the need for manufacturing and service firms. However, some factors induce the companies to practice greenwashing. [12] found four categories of driving factors that led any organization to become involved in greenwashing. The driving forces are; first, nonmarket external drivers include lax and uncertain regulatory environment, activist, NGO, and media monitoring; second, market external drivers consist of consumer demand, investor demand, and competitive pressure; third, organizational drivers composed of firm characteristics, the effectiveness of intra-firm communication, incentive structure and culture, and organizational inertia; and fourth, individual psychological drivers include optimistic bias, narrow decision framing, and hyperbolic intertemporal discounting. Similarly, [24] highlighted the causes of greenwashing include booming sales, enhancing reputation, cultural practice, aspirations as action, enthusiastic but uninformed; and consequences are reducing public trust, increasing regulatory risk, damaging and devaluing reputation.

1.4 Measuring Greenwashing

Various organizations have taken different initiatives to identify and measure the levels of greenwashing. Founded in Vancouver in 1971, Greenpeace, an independent global campaigning organization working to protect and conserve the environment through changing attitudes and behavior, arranged a greenwashing contest based on print and video ads in 2011 [21]. EnviroMedia and the University of Oregon [15] developed a greenwashing index based on online customer feedback. The index includes five determinants such as misleading ads with words, misrepresenting ads with visual materials, disprovable or unspecific ads claiming green, overstating how green the product/company/service is, and the ad leaves out critical information, trying to make the green claim sound better than it is. Terrachoice [49] identified seven ways termed seven sins practiced by the firms for greenwashing. Since the reviews and rankings posted to these websites are based on the perceptions of the critical public, this raises the question of how the critical public's perceptions would differ from the assessments of an independent party [19].

1.5 Actors and Stakeholders of Greenwashing

A significant number of studies identify, beyond solely corporate involvement, the full array of actors who may participate in greenwashing [31]. However, most of the studies admit that the primary perpetrators of greenwash are corporate actors [12, 26, 27, 32, 31, 34, 44, 52, 42]. However, the greenwashing literature reveals that other than the corporates, governments [47, 48]; politicians [4]; university administrators [25]; research organizations [35]; environmental policy experts [5]; and industries [15, 30]; stake the greenwash practice. Even the international organizations, including the United Nations, World Bank, and OECD, are also accused of greenwashing leveled at due to their involvement in programs such as the Global Environmental Facility [53] and their promotion of "green economy" initiatives [6].

On the other hand, to identify and analyze the greenwashing stakeholders, it is critical to recognize those who seek environmental information about the products and the firm. The stakeholders create pressure on the business to become environmentally sustainable. According to [17], stakeholders in an organization are any individuals or groups who can impact or be impacted by attaining the organization's goals. To clarify, stakeholders include any individuals or groups with direct or indirect interest and who affect or are affected by the organization's activities, decisions, policies, practices, or goals [8]. Moreover, [20] mentioned the name of stakeholder groups as employees, suppliers, customers, creditors, competitors, governments, and communities who play and put some economic value at risk. Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (ENGOS) in the community, in collaboration with media partners, monitor firms' environmental and social performance and are inclined to defame those organizations whose commitment to sustainable development is proved wrong [33]. On the contrary, when an influential opponent in the market sticks to a particular sustainability initiative or practice, it enhances managers' awareness of the situation and imposes moral pressure on others to follow duly [43, 13]. Thus, positive perceptions of sustainability and environmental practices may help companies impact the formation of environmental legislation in favor of their interest and discourage regulatory authorities from taking action on a particular environmental issue [52].

2. Methods

The study investigates how Bangladeshi firms engage in greenwashing practices and claim that they produce and market environment-friendly goods and services. Also, the study wants to pinpoint how greenwashing can be restricted in Bangladesh. The study uses environmental guidelines for industry and advertisers provided by the Bangladeshi government agencies, the Greenwashing Index (Table 1) adapted from [15], and the Seven Sins Model (Table 2) of [48] to identify the attributes of greenwashing that Bangladeshi firms practice. The Greenwashing Index and the Seven Sins Model were used to measure the level of greenwashing in many studies e.g., [42]. For example, [42] examined a sample of goods and services with the self-declared greenness claim in Canada. They verified whether the claim was meaningful, accurate, reliable, deceptive, false, or misleading. This study replicates [42] in measuring greenwashing and verifying the environmental claims of Bangladeshi firms.

Table 1: Greenwashing Index.

First	: The ad misleads with words
Second	: The ad misleads with visuals and/graphics
Third	: The ad makes a green claim that is vague or seemingly unprovable
Fourth	: The ad overstates or exaggerates how green the product/company/service actually is
Fifth	: The ad leaves out or masks important information, making the green claim sound better than it is

Source: EnviroMedia and the University of Oregon [15], Greenwashing index

The population for the study is the self-declared green products and services produced and marketed in Bangladesh. Among the self-declared products, 100 brands were randomly selected from different industries, including beauty, cosmetics, toiletries, wearing and households, food and beverage, electronics, furniture, and automobiles. These products are selected for study because the consumers are more concerned about the environment and using these products for the safety of their families.

Table 2: Seven Sins Model.

1.	Sin of No Proof	: Absence of third-party certification
2.	Sin of the Hidden Trade-off	: Claiming green based on unreasonably narrow set of attributes without attention to other important environmental issues
3.	Sin of Vagueness	: A marketing claim so lacking in specifics as to be meaningless e.g 'All-natural'
4.	Sin of Irrelevance	: Emphasizing environmental issue unrelated to the product e.g. 'CFC free'
5.	Sin of Lesser of Two Evils	: Claiming 'green' about a product but lacking in environmental benefits
6.	Sin of Fibbing	: Claiming falsely e.g., 'Energy star certified'
7.	Sin of Worshiping False Labels	: Creating a false suggestion or certification-like image to mislead consumers

Source: TerraChoice [49]. The Seven Sins of Greenwashing.

First, the sample products were examined through greenwashing index model and the seven sins model to recognize whether the producing and distributing firms practice greenwashing. Second, the study developed a seven-scale index focusing on the seven sins model. Third, each attribute of greenwashing of the seven sins

model was inputted in each scale. Finally, if one product has at least one attribute of greenwashing, the existence of greenwashing in that product was considered.

Table 3: Sample of the study.

Product Category	Number of products
Automobile, Electronics, and Furniture	18
Beauty and Cosmetics	22
Consumer and Toiletries	16
Food and Beverage	34
Households and wearing	10
Total	100

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Study Results

In order to investigate whether the Bangladeshi firms practice greenwashing in their manufacturing and marketing process, greenwashing attributes were examined through the Seven Sins Model of [49] in a sample of goods and services sold in Bangladesh. The seven sins are (1) sin of proof, (2) sin of hidden trade-off, (3) sin of vagueness, (4) sin of irrelevance, (5) sin of lesser of two evils, (6) sin of fibbing, and (7) sin of worshipping false labels. First, measuring the seven-sins-scale index, the existence of greenwash in the product or service was considered if it has at least one sin of greenwash.

Then the green information disclosed by the firms in the product packaging and labels, firms' advertising, corporate websites, Bangladesh Standard & Testing Institution (BSTI) website, and Google have verified whether the environmental claims are valid.

Table 4: Greenwashing Levels of Products.

Levels of Greenwash	Percentage
Greenwash products	98%
No greenwash	2%
At least one sin of greenwash	98%
At least two sins of greenwash	96%
At least three sins of greenwash	82%
At least four sins of greenwash	47%
At least five sins of greenwash	19%
At least six sins of greenwash	6%
All of the seven sins of greenwash	0%

The study results were categorized based on the levels of involvement in greenwashing, i.e., no greenwash, at least one sin, two sins, three sins, four sins, five sins, six sins, and all of the seven sins of greenwash. The sample goods and services investigation shows that 98% of the sample products are involved in greenwashing with at least one sin, 96% with at least two sins, and 82% with at least three sins of the scale.

Products with at least four sins are found in 47%, at least five sins are found in 19%, and at least six sins are found in only 6% of the products. However, no product is involved in all the scale's seven sins.

Table 5: Frequency of sins levels.

Level	Sin	Percentage
1st sin	Sin of no proof	77%
2nd sin	Sin of hidden trade-off	56%
3rd sin	Sin of vagueness	88%
4th sin	Sin of irrelevance	42%
5th sin	Sin of lesser of two evils	46%
6th sin	Sin of fibbing	21%
7th sin	Sin of worshipping false labels	73%

In the analysis of the specific sins, 88% of the products' greenness claims do not represent clear information, and 77% of products' greenness claims are either not certified by the third parties or their certificates are not provided in the available communication channel. Moreover, 73% of the products using false labels either mislead the customers or customers cannot research that information.

3.2 Discussion

There has been very little research on the Bangladeshi companies' greenwashing practices involved with marketing products and services. The seven sins model to measure the level of greenwashing has been used in this study, taking 100 consumer products as the sample size. The results of this investigation revealed that 98% of the products that claimed to be green products are involved with greenwashing with at least one sin of greenwashing practice. In contrast, only 2% of the study's total sample practiced greenness in their production and marketing process. These outcomes are in line with the findings of the research done by [42] on Canadian firms' greenwashing practices using a similar greenwashing model. The reference [42]'s findings showed that among the 100 self-declared green products, 94% are not providing comprehensive information, and only 6% of consumer products are stated as green products based on their transparent green activities. Although, nowadays, consumers are aware of environmental issues and prefer green products, [55] stated that greenwashing activities damage the company's reputation and brands.

The results of the study widely contribute to business and society and have several implications. Firstly, the findings will be theoretically meaningful and practically relevant for greenwash theory, the broader literature on misleading organizational behavior, and practice. Secondly, the study's empirical results will help the organizations evaluate and take necessary steps on their present green activities that will proceed them to redevelop their marketing strategies and ethical behavior and build competitive, sustainable growth in the market. Thirdly, market actors and stakeholders affected by greenwashing will get empirical evidence and relevant information to take initiatives on greenwashing and establish a public opinion collectively. Finally, nonmarket actors such as policymakers, NGOs, social and environmental activists, and concerned bodies of greenwashing will also benefit directly and indirectly in formulating necessary laws and regulations to combat greenwashing.

The study has two limitations. Firstly, the study sample was chosen in the convenience sampling method because of the author's convenience and data availability. Moreover, many leading companies claiming they produce green products are excluded from the sample for the unavailability of data. Secondly, the sample

companies were examined through the Seven Sins model based on the publicly available data by which the general people or consumers can easily justify the firm's greenness claims. As a result, future studies can be conducted on the drivers of corporate greenwashing in Bangladesh. Also, the problems that remain in the system or approach to combat greenwashing should be investigated.

4. How to Combat the Growth of Greenwashing in Bangladesh

Lyon and Montgomery [31] recommended three specific mechanisms for restricting the practice of greenwashing in corporations. They concluded that greenwashing would soon be eliminated if civil society and social media put pressure, the government made it compulsory to use eco-labels and restricted deceptive marketing operations. In a similar study, [33] proposed measures to restrict greenwashing, focusing on the close collaboration among the key institutional stakeholders to meet their information needs and minimizing the conditions resulting in greenwashing. However, [33] concluded that the more productive way of restricting the growth of greenwash practice is using the government's regulatory powers to implement sustainable business practices.

Many companies in our country confidently advertise their products using the words 'mineral water,' 'eco-products,' 'organic foods,' 'pure foods,' 'naturally extracted goods,' 'herbal cosmetics,' and 'herbal medicine.' They do not even provide detailed information to understand the green business they use to claim. Such kind of greenwashing practice by business organizations is increasing day by day, which might cause a severe negative impact on the environment as well as on humankind too. Three critical aspects below should be considered to diminish greenwashing practice in Bangladesh.

4.1 Civil Society and Social Media Influence

Through the emersion of social media, the influence of civil society to confront greenwashing is improved. According to [7], some researchers anticipate that greenwash will rapidly be eradicated in the stir of advanced information technology.

Many websites and social media pages are now creating awareness by providing further updates to the public, which helps raise the voices of the consumers against greenwashing. Textile Today (www.textiletoday.com.bd), for example, is a monthly business magazine in Bangladesh concentrating on textile, apparel, and fashion arts along with the greenwashing issues of the textile industry in the country. Besides, some daily newspapers, such as The Daily Star (www.thedailystar.com), cover news on greenwashing, questioning the marketing tools of different influential brands in the country, which helps consumers be aware of greenwashing practices of the companies. Furthermore, the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP), through its official Facebook page [37], continuously publishes its monitoring activities and public hearings and even it shares real punishments situation for unlawful activities by business organizations and firms that harm consumer rights. Moreover, the Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB), through its website [11], helps people improve their understanding level and build the ability to preserve their rights and interests as consumers.

Thus, to make greenwash inoperative, customers and financers should act in response in the market. Likewise,

building community awareness and measuring continuously, such as sustainability ratings, different forms of assessment of CSR exertions have also made similar efforts to deal with the challenges of greenwashing where unethical firms are castigated due to their poor rating while motivating ethical businesses to keep up their CSR exertion through an unsymmetrical answer to excellent and poor ratings [39].

However, in many cases, civic society and consumer influence might be an effective and favorable way at the retailer level. For example, retailers in certain product groups who are educated and trained may contribute to lessening challenges presented by consumer indecision and suspicion [9]. Similarly, retailers help consumers who want to gain more and are looking for reliable brands by emphasizing labeled products [10]. Thus, public organizations, civil societies, and social media pressure can manipulate business organizations to diminish their greenwashing practice.

4.2 Ecolabeling

Ecolabels are a particular type of product labeling that certifies the ecological contributions of a specific product and service. It ensures the straightforwardness of the company's assertions to the consumers by issuing credentials signs or seals of endorsement [1]. Nowadays, environmental credentials approved by a trustworthy licensor or a third party are the most prevalent and recent approach to alleviate greenwashing. Hence, to uplift the use of more environmentally-sound products and motivate to practice eco-friendly production systems products and motivate to practice eco-friendly production system governments, concerned organizations, and businesses have started evolving ecolabels. To be verified with an ecolabel, the product or service must show that it can lessen the overall ecological impact of its manufacturing process or use by accomplishing particular and predetermined criteria.

It also facilitates observing environmental claims by the businesses. Currently, numerous types of ecolabels are used worldwide. However, presently Bangladesh has six international standard ecolabels in the marketplace, namely Best Aquaculture Practices, EarthCheck, Global Organic Textile Standard, IMO certified, Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) schemes, TCO Certified (Eco-label index, 2017), although eco-Labeling is a modern concept and still not well known to the citizens as well as at the businesses market in Bangladesh. Therefore, government and other public and private organizations should provide more information on eco-labeling to uplift public awareness and promote the production and utilization of eco-friendly products, which will benefit both consumer and business organizations. However, it has some negative aspects too. For example, ecolabelling a single issue can help a company focus only on a particularly positive feature while concealing negative aspects of a product is greenwashing. A large number of business organizations nowadays are exercising self-declared or third-party recognition. Companies also use several seals or ecolabel credentials in their single good package avoiding clear and narrative green information such as the process of recycling and final disposal [46]. Therefore, the responsible organization or authority must ensure proper and adequate monitoring and imposition of label standards to prevent greenwashing.

4.3 Government Regulation and Legislation

Ratings, ecolabels, and other related independent standards, commonly mentioned as essential and potential mechanisms to restrain greenwashing, may sometimes not be workable. Regarding this, many researchers recommend that government attention be required to ensure the accessibility and genuineness of such sources [39]. In contrast, other investigators claim that regulation is the most significant factor in facing the challenges [54]. Nowadays, business organizations also frequently appeal to the government to regulate and enforce the proper guidelines to combat greenwashing by their opponents. Therefore, the harmful impact on the environment of corporate activities around the globe should be depressed with an adequate legal framework and proper implementation by the country's government. Some significant legislation in Bangladesh is formulated to address the country's environmental concerns, such as the Environment Conservation Act 1995, Environment Court Act 2010, Forest Act 1927, Wildlife (Conservation and Security) Act 2012, Brick Manufacturing and Brick Kilns Establishment (Control) Act 2013, Bangladesh Biodiversity Act 2017, and Bangladesh Water Act 2013. Another important policy is the Consumer Rights Protection Act of 2009 [51]. Bangladesh has introduced the Consumer Rights Protection Act 2009 [51] to address consumer affairs and ensure the fundamental rights of consumers, which is concerned about goods and services received by the customers or final users from the sellers or producers. The law believes that consumer rights are connected to human rights. Throughout the years, these rights have been considered more significant in safeguarding the concern of consumers from the clutches of business domination and firms' malpractices. Besides, to easily access justice and implement the Consumer Right Protection Act, the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection (DNCRP), a quasi-judicial government department, receives consumer complaints over goods and services and strives to address them. However, the government still has to do many things to combat greenwashing practiced by the business firms by formulating new and effective regulations to observe greenwashing and penalize the organizations responsible for misleading environmental declares. Besides, the government should provide a specific rule for environmental marketing claims and prohibit the usage of false images, logos, signs, colors, words, and information claiming eco-friendly or green products or services. After all, to value the businesses' accomplishments towards environmental protection, the government needs to establish a green audit to rate environmental claims and assess the greenwashing index. Finally, reforming advertising criteria and corporate codes of conduct need to consider carefully to deter greenwashing.

5. Conclusion

Bangladeshi firms produce green products to satisfy environment-concerned customers. Also, the firms claim the greenness in their advertisement with the global trends. However, most of the firms are hiding their actual activities. This study aimed to identify how Bangladeshi firms practice greenwashing and introduce a legal framework that is used as a tool for combating greenwashing in Bangladesh. In an investigation of greenwashing practices in Bangladeshi firms, the study examined 100 self-declared green products produced and marketed in Bangladesh. To verify the claim of greenness, the study used the greenwashing index [15] and the seven sins model [49]. Developing a seven-scale index, the study examined each sample product and its producing company and whether they practice greenwashing. The study results revealed that 98 percent of products were involved in greenwashing, with at least one sin on the seven-scale index. However, no product was found that is involved in all of the seven sins. Six percent of the products were involved in severe greenwashing. On the other hand, only two percent of products were found green.

The global rise of consuming environment-friendly products impacts the marketing activities of Bangladeshi firms. The stakeholders of the companies are also seeking eco-friendly goods and services. As a result, Bangladeshi companies are induced to take the environmental issues as their moral obligation in producing and marketing goods and services to gain the opportunity of booming scale and enhancing reputation. On the other hand, the greenwashing practice reduces public trust, increases regulatory risks, and damages a firm's reputation. Nevertheless, stakeholders, including public organizations, civil societies, and social media pressure, can intervene in firms' business functions to combat greenwash practices.

References

- [1] L. Atkinson and S. Rosenthal. "Signaling the Green Sell: The Influence of Eco-Label Source, Argument Specificity, and Product Involvement on Consumer Trust." *Journal of Advertising*, 43:1, 33-45, 2014.
- [2] P. Bansal and K. Roth. "Why companies go green: A model of ecological responsiveness." *Academy of management journal*, 43(4), 717- 736, 2000.
- [3] R. Bazillier and J. Vauday. "The Greenwashing Machine: Is CSR More Than Communication?" 2013.
- [4] S. Boehmer-Christiansen. "Britain and the International Panel on Climate Change: The impacts of scientific advice on global warming." *Environmental Politics*, 30(1), 1-18, 1995.
- [5] S. Boehmer-Christiansen. "Reflections on scientific advice and EC transboundary pollution policy." *Science and Public Policy*, 40, 195-203, 1995.
- [6] J. M. Borel-Saladin and I. N. Turok. "The green economy: Incremental change or transformation?" *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 23, 209-220, 2013.
- [7] F. Bowen. "After greenwashing: Symbolic corporate environmentalism and society." Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2014.
- [8] A. B. Carroll and A. K. Buchholtz. "*Business and society: Ethics, sustainability, and stakeholder management*." Nelson Education, 2014.
- [9] Y. S. Chen and C. H. Chang. "Greenwash and green trust: the mediation effects of green consumer confusion and green perceived risk." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 114, 489-500, 2013.
- [10] A. G. Cliath. "Seeing shades: Ecological and socially just labeling." *Organization & Environment*, 20(4), 413-439, 2007.
- [11] Consumer Association of Bangladesh (CAB) <<http://www.consumerbd.org/>> Accessed 10 October 2020
- [12] M. A. Delmas and V. C. Burbano. "The drivers of greenwashing." *California Management Review*, 54(1), 64-87, 2011.
- [13] M. A. Delmas and M. W. Toffel. "Organizational responses to environmental demands: Opening the black box." *Strategic Management Journal*, 29(10), 1027-1055, 2008.
- [14] U. Dulleck, R. Kerschbamer, and M. Sutter. "The economics of credence goods: An experiment on the role of liability, verifiability, reputation, and competition." *American Economic Review*, 101(2), 526-55, 2011.
- [15] EnviroMedia Social Marketing & University of Oregon. "*Greenwashing Index*." Retrieved on June 19, 2016, from <http://www.greenwashingindex.com>, 2009.

- [16] J. Fava, S. Baer, and J. Cooper. "Green(er) product standard trends in North America." *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 39(1), 9-12, 2011.
- [17] R. E. Freeman. *Strategic management: A stakeholder approach*. Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- [18] N. E. Furlow. "Greenwashing in the new millennium." *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 10(6), 22, 2010.
- [19] T. D. Gallicano. "A critical analysis of greenwashing claims." *Public Relations Journal*, 5(3), 1-21, 2011.
- [20] K. E. Goodpaster. "Business ethics and stakeholder analysis." *Business ethics quarterly*, 53-73, 1991.
- [21] Greenpeace. "Greenpeace: Greenwashing." 2016. Retrieved on June 19, 2016, from <http://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/recent/Prime-Minister-Harper-stars-in-winning-entry-in-Greenpeace-CAPP-ad-jamming-contest/>
- [22] J. Greer and K. Bruno. *Greenwash: The reality behind corporate environmentalism*. Third World Network, 1996.
- [23] Investopedia, 2022. Retrieved on June 15, 2022, from <http://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/08/greenwashing.asp>
- [24] JK Consulting Enterprises, 2011. A paper presented in 12th Annual Caribbean Conference on Sustainable Tourism Development STC-12, Bermuda, retrieved on June 19, 2016 from <http://www.onecaribbean.org/content/files/JACQUELINE%20KUEHNEL.pdf>
- [25] D. R. Jones. "Looking through the "greenwashing glass cage" of the green league table towards the sustainability challenge for UK universities." *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 25, 630-647, 2012.
- [26] E.-H. Kim and T. P. Lyon. "Greenwash vs. brownwash: Exaggeration and undue modesty in corporate sustainability disclosure." *Organization Science*, Advance online publication, 2014. doi:10.1287/orsc.2014.0949
- [27] E.-H. Kim and T. P. Lyon. "Strategic environmental disclosure: Evidence from the DOE's Voluntary Greenhouse Gas Registry." *Journal of Environmental Economics and Management*, 61, 311-326, 2011.
- [28] P. Kotler. "Reinventing marketing to manage the environmental imperative." *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 132-135, 2011.
- [29] W. S. Laufer. "Social accountability and corporate greenwashing." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 43, 253-261, 2003.
- [30] D. Lu and M. J. Realf. "The design of a sustainability assessment standard using life cycle information." *Journal of Industrial Ecology*, 61, 493-503, 2013.
- [31] T. P. Lyon and A. W. Montgomery. "The means and end of greenwash." *Organization & Environment*, 28(2), 223-249, 2015.
- [32] T. Lyon, and J. Maxwell. "Greenwash: Corporate environmental disclosure under threat of audit." *Journal of Economics & Management Strategy*, 20, 3-41, 2011.
- [33] D. Markham, A. Khare, and T. Beckman. "Greenwashing: a proposal to restrict its spread." *Journal of Environmental Assessment Policy and Management*, 16(04), 2014.
- [34] S. Matejek and T. Gössling. "Beyond legitimacy: A case study in BP's "green lashing"." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 120, 571-584, 2014.

- [35] A. Nelson, A. Earle, J. Howard-Grenville, J. Haack, and D. Young. "Do innovation measures actually measure innovation? Obliteration, symbolic adoption, and other finicky challenges in tracking innovation diffusion." *Research Policy*, 43, 927-940, 2014.
- [36] G. Nyilasy, H. Gangadharbatla, and A. Paladino. "Perceived greenwashing: The interactive effects of green advertising and corporate environmental performance on consumer reactions." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 125(4), 693-707, 2014.
- [37] Official Facebook page of DNCRP, 2020. Retrieved on October 11, 2020 from <https://www.facebook.com/dncrp/>.
- [38] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2016. Retrieved on June 15, 2016, from <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/greenwash>
- [39] B. Parguel, F. Benoit-Moreau, and F. Larceneux. "How sustainability ratings might deter "greenwashing": A closer look at ethical corporate communication." *Journal of Business Ethics*, 22, 15-28, 2011.
- [40] B. Parguel, F. Benoit-Moreau, and C. A. Russell. "Can evoking nature in advertising mislead consumers? The power of 'executional greenwashing.'" *International Journal of Advertising*, 34(1), 107-134, 2015.
- [41] J. D. Phyper and P. MacLean. *Good to Great: Managing Business Risk and Opportunities in the Age of Environmental Awareness*. Toronto: John Wiley and Sons Canada Ltd, 2009.
- [42] B. Rahman, A. L. I. Idris, and A. M. Nedelea. "Greenwashing in Canadian Firms: An Assessment of Environmental Claims." *Ecoforum Journal*, 6(2), 2017.
- [43] C. A. Ramus and I. Montiel. "When are corporate environmental policies a form of greenwashing?" *Business & Society*, 44(4), 377-414, 2005.
- [44] F. Relaño. "Maximizing social return in the banking sector." *Corporate Governance*, 17, 274-284, 2011.
- [45] J. Robertson and J. Barling. "Greening organizations through leaders' influence on employees' pro-environmental behaviors." *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 34, 176-194, 2013.
- [46] A. H. Russel and L. C. Robidas. "Opportunities and Challenges of Eco-label Practices in Bangladesh for Promoting Environmentally Conscious Consumers." *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 4(6), 2019.
- [47] E. Stephenson, A. Doukas, and K. Shaw. "Greenwashing gas: Might a "transition fuel" label legitimize carbon-intensive natural gas development?" *Energy Policy*, 11, 452-459, 2012.
- [48] G. Szili and M. W. Rofe. "Greening port misery: marketing the green face of waterfront redevelopment in port Adelaide, South Australia." *Urban Policy and Research*, 22, 363-384, 2007.
- [49] TerraChoice. *The Seven Sins of Greenwashing*. 2009. Unpublished paper retrieved on 19 June, 2016 from <http://www.sinsofgreenwashing.org>.
- [50] TerraChoice. *The Sins of Greenwashing: Home and Family Edition*, 2010. Unpublished paper retrieved on 19 June, 2016 from <http://www.sinsofgreenwashing.org>.
- [51] *The Consumers' Rights Protection Act 2009*. Retrieved on October 10, 2020 from <http://dncrp.portal.gov.bd/site/page/81410ae5-17d8-456c-8cff-4bbd8742d809/The-Consumers%E2%80%99-Right-Protection-Act,-2009->>

- [52] K. Walker and F. Wan. "The harm of symbolic actions and green-washing: Corporate actions and communications on environmental performance and their financial implications." *Journal of business ethics*, 109(2), 227-242, 2012.
- [53] Z. Young. "NGOs and the global environmental facility: Friendly foes?" *Environmental Politics*, 14, 243-267, 1999.
- [54] V. L. Smith and X. Font. "Volunteer tourism, greenwashing and understanding responsible marketing using market signaling theory." *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 22(6), 942-963, 2014.
- [55] Caldas, M. V. D. A., Veiga-Neto, A. R., Guimarães, L. G. D. A., Castro, A. B. C. D., & Pereira, G. R. B. (2021). Greenwashing in environmental marketing strategy in the Brazilian furniture market. *Revista de Economia e Sociologia Rural*, 59.