



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعة 20 أوت 1955 - سكيكدة
كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير
قسم العلوم التجارية



عنوان المذكرة

**Green Marketing Practices in Leading Corporations:
A Comparative Case Study of Patagonia, IKEA,
and Unilever**

مذكرة ضمن متطلبات الحصول على شهادة ماستر أكاديمي في شعبة العلوم التجارية
تخصص: تسويق

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الاسم واللقب	الرتبة	الجامعة	الصفة
سعدي رندة	أستاذ محاضر "أ"	جامعة 20 أوت 1955 سكيكدة	رئيسا
زرقوط سارة	أستاذ محاضر "ب"	جامعة 20 أوت 1955 سكيكدة	مقررا
مقيطع حمزة	أستاذ مساعد "أ"	جامعة 20 أوت 1955 سكيكدة	ممتحنا

السنة الجامعية: 2025/2026



جامعة 20 أوت 1955 * سكيكدة *

كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والتجارية وعلوم التسيير



سكيكدة في 20/06/2026

القسم : العلوم التجارية

إستمارة ايداع مذكرة ماستر

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المشرف على مذكرة ماستر تخصص: تسويق

ب عنوان:
Green marketing practices in Leading corporations:
A Comparative Case Study of PATAGONIA; IKEA
and Unilever

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الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

جامعة 20 أوت 1955 - سكيكدة



نيابة مديرية الجامعة للتكوين العالي في الطورين الأول والثاني والتكوين المتواصل والشهادات والتكوين العالي في التدرج

سكيكدة في: 2026/06/



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تاريخ الميلاد 2025/03/29 بـ سكرية / ولاية: سكرية

عنوان الإقامة: حي ٤ مسكن نسا هدي العمارة 3 - رقم 10 بالكروة هوارى يومين .

كلية العلوم الاقتصادية والعلوم التجارية وعلوم التسيير / قسم: العلوم التجارية

التخصص: تسويق

رقم التسجيل: 2121 36201045

وفي يوم: _____/جوان/2026

أصحح بأن مذكرة الماستر الموسومة بـ:

Green Marketing Practices in leading corporations: A Comparative case study of Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever.

المدة الجامعية: 2025/2026

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والإجراءات التي
تستلزمها الكلية
على مضمون الويضية
المصادقة
الإدارة عيسى
على مضمون الويضية
المصادقة

4129139692
2024/10/10

الاسم واللقب والتوقيع للطالب

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 موضوع على السلام
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 21 JUN 2020

عن رئيس المجلس الشعبي البلدي
و يفتقر إلى ملحق الإدارة الإقليمية
مع رئيس القسم بعد المصادقة على المصالح العامة
له في هذه المسألة

ملاحظة هامة:

- تملأ الاستمارة من قبل الطالب وتندفع لرئيس القسم بعد المصادقة على النسخ المصالحح للامانة.

Dedication

To my parents —

You gave me more than I could ever put into words. You raised me with patience when I tested yours, stood beside me when the path was unclear, and believed in me on the days I forgot to believe in myself. Every late night spent on this work carried the weight of everything you have sacrificed and the warmth of everything you have given. This thesis is not mine alone — it is the result of a life you built for me, and I hope it makes you proud.

To you, with all my love and gratitude.

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not exist without the guidance, generosity, and unwavering commitment of my supervisor, Dr. Sarra Zerkout. From the earliest stages of this research to its final pages, she gave her time, her expertise, and her energy without reservation. Her support went far beyond the academic — she offered encouragement when progress felt slow, clarity when the direction felt uncertain, and a standard of rigour that pushed this work to be better than it would have been without her. In the moments when the weight of this research felt overwhelming, she had a rare and invaluable ability to calm me down and make me feel that everything was going to be alright — and it always was. I am deeply grateful not only for the intellectual guidance she provided, but for the personal investment she made in this research and in me as a researcher. It is a privilege to have worked under her supervision, and I hope this thesis reflects the care she put into it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PRELIMINARY PAGES

Cover Page	—
Dedication and Acknowledgements	—
Table of Contents	—
List of Tables	—
List of Figures	—
Abbreviations Table.....	—
Abstract	—

INTRODUCTION

Introduction.....	a
--------------------------	----------

CHAPTER ONE — LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Part One: Conceptual Framework

First: The Concept of Green Marketing	1
Definitions of Green Marketing	1
Evolution of Green Marketing Orientation	3
Characteristics of Green Marketing	4
Main Goals of Green Marketing	6
The Importance of Green Marketing	8
Second: The Green Marketing Mix	9
Green Product	9
Green Pricing	9
Green Distribution (Place)	10
Green Promotion	10
Green People	12
Green Process.....	13
Green Physical Evidence	13
Third:Challenges of Green Marketing	14
General Challenges	14
Contemporary Challenges.....	15

Part Two: Empirical Review

Arabic Studies	16
Foreign Studies	23
Research Gap Analysis	30
Summary.....	33

CHAPTER TWO — FIELD STUDY

Part One: Presentation of the Organizations under Study

First: Patagonia	42
Patagonia and Sustainability	43
Second: IKEA	43
IKEA and Sustainability	44
Third: Unilever.....	45
Unilever and Sustainability	46
Fourth: Comparative Overview — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever	47

Part Two: Research Methods and Instruments

Study Population and Sample	48
Rationale for Company Selection	48
Temporal and Thematic Scope of the Study	48
Research Methodology	49

Part Three: Study Variables, Measurement, and Data Collection

Study Variable	51
Variable Dimensions (7Ps)	51
Indicators for Each Dimension	51
Data Sources	51

Part Four. Field Study: Results and Discussion

Research instruments	52
Content Analysis Card.....	52
Green Product	54
Green Pricing	57
Green Distribution (Place)	60
Green Promotion.....	62
Green People.....	65
Green Process.....	67
Green Physical Evidence	70
Hypothesis Testing and Linkage with Prior Literature	74
Analytical Discussion and Interpretation.....	78
Chapter Conclusion	88

CONCLUSION

Conclusion	94
Practical Recommendations.....	95
Horizons of the Study (Future Research Directions).....	96

REFERENCES AND SOURCES

References and Sources	98
-------------------------------------	-----------

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter One

Table 1 — Definitions of Green Marketing	2
Table 2 — Arabic Studies	16
Table 3 — Foreign Studies	23
Table 4 — Conceptual Value Additions to the Literature (Research Gap)	31

Chapter Two

Table 1 — Company Profile — Patagonia	42
Table 2 — Company Profile — IKEA	44
Table 3 — Company Profile — Unilever	45
Table 4 — Comparative Overview — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever	47
Table 5 — Content Analysis Card — Green Marketing KPI Indicators (7Ps Framework) 52	
Table 6 — Comparative Scoring Table (Green Product) — Overview Example	54
Table 7 — Comparative Evidence — Green Product	55
Table 8 — Comparative Scoring — Green Product	56
Table 9 — Comparative Evidence — Green Price	57
Table 10 — Comparative Scoring — Green Price	59
Table 11 — Comparative Evidence — Green Place (Distribution)	60
Table 12 — Comparative Scoring — Green Place (Distribution)	61
Table 13 — Comparative Evidence — Green Promotion	62
Table 14 — Comparative Scoring — Green Promotion	64
Table 15 — Comparative Evidence — Green People	65
Table 16 — Comparative Scoring — Green People	66
Table 17 — Comparative Evidence — Green Process	67
Table 18 — Comparative Scoring — Green Process	69
Table 19 — Comparative Evidence — Green Physical Evidence	71
Table 20 — Comparative Scoring — Green Physical Evidence	73

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 — Study Model	f
Figure 2 — Evolution of Green Marketing Orientation	4

Abbreviations Table

Abbreviation	Full Term	Category	Definition
7Ps	Seven Ps of the Marketing Mix	Business & Marketing	The seven elements of the extended marketing mix: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence.
AGM	Annual General Meeting	Business & Finance	A yearly gathering of a company's shareholders and board of directors to discuss financial results, governance, and strategic decisions.
AI	Artificial Intelligence	Technology	Technology enabling machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as inventory optimisation and supply-chain analysis.
APA	American Psychological Association	Academic	A professional organisation whose citation style (APA 7th Edition) is used for referencing sources throughout this document.
B Corp	Benefit Corporation (B Lab Certified)	Sustainability & Certification	A certification awarded by B Lab to companies that meet verified standards of social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency.
B.V.	Besloten Vennootschap (Private Limited Company)	Legal & Corporate	A Dutch private limited liability company structure. Used in "Inter IKEA Systems B.V.", IKEA's intellectual property and franchisor entity based in the Netherlands.
CO₂e	Carbon Dioxide Equivalent	Sustainability & Environment	A standard unit for measuring carbon footprint. It converts all greenhouse gases into the amount of CO ₂ with the same global warming potential.
COP	Conference of the Parties	International Policy /	The supreme decision-making body of a UN environmental convention. COP16 refers to the 16th UN Biodiversity Conference (2024).
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive	Regulation & Standards	An EU regulation requiring large companies to report on their environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impacts using standardised ESRS frameworks.
DIY	Do It Yourself	General	Referring to activities completed independently by consumers, such as Patagonia's Worn Wear online repair guides.
DWR	Durable Water Repellent	Materials & Chemistry	A chemical coating applied to fabrics to make them water-resistant. Conventional DWR

Abbreviation	Full Term	Category	Definition
			often contains PFAS; Patagonia has worked to eliminate PFAS-based DWR.
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance	Sustainability & Standards	A framework used to evaluate a company's performance and practices across three non-financial dimensions: environmental, social, and governance criteria.
ESRS	European Sustainability Reporting Standards	Regulation & Standards	Mandatory sustainability reporting standards under the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), specifying what companies must disclose.
EU	European Union	International Policy /	A political and economic union of 27 European member states. Referenced in relation to CSRD, ESRS, and regulatory sustainability frameworks.
EUR	Euro	Business Finance &	The official currency of the Eurozone, used in financial data for IKEA (EUR 45.1 billion in FY2024 retail sales) and Unilever (EUR 60.8 billion turnover).
FMCG	Fast-Moving Consumer Goods	Business Marketing &	Products sold quickly at relatively low cost, such as food, beverages, and personal care items. Unilever is classified as an FMCG company.
FSC	Forest Stewardship Council	Sustainability & Certification	An international non-profit organisation that certifies responsibly managed forests. FSC® certification appears on IKEA and Patagonia products and packaging.
FY	Financial Year (Fiscal Year)	Business Finance &	A 12-month accounting period used for reporting corporate performance. Each company uses a different calendar: Patagonia's FY runs May–April; IKEA's runs September–August; Unilever's follows the calendar year.
GHG	Greenhouse Gas	Sustainability & Environment	Gases that trap heat in the Earth's atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Includes CO ₂ , methane (CH ₄), nitrous oxide (N ₂ O), and others, measured in CO ₂ e.
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative	Regulation & Standards	An international independent standards organisation that helps companies report on their economic, environmental, and social impacts.
GRS	Global Recycled Standard	Sustainability & Certification	An international, voluntary standard that sets requirements for third-party certification of

Abbreviation	Full Term	Category	Definition
			recycled content and chain of custody in products.
IKEA	Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd	Company Name (Acronym)	An acronym from the initials of the company's founder (Ingvar Kamprad), his family farm (Elmtaryd), and his home village (Agunnaryd) in Sweden.
ISSB	International Sustainability Standards Board	Regulation & Standards	A body that develops global baseline sustainability disclosure standards for capital markets, operating under the IFRS Foundation.
IWAY	IKEA Way (Supplier Code of Conduct)	Business & Marketing	IKEA's own code of conduct for suppliers, setting minimum requirements for working conditions, environmental impact, and social responsibility across the supply chain.
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	Business & Marketing	A measurable metric used to evaluate the success of an organisation in achieving its objectives. Used throughout this document to assess green marketing performance.
Mt	Metric Tonnes (in context of large-scale data)	Units of Measurement	A unit of mass equal to 1,000 kilograms. Used for large-scale emissions data (e.g., 21.3 Mt CO ₂ e for IKEA's total climate footprint in FY24).
n.d.	No Date	Academic	An APA citation notation used when no publication date is available for a source, typically applied to undated web pages.
OKR	Objectives and Key Results	Business & Marketing	A collaborative goal-setting framework used by organisations to set ambitious goals with measurable outcomes. IKEA adopted an OKR-based sustainability strategy in FY25.
PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate	Materials & Chemistry	A common type of plastic resin used in packaging, including bottles. Referenced in the context of IKEA's 99% recycled PET bottles in its food range.
PFAS	Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances	Materials & Chemistry	A large group of synthetic chemicals ("forever chemicals") used in water- and stain-resistant coatings. Linked to environmental and health concerns; Patagonia achieved 97% PFAS-free products in FY24.
PFC	Perfluorocarbon	Materials & Chemistry	A class of synthetic chemicals used in water-repellent fabric treatments. Often listed together with PFAS as PFC/PFAS; Patagonia has targeted their elimination from products.

Abbreviation	Full Term	Category	Definition
PLC	Public Limited Company	Legal & Corporate	A UK corporate structure in which shares are offered to the public on a stock exchange. Unilever is listed as "Unilever PLC".
QR	Quick Response (Code)	Technology	A two-dimensional barcode scannable by smartphones, used by Patagonia on product hang tags to reduce paper waste by more than 40 million tags.
RCS	Recycled Claim Standard	Sustainability & Certification	A chain-of-custody standard that tracks recycled materials from a reclaimed source through the supply chain to the final product. Applied to Patagonia's recycled cashmere and wool.
RSPO	Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil	Sustainability & Certification	A global, multi-stakeholder initiative that sets standards and certifies sustainable palm oil production. Unilever is a founding RSPO member.
SBTi	Science Based Targets initiative	Sustainability & Standards	A partnership between CDP, UN Global Compact, WRI, and WWF that validates corporate greenhouse gas reduction targets aligned with the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C pathway.
SFI	Sustainable Forestry Initiative	Sustainability & Certification	A North American forest certification standard promoting sustainable forest management. Referenced alongside FSC® as an acceptable certification for Patagonia's packaging materials.
TCFD	Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures	Regulation & Standards	A framework for voluntary climate-related financial disclosures, helping companies report climate risks and opportunities in a consistent, decision-useful manner.
UAE	United Arab Emirates	Geography	A federation of seven emirates in the Middle East. Referenced in the context of Unilever's December 2024 sustainability campaign reaching 9.8 million consumers.
USD	United States Dollar	Business & Finance	The official currency of the United States. Used in financial data for Patagonia (US\$1.5 billion revenue; US\$226 million in donations) and IKEA (USD 2.2 billion price-reduction investment).
ZEMBA	Zero Emission Maritime Buyers Alliance	Sustainability & Environment	A non-profit buyers' alliance co-founded in 2023 by the Aspen Institute, Amazon, Patagonia, and Tchibo, aggregating freight-

Abbreviation	Full Term	Category	Definition
			buyer demand to accelerate zero-emission shipping solutions.

Abstract

Abstract

This study aimed to analyze and compare green marketing practices in three leading multinational corporations—Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever—using the Extended Green Marketing Mix (7Ps), comprising Product, Price, Place (Distribution), Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence. The study was founded on the premise that environmental sustainability has become an essential component of contemporary marketing strategy. A descriptive-comparative approach was employed, supported by structured analytical coding sheets. The analysis was based on the companies' publicly available official documents, including annual reports, sustainability reports, climate transition plans, and official corporate websites. The empirical assessment relied on twenty-one Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) distributed across the seven dimensions of the Green Marketing Mix.

The findings revealed significant differences in green marketing practices among the three companies. Patagonia achieved the strongest overall performance, particularly in the dimensions of Green Product, Green Price, Green Promotion, and Green Physical Evidence, supported by the use of 73% recycled materials, the production of 97% PFAS-free products, and the repair of 145,446 garments. IKEA demonstrated the highest performance in Green Place (Distribution), recording a 9% reduction in transport emissions, the use of 95% renewable electricity in its logistics operations, and the processing of 495,000 products through its Buyback and Resell programme. Unilever ranked highest in Green Process, maintaining zero non-hazardous waste to landfill, reducing manufacturing water consumption per tonne of production by 47%, and implementing 21 water stewardship programmes. The study concludes that reliance on independently verified environmental certifications enhances the credibility of green marketing practices. It further recommends strengthening consumer-visible environmental evidence at the product level, expanding circular economy business models, and improving the transparency and comprehensiveness of corporate sustainability reporting.

Keywords: Green Marketing; Extended Green Marketing Mix (7Ps); Sustainability; Patagonia; IKEA; Unilever.

المخلص باللغة العربية:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل ومقارنة ممارسات التسويق الأخضر في ثلاث شركات عالمية رائدة هي: Patagonia و IKEA و Unilever، وذلك بالاعتماد على عناصر المزيج التسويقي الأخضر الموسع (7Ps)، الذي يشمل: (المنتج؛ السعر؛ التوزيع؛ الترويج؛ الأفراد؛ العمليات والدليل المادي)، حيث انطلقت هذه الدراسة من أن الاستدامة البيئية أصبحت عنصراً أساسياً في الاستراتيجية التسويقية المعاصرة، أين تم إعتدال المنهج الوصفي المقارن، مع بطاقات التحليل وبالاعتماد على الوثائق الرسمية المنشورة للشركات؛ التقارير السنوية؛ تقارير الاستدامة؛ خطط التحول المناخي والمواقع الإلكترونية الرسمية، مستندين على 21 مؤشراً رئيسياً للأداء (KPIs) موزعة على الأبعاد السبعة للمزيج التسويقي الأخضر.

توصلت الدراسة إلى وجود فروق دالة في ممارسات التسويق الأخضر بين الشركات الثلاث، حيث حققت شركة Patagonia أفضل أداء إجمالي، ولا سيما في أبعاد المنتج الأخضر، والسعر الأخضر، والترويج الأخضر، والدليل المادي الأخضر، مدعومة باستخدام 73% من المواد المعاد تدويرها، وإنتاج 97% من منتجاتها الخالية من مركبات PFAS، وإصلاح 145,446 قطعة ملابس. أما IKEA فقد تفوقت في بعد التوزيع الأخضر، محققة تخفيضاً بنسبة 9% في انبعاثات النقل، واعتماد 95% من الكهرباء المتجددة في عملياتها اللوجستية، ومعالجة 495,000 منتج ضمن برنامج الاسترجاع وإعادة البيع، في حين تصدرت Unilever بُعد العمليات الخضراء، من خلال المحافظة على صفر نفايات غير خطرة إلى المكبات، وخفض استهلاك المياه في التصنيع لكل طن من الإنتاج بنسبة 47%، وتنفيذ 21 برنامجاً للإدارة الرشيدة للمياه، وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الاعتماد على الشهادات البيئية الصادرة عن جهات مستقلة يعزز مصداقية ممارسات التسويق الأخضر، وتوصي بتعزيز الأدلة البيئية الظاهرة على مستوى المنتج، وتوسيع نماذج الاقتصاد الدائري، وتحسين شفافية تقارير الاستدامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التسويق الأخضر؛ المزيج التسويقي الأخضر (7Ps)؛ الاستدامة، مؤسسات (Patagonia، IKEA، Unilever).

Introduction

Introduction

Marketing occupies a central role in business management, serving not only to promote products and generate sales but also to connect firms with customer needs, expectations, and societal values. Over recent decades, marketing's scope has expanded from transactional concerns to long-term relationships between organizations and the societies they affect, reflecting the view that commercial success is linked to social and environmental outcomes. Rising public awareness of environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion, together with pressure from consumers, regulators, and civil society, has driven companies to integrate environmental considerations into strategic and operational decisions. Because marketing shapes consumer perception and communication, it has been particularly transformed by this shift toward responsibility.

Green marketing has emerged as a distinct field focused on developing, communicating, and delivering products and services that minimize environmental harm while meeting consumer needs. It spans sourcing, product design, and corporate communication about environmental commitments, and has moved from a peripheral reputational concern to a strategic priority as environmental factors influence consumer choice. This expansion has required rethinking the traditional marketing mix, originally centered on Product, Price, Place, and Promotion, to better capture service and stakeholder dimensions.

The extended marketing mix—the 7Ps of Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence—offers a more comprehensive framework for analyzing green marketing. Environmental practices typically affect multiple marketing elements: sustainable materials and product design, pricing that reflects environmental costs, eco-conscious distribution channels, promotional messaging, personnel training and behavior, internal operational processes, and the tangible or digital evidence that demonstrates environmental commitments. Assessing green marketing through the 7Ps therefore yields a structured understanding of how sustainability is embedded across a company's marketing activities rather than only in its communications.

This study compares the green marketing practices of three multinational companies known for sustainability orientation—Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever—each representing different sectors and approaches. Patagonia emphasizes environmental activism, product longevity, and repair; IKEA integrates sustainable design, material sourcing, and supply-chain efficiency; and Unilever embeds environmental and social objectives across a broad consumer-goods portfolio while publishing regular sustainability disclosures. By analyzing these firms across the extended marketing mix, the study seeks to show how stated environmental commitments are translated into concrete marketing practices and to assess the alignment between rhetoric and operational reality.

Introduction

First. Study Framework

1. Main Research Question

Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever are among the most prominent global companies that have adopted green marketing strategies. However, the nature of these practices and their level of adoption may vary from one company to another depending on their strategy, activities, and degree of commitment to sustainability. Based on this, this study seeks to compare these companies by analyzing their official documents, such as annual reports, sustainability reports, and websites, and calculating indicators for each element of the green marketing mix (7Ps), enabling the identification of similarities and differences in green marketing practices among them.

What is the reality of green marketing practices at Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever in light of the indicators of the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps)?

2. Sub-Questions

- What is the level of adoption of green marketing practices by Patagonia according to the indicators of the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps)?
- What is the level of adoption of green marketing practices by IKEA according to the indicators of the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps)?
- What is the level of adoption of green marketing practices by Unilever according to the indicators of the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps)?
- What are the similarities and differences among the three companies — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — in the indicators of each element of the green marketing mix (7Ps)?
- Which company achieves the highest level of adoption of green marketing practices according to the adopted indicators?

Second. Research Hypothesis

1. Main Hypothesis

- **H0 (Main Hypothesis):** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their green marketing mix (7Ps) practice indicators.
- **H1 (Alternative Hypothesis):** There are no differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever in green marketing practices according to the indicators of the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps).

2. Sub-Hypotheses:

- **Hyp1:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their green product practice indicators.
- **Hyp2:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their green pricing practice indicators.

Introduction

- **Hyp3:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their green distribution practice indicators.
- **Hyp4:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their green promotion practice indicators.
- **Hyp5:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their People indicators.
- **Hyp6:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their Process indicators.
- **Hyp7:** There are significant differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever regarding their Physical Evidence indicators.

Third. Research Rationale

The growing tendency in contemporary marketing research to operationalise environmental sustainability as a structured, measurable variable — rather than a general corporate orientation — has created a demand for comparative frameworks capable of assessing green marketing reality across diverse organisational contexts. Leading global corporations represent the most relevant testing ground for such an assessment: they command the resources, visibility, and institutional pressure to translate green commitment into documented, verifiable practice, making them both the most accountable and the most analytically tractable cases.

The choice of the 7Ps framework as the analytical lens responds to this same tendency: it disaggregates green marketing reality into seven distinct, documentable dimensions, each assessable through concrete indicators, allowing structured cross-case comparison rather than impressionistic evaluation. The selection of Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever reflects the need to apply this framework across maximum sectoral variation — outdoor apparel, home furnishing, and fast-moving consumer goods — so that findings speak to the variable as it operates under structurally different conditions, not merely within a single industry context.

Fourth. Importance of the Study

The study makes a clear theoretical contribution by applying the full extended marketing mix (7Ps) — green product, pricing, distribution, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence — in an integrated, comparative analysis. Using recent empirical evidence from three multinational corporations across different sectors, it advances understanding of how green marketing variables are operationalised in practice and fills a gap left by single-sector or survey-dominated studies. Methodologically, it demonstrates the value of document analysis and comparative content analysis (using corporate sustainability reports, annual disclosures, and websites) as rigorous, auditable tools for diagnosing green marketing across all 7Ps.

Practically, the research offers managers and decision-makers a structured benchmark of green marketing performance for Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever, helping organisations identify strengths and gaps in their sustainability-oriented marketing strategies. The institution-level comparison generates cross-sectoral insights about how large firms translate environmental

Introduction

commitments into concrete marketing actions, and the documented-source approach provides a replicable framework for evaluating green marketing in other multinational contexts.

Fifth. Research Objectives

- Identify the green marketing practices adopted by each of the three companies — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — across the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps).
- Classify the identified practices according to each of the seven elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps) as defined in the theoretical framework.
- Compare the green marketing practices of the three companies Patagonia, IKEA, Unilever across all 7Ps elements in order to identify similarities and differences in their implementation approaches.
- Evaluate the green marketing practices of each company in terms of depth, consistency, and alignment with the theoretical dimensions of the green marketing mix.

Sixth. Study Boundaries

1.Temporal Boundaries

The study is primarily anchored in fiscal year 2024, relying on the most recently completed annual reports, sustainability reports, climate transition plans, and official corporate disclosures published by each company for that period.

One exception applies to the People dimension: FY2025 was selected as the primary reporting year for this dimension because it is the most recent year for which all three companies have published complete, official annual disclosures as of the date of this study. It is also the only year in which all three companies are comparable on equal reporting terms — FY2025 marks Patagonia's first consolidated impact disclosure, as prior years' People-dimension data exist only in fragmented form. Using FY2024 for this dimension would therefore have produced evidence gaps that reflect reporting maturity rather than performance, undermining the comparability that the study's comparative design requires.

2.Spatial Boundaries

The study focuses on three multinational companies:

- Patagonia
- IKEA
- Unilever

3.Thematic Boundaries

The study is thematically bounded by the concept of green marketing as operationalised through the extended marketing mix (7Ps): green product, green pricing, green distribution, green promotion, green people, green process, and green physical evidence. The analysis is confined exclusively to what each company officially discloses in its primary sustainability documentation — namely annual reports, sustainability reports, climate transition plans, and official corporate

Introduction

websites published for fiscal year 2024. Internal practices, unpublished strategies, and any information not reflected in official corporate disclosure fall outside the thematic scope of this study.

Seventh. Study Difficulties

- The study depends entirely on publicly available corporate disclosures, which may not fully reflect actual internal practices.
- The three companies differ in the format, structure, and terminology used in their sustainability reporting, which complicates direct comparison across cases.
- The depth and level of detail provided in environmental disclosures varies considerably from one company to another, with some companies offering more granular data than others.
- Direct evidence for certain green marketing practices — particularly those concerning internal processes and personnel — is limited in publicly accessible sources.
- The three companies operate in structurally different industries (outdoor apparel, home furnishing, and fast-moving consumer goods), which introduces additional challenges when comparing practices that are not directly equivalent across sectors.
- The evaluation of the People dimension is based primarily on corporate sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, and other organisational disclosures. The findings therefore reflect the employer's perspective on sustainability-related human resource practices and employee engagement initiatives; the study does not directly measure employees' perceptions, experiences, or satisfaction. Results should be interpreted as an evaluation of reported organisational practices rather than employee-level outcomes.

Eighth. Research Methodology

- **Approach:** Descriptive-comparative
- **Data collection:** Document analysis

Ninth. Study Model

Thus, the following study model can be presented:

Introduction

Figure .1: Study Model



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the theoretical literature of the study and artificial intelligence generation

Introduction

Tenth. Thesis Structure

- **Chapter One: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework** is organised into two parts. Part One constitutes the conceptual framework and is divided into three sections: Section One examines the concept of green marketing, covering its definitions, historical evolution, characteristics, objectives, and importance; Section Two addresses the green marketing mix (7Ps), treating each element in dedicated subsections; and Section Three analyses the principal challenges confronting green marketing in practice. Part Two constitutes the empirical review and presents a systematic analysis of sixteen prior studies, organised by Arabic and international scholarship, followed by a structured research gap analysis and a statement of the current study's added value.
- **Chapter Two: Field Study — Results and Discussion** is organised into five parts. Part One presents the three organisations under study — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — including their sustainability profiles and a comparative overview. Part Two details the research methods and instruments employed. Part Three defines the study variable, its seven dimensions, the twenty-one KPIs, and the data sources. Part Four constitutes the field study proper, presenting the comparative evidence tables, scoring tables, and analytical discussion for each of the seven elements of the green marketing mix, followed by hypothesis testing and the linkage of findings with prior literature. Part Five presents the conclusion and recommendations, including a summary of main findings, practical recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

Chapter One

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

This chapter is organized into two main parts. The first part, the conceptual framework, explores the theoretical and practical foundations of green marketing. The first section delves into its primary theoretical concepts, including its definition as a strategy prioritizing environmental sustainability, its rising importance amid shifting consumer preferences for eco-conscious products, and the developmental progression of its orientations from initial regulatory compliance to comprehensive, integrated business practices.

The second section examines its dimensions and the green marketing mix, while the third section discusses the principal challenges that confront green marketing in practice.

The second part, the empirical review, presents a systematic review of prior studies on green marketing in large corporations, organised by Arabic and international scholarship, before situating the current study within this body of knowledge through a structured gap analysis.

Part One: Conceptual Framework

First: The Concept of Green Marketing

This section examines the diverse definitions, historical evolution, growing importance, key characteristics, primary objectives, and major challenges of green marketing.

1. Definitions Of Green Marketing :

Green marketing lacks a single universally accepted definition, with the terms “environmental marketing” and “ecological marketing” often used interchangeably to describe the alignment of business objectives with environmental priorities. Its origins can be traced to 1975, when the American Marketing Association organized the first workshop on “ecological marketing,” which focused on evaluating marketing activities’ impacts on pollution, energy consumption, and resource depletion (Polonsky, 1994). At that stage, the concept reflected a relatively narrow and regulation-oriented perspective. During the late 1980s and 1990s, however, green marketing evolved into a broader strategic approach encompassing product modification, changes in production processes, eco-friendly packaging, and environmentally oriented advertising aimed at delivering customer value (Polonsky, 1994).

Menon and Menon (1997, as cited in Banerjee, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999) further emphasized this strategic convergence by defining green marketing as the process of implementing “environmentally beneficial marketing activities with the goal of creating revenue by providing exchanges that satisfy a firm’s economic and social performance objectives.” Hanson, Walker, and Steen (Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 325–326) reinforced this broader perspective by defining green marketing as “a holistic process that anticipates, identifies and satisfies the requirements of customers and society in an ecologically sustainable manner,” notably introducing the proactive dimension of anticipation that was absent from earlier formulations.

Building on these strategic and holistic perspectives, Ricky Y. K. Chan (2004) extended the concept by describing green marketing as the promotion of products presumed to be environmentally safe through integrated practices that minimize environmental harm during

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

manufacturing, promotion, usage, and disposal. This expanded interpretation emerged alongside growing public concern regarding global warming, non-biodegradable waste, and broader ecological threats. More recent interpretations have broadened the concept even further. Mishra and Sharma (2012, pp. 35–41) describe green marketing as a holistic process aimed at minimizing environmental harm throughout production, consumption, and disposal stages, while Gheorghiu, Vidraşcu, and Niculescu (2013, p. 373) view eco-marketing as the adaptation of traditional marketing practices to ecological realities. This latter perspective is particularly relevant to the present study, as it reflects the strategic integration of environmental considerations within large enterprises.

Thus, green marketing can be understood as a strategic and holistic approach that seeks to conserve resources, reduce waste and pollution, and integrate economic, environmental, and social objectives beyond mere regulatory compliance.

Table 1. Definitions of Green Marketing

Author	Year	Definition
Manju	2012	Green Marketing is an evaluative marketing concept that aims at producing, marketing, consuming, and disposing of products and services in a manner that is less harmful to the environment.
Ph. Kotler	2011	Green Marketing is a managerial and social process that enables individuals, groups, and organizations to obtain what they want (i.e., environmental requirements).
Mansvelt, J	2011	Green Marketing is an advanced system for promoting and branding goods and services that promotes products as reducing negative impacts on the environment.
Mishra	2010	Green Marketing is a modern phenomenon that opened the door for organizations to market environmentally friendly green products (Green-Friendliness).
Simula, Lehtimark	2009	Green Marketing is the use of new technologies and new products that have a sustainable impact on the environment.

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on (Kumar, R. 2013, P. 192. ; Mansvelt, J. 2011).

From the previous definitions, it can be said that green marketing consists of strategic marketing practices limited to conserving natural resources and reducing waste and environmental pollution, by integrating business objectives with environmental and social priorities across all stages of product production, consumption, and disposal. This approach transcends the regulatory framework.

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

2.Evolution of Green Marketing Orientation:

Green marketing is also referred to as sustainable marketing, organic marketing, eco-friendly marketing, environmental marketing, and ecological marketing. Scholarly literature and practical applications sometimes use these terms interchangeably. However, they are not exact synonyms—most cover only part of green marketing's scope. The evolution of green marketing supports this: across its phases, specific components (ecological marketing, environmental marketing, and sustainable marketing) dominated attention. For these reasons, this study employs the term "green marketing."

Green marketing has developed since 1960 (Figure 2). Its progression includes three phases: ecological, environmental, and sustainable (Mishra & Sharma, Green marketing: challenges and opportunities for business, 2014) (Zampese, Moori, & Caldeira, 2016) (Lazar, 2017, pp. 45-52) (Papadas, Avlonitis, & Carrigan, 2017 pp. 236-246) During the first ecological phase, marketing activities were seen as remedies for environmental problems. Researchers and practitioners targeted the most damaging and toxic industries, such as chemicals and mining.

The primary emphasis stayed on major polluters (Papadas, Avlonitis, & Carrigan, 2017 236-246) The ecological phase yielded limited useful outcomes. Its main gain was heightened government awareness, which viewed green marketing as "a form of response to environmental activism" (Zampese, Moori, & Caldeira, 2016, pp. 183-211)

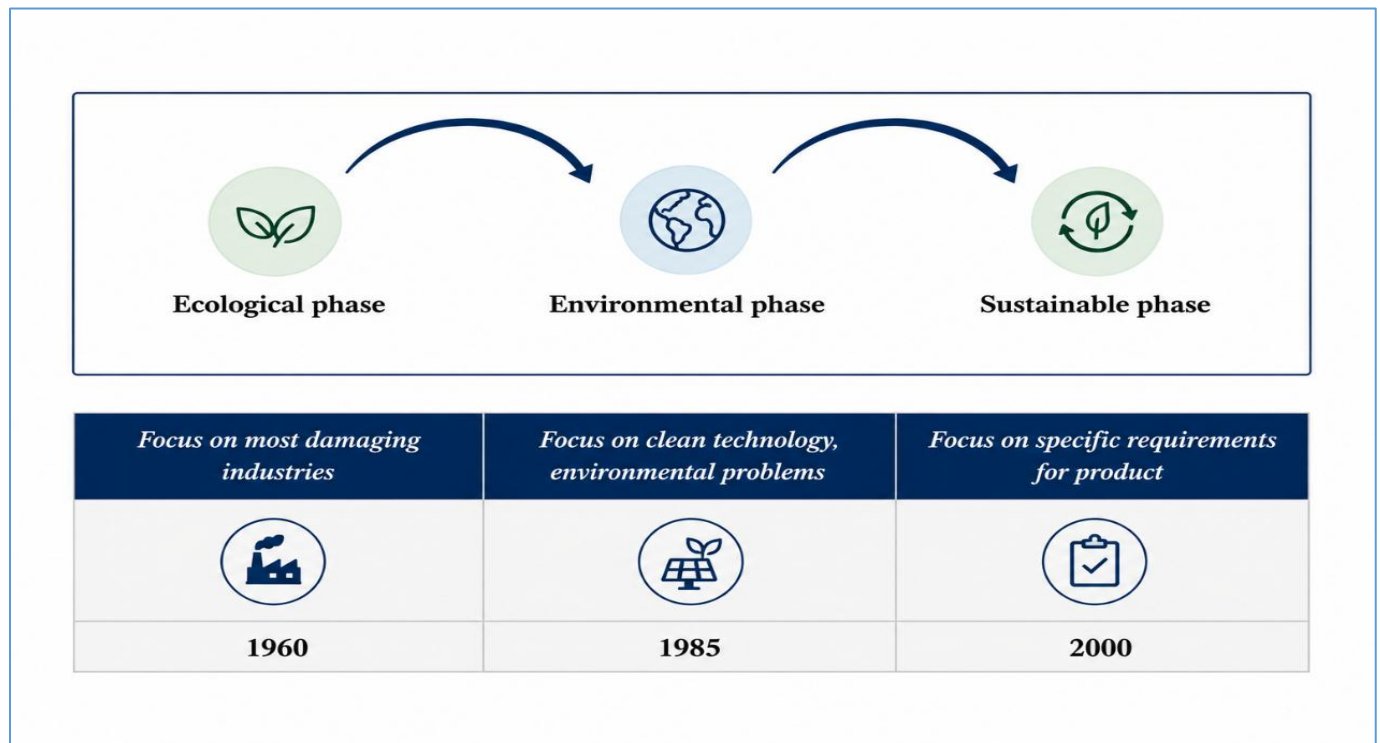
In the late 1980s, shifts in social and business environments elevated environmental concerns in green marketing. The environmental phase shifted focus to clean technologies for designing innovative products, reducing pollution and waste. (Lazar, 2017, pp. 45-52) Unlike the ecological phase, it extended beyond resource consumption to broader issues like ecosystem destruction and species extinction. Green marketing now included sectors beyond heavy polluters, such as electronics, tourism, and clothing. Environmental factors became a key competitive edge in product markets (Papadas, Avlonitis, & Carrigan, 2017. pp. 236-246) Companies struggled to verify product "greenness" and attributes, leading to consumer skepticism toward green claims. Nonetheless, this phase delivered practical advances, like effective packaging recycling. Scientifically, the 1990s saw strong interest in green marketing, which later waned—likely because most firms saw green issues as costs and constraints, not marketing opportunities (Papadas, Avlonitis, & Carrigan, 2017. pp. 236-246.)

Worldwide acknowledgment of environmental problems as signs of unsustainable production and consumption spurred green marketing's next step. The sustainable phase, beginning around 2000, emphasizes products with minimal environmental impact during use. Marketing grew more transformative, aiming to internalize full environmental costs of production and consumption to foster a sustainable economy. This phase demands that current living standards not jeopardize future generations' well-being (Peattie, 2001, pp. 129–146.) In the sustainable stage, green marketing became highly relevant across many firms. Companies in diverse industries adopted sustainable marketing principles: future orientation, equity, and focus on needs over wants

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

(Katrandjiev, 2016, pp. 71–82.) Examining green marketing's evolution shows it has matured over six decades. It continues to advance, suggesting green marketing orientation may soon surpass the sustainable phase.

Figure 2 : Evolution of Green Marketing Orientation



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on (Vilkaite-Vaitone & Skackauskiene, 2019)

3. Characteristics of Green Marketing

Green marketing differentiates itself from traditional marketing through distinct attributes grounded in environmental stewardship:

- Fundamentally, it adopts a comprehensive approach, mandating alignment of all facets of a firm's operations—including supply sources, distribution strategies, product disposability and recyclability, pollution control, and promotional activities—with sustainability imperatives (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 326);
- This integrated framework precludes partial implementation, necessitating coherence throughout every operational domain;
- It balances attention to both inputs and outputs: a commitment to mitigating ecological effects from inputs (such as raw materials, design specifications, and manufacturing processes)

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

alongside outputs (encompassing product attributes, disposability, and longevity) (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 326);

- Such rigorous dual evaluation distinguishes authentic green marketing from superficial greenwashing, which privileges downstream product assertions over upstream environmental consequences;

- It encompasses consumer practices, evaluating whether usage and waste disposal from products are promoted in environmentally responsible manners (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 326);

- Extending beyond individual consumers, it embraces a multi-stakeholder perspective that integrates suppliers, distributors, community stakeholders, and future generations (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 326);

- Crucially, this perspective transcends basic regulatory adherence, embodying a proactive stewardship model that frequently surpasses compliance, especially in jurisdictions where regulations lag behind ecological optima (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 326);

- In advanced stages, green marketing manifests through a learning-oriented organizational culture, wherein firms systematically advance their environmental expertise, embed it in product design, and inform consumers on ecological matters (Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 11-12);

- Thus, the integration of environmental considerations into marketing has progressed from a peripheral focus to a core element of the mainstream marketing mix, applicable across all organizations (Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 12). The dimensions of green marketing focus primarily on the principle of reducing waste, if not eliminating it entirely. In this context, waste is treated as raw material that can re-enter the manufacturing process. Industrial organizations are therefore encouraged to improve the efficiency of their production operations and provide high-quality products with minimal waste rather than searching for methods of disposal (Talib A. F., 2010, p. 10).

In addition, green marketing reformulates the concept of production within environmental considerations by relying on environmentally friendly raw materials and improving the efficiency of resource use in ways that reduce pressure on natural resources. It also emphasizes recycling products at the end of their life cycle so that they can serve again as secondary raw materials, an approach commonly referred to as the closed-loop approach. Furthermore, traditional packaging is gradually replaced with materials that are more recyclable and less harmful to the environment (Al-Samadi, 2009, p. 33).

From a pricing perspective, green products often reflect their actual environmental and production costs. Consequently, their prices may be higher in the short term due to the additional expenses required to comply with environmental standards. However, many organizations adopt product differentiation and added consumer value as a competitive strategy rather than relying solely on price competition (Qayed, 2015, pp. 37–46; Talib A. F., 2010, p. 10).

Many organizations have recognized that environmental orientation represents a market opportunity capable of providing sustainable competitive advantage, particularly with the growth of environmental awareness and green consumer communities. Nevertheless, some competitors

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

continue to prioritize short-term profits despite the negative environmental consequences of their activities (Qurayshi & Qadri, 2011, p. 377).

Green marketing also encourages consumer participation in environmental initiatives. For example, some companies provide prepaid postal envelopes that enable consumers to return used ink cartridges for recycling. Such practices demonstrate how environmental orientation can become economically beneficial while promoting the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources over the medium and long term (Belbrahem, 2014, p. 79)

4. Main Goals of Green Marketing

The objectives of green marketing function concurrently across ecological, social, and economic spheres, underscoring the intricate balance between commercial operations and environmental sustainability.

- At its foundational level, the paramount objective entails fulfilling the needs of customers and society through ecologically viable means (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 325-326);

- This necessitates managing all marketing functions to ensure their perpetuation into the future without depleting natural resources, positioning the firm as a custodian of the environment rather than a mere extractor (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 326-327);

- A complementary objective is intergenerational equity, whereby green marketing compels firms to consider "the ecological interests of customers and the interests of future as well as current generations" (Hanson et al., in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 326), thereby extending accountability far beyond the short-term focus of conventional marketing on immediate consumer gratification;

- In tandem with these ecological priorities, green marketing advances explicit economic objectives;

- It fosters enduring competitive differentiation, allowing firms to distinguish themselves while curtailing expenses via resource optimization and the reclamation of materials conventionally discarded as waste (in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 11-12);

- From a consumer perspective, it seeks to empower individuals in "identifying and adopting new, less environmentally harmful ways of satisfying their needs" (Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 12), thereby promoting sustainability via demand-side transformations in addition to supply-side initiatives;

- In synthesis, these ecological and economic objectives coalesce in the formulation articulated by Menon & Menon (1997, as cited in Banerjee, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999 p.12): "creating revenue by providing exchanges that satisfy a firm's economic and social performance objectives," thereby establishing profitability and environmental stewardship as symbiotic rather than antagonistic pursuits; **exemplified by the dual bottom-line pursuit of profit alongside social responsibility (Mourad et al., 2012), coupled with efforts to reduce environmental**

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

impact by steering consumers toward green products without suppressing overall consumption (Groening et al., 2018);

- Another research highlights that green marketing aims to address the demands of ecologically conscious consumers;

- For successful implementation, it requires supportive market and economic conditions that foster its growth;

- Largely, this approach ties into socially responsible business practices, where success extends beyond profits to include environmental stewardship;

- Companies adopting green marketing pursue this through two channels: internally, by investing in personnel and technologies to develop a green marketing mix; and externally, by positively impacting local communities;

- The core elements of the green marketing mix include: a green product, produced without harming the environment and using resources efficiently;

- Packaging that adheres to the 3R principles (Reduce—minimize material use; Reuse; Recycle);

- Pricing, where firms seek an optimal balance since green products cost more, raising the question of consumer willingness to pay;

- And promotion, leveraging green labels.

Key objectives of green marketing, as outlined in (Mishra & Sharma, 2014 pp.78-86), are:

- Eliminating surplus production,
- Redefining the product concept,
- Ensuring prices account for true environmental costs,
- Making environmental protection profitable,
- Altering product manufacturing processes,
- Modifying packaging,
- Modifying advertising.

This concept encourages businesses to repurpose production surpluses, thereby conserving limited resources. Green products stand apart from conventional ones, crafted from non-polluting materials that benefit consumer health. Their prices are typically higher to offset environmental costs, yet they must remain consumer-acceptable, prompting companies to strike a balance. Firms embracing green marketing prove it can drive profitability without making profit the sole focus. Production changes incorporate energy-saving measures and pollution prevention. Packaging follows the 3R framework with recyclable materials. Promotion, especially advertising, demands messages that inspire green product adoption—a notable challenge being the scarcity of verifiable claims for such promotions. Recent research, such as studies by (Reshma, 2024, p. D371) underscores the evolving goals of green marketing amid heightened climate urgency. These objectives focus on systemic shifts:

- Eliminate the notion of waste entirely.
- Redefine the concept of a marketed product.
- Incorporate environmental and true costs into pricing.

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

- Transform environmentalism into a viable business strategy.
- Introduce innovations to product designs.
- Revise production processes.
- Adapt packaging solutions.
- Update advertising approaches.

5. The Importance of Green Marketing

The importance of green marketing lies in improving the image of the organization, as others believe that a good reputation for the organization arises as a result of the organization adopting a set of principles and plans within its daily activities, such as building trust between it and its external environment, improving its relationships with its clients and suppliers, because the organization's application of these principles makes it socially and environmentally responsible and of good repute in the markets, and allows it to improve its financial and marketing performance, especially when offering high-quality green products with honest promotion. (Qurayshi & Qadri, 2011, p. 377)

It also contributes to providing funds in the long run despite the high initial costs, and enjoying a competitive advantage that ensures sustainable growth in the long run on the profitability side, in addition to assisting organizations in marketing their products and services and preserving environmental aspects in the minds of their audiences, as well as utilizing resources efficiently without waste and achieving the objectives of the organization. (Jamge, 2012, p. 2)

Given finite natural resources, humanity must innovate to satisfy unlimited consumer demands. While market societies uphold "freedom of choice" for individuals and firms to meet their needs, the sustainability of Earth's resources remains vigorously debated. Consequently, businesses must adopt creative approaches to reconcile boundless demand with limited supply. Green marketing emerges as a strategic framework that aligns marketing activities with resource conservation while fulfilling organizational goals, consumer needs, and industry expectations.

Literature identifies five primary drivers propelling firms toward green marketing adoption:

- Firms perceive environmental marketing as a strategic opportunity to achieve competitive objectives.
- Governmental regulations mandate socially responsible practices.
- Organizations recognize a moral imperative to prioritize sustainability.
- Competitive pressures from rivals' green initiatives necessitate adaptation.
- Cost savings from waste reduction and material efficiency compel behavioral change (Rashma, 2024 p.D371)

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

Second: The Green Marketing Mix

This section delineates the core dimensions of green marketing and elucidates its key elements, with particular emphasis on the green marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion, green people, green process and green physical evidence,)

1. The Green Product

The green product is defined as a wide range of activities and modifications carried out on the ordinary product to ensure the protection of customers and the preservation of the natural environment without causing harm to it (Kasra & Shimaa, 2012,). Some view the green product as incorporating environmental objectives in product planning that reduce resource consumption, pollution, and increase conservation of scarce resources (Pirakatheeswari, 2009). Green products are distinguished from other products by being environmentally friendly and non-harmful compared to similar products, as they do not rely heavily on fossil fuels and materials, and better achieve environmental quality (Salihi, 2011,). In addition, they are products that better achieve the five Rs (5Rs): repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing, reuse, and recycling (Al-Rida, 2008, p. 222).

It represents the first element of the marketing mix (Anusha, 2016) and shapes the other three Ps through its design and attributes. It encompasses tangible goods—like furniture, clothing, and groceries—as well as intangible offerings, such as services, that consumers acquire (Singh, 2012 pp. 40-45). In political advertising, the product is a dynamic bundle of perceived benefits that voters expect from electing a candidate (Bigi, 2017). Green marketing literature defines environmentally friendly products as those delivering long-term benefits, reducing consumer guilt, and relieving environmental burdens without compromising core functionality (Sharma et al., 2019; Wijekoon & Sabri, 2021p). Examples include electric vehicles, paper or jute bags, stainless steel bottles, erasable notebooks, and reusable diapers.

2. Green Pricing

Price differs from the other elements of the marketing mix in that it generates revenues and profits, while the other elements generate costs. Lawrence Mpelele Khanya defines green pricing as "the strategy that allows marketers to adjust their pricing structure in line with their investments related to green efforts that allow the organization to use" (Lawrence, 2014, p. 627).

Ross Gittel views green pricing as the amount of money that the consumer pays for a product or service based on its value as sustainable products, where the cost of green products is higher compared to their traditional counterparts, and the difference between the price of green products and traditional products creates a gap called the green price (Ross, Matt, & Michael, 2012). Meanwhile, Najm Aboud Najm defines green pricing as the process that allows pricing the product after applying environmental requirements starting from the supply process, as well as design, and ending with environmentally considerate packaging through attention to the necessity of recycling both the product and packaging alike, in addition to environmental distribution (Najm, 2010, p. 253).

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

From the above concepts, we conclude that green pricing is a process for determining the price of the green product while taking environmental considerations into account, as it is the amount of money that the consumer pays based on the perceived value, given that the cost of green products is higher than the cost of traditional products.

3. Green Distribution:

Green distribution holds great importance in the green marketing mix, no less than its other elements, as it is the means through which the green product is delivered to the targeted party, at the appropriate time and place, and in the required form. In green distribution, attention is given to environmental aspects during the distribution of the product from the manufacturer to the final consumer. Environmental aspects in distribution are determined by relying on a set of techniques and using environmentally friendly transport means that help reduce energy consumption and emissions, thereby ensuring contribution to reducing environmental problems (Najm, 2010, p. 276). Green distribution relies on the commercial outlet, which greatly ensures the benefit for both wholesalers and retailers alike, by strengthening their relationships with producers and consumers due to the adoption of green marketing distribution channels relying on the recycling process (Al-Bakri, 2012, p. 243).

It involves distributing products from producers to end-users (Istiqomah, 2015 pp. 073–098), or more specifically, the channels and locations through which consumers access them (Al Badi, 2018). This often occurs via intermediaries like distributors, wholesalers, and retailers (Efanny et al., 2018).

4. Green promotion

Iyad Abd Al-Fattah and Abd Al-Rahman define green promotion as the promotion of environmentally friendly consumer behavior, represented by persuading consumers to purchase and use green products (Al-Nusour, 2014, p. 158). Green promotion allows the organization to communicate its marketing message and environmental vision to the consumer through its products and services (Talib A. F., 2010). Green promotion involves conveying information about the environmental commitments and efforts made by organizations to consumers.

The green promotional mix includes advertising, public relations, environmental labels, packaging, and personal selling. Green product manufacturers rely on public relations and advocacy to communicate with consumers, as it is considered the easiest way to build trust and is more credible. Public relations are used when the organization targets a specific market and a defined segment of consumers, while advertising is used when targeting the broad market and a larger number of consumers in order to introduce the product and its characteristics through media channels (Ham, 2011, pp. 381-403).

Yet, promotion in green marketing takes many forms, and its importance varies depending on several key factors. These include the target audience's environmental awareness, the product's lifecycle stage, regulatory pressures, and the firm's overall sustainability strategy. For instance,

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

eco-labeling and green certifications prove highly effective for consumer goods targeting environmentally conscious buyers, while educational advertising campaigns excel in B2B contexts to build long-term trust (Ottman J. A., 2011). In large enterprises, promotional strategies must align with systemic integration, prioritizing authenticity to avoid greenwashing accusations—a common pitfall that undermines credibility (Delmas & Burbano, 2011, pp. 64-87).

It encompasses all communication methods used to inform, remind, persuade, and motivate target audiences to adopt a product or service (Tariq Khan, 2014). It involves knowledge-building, persuasion, and influence (Karunanithy & Sivesan, 2013 pp. 1-9), delivered through a mix of advertising, personal selling, sales promotions, and public relations (Alexandrescu & Milandru, 2018 pp.268-274).

4.1. Tools of Green Promotional Mix

The green promotional mix consists of several elements, the most important of which are:

A. The Green Trademark / Green Brand

The American Marketing Association states that the environmental trademark is a name, sign, symbol, design, or a combination thereof that aims to identify goods or services from one seller or group of sellers and distinguish them from competitors. Consumer evaluation of a trademark depends on its environmental performance, and there should be a positive association with it. The green trademark is also defined as a name, symbol, or design that is specific to green or eco-friendly products and is used to help consumers differentiate between green products and non-green products. (Narges, 2014)

B. The Green Label / Eco-Label

This is considered one of the most well-known environmental standards. It refers to the marks placed on a product to inform the consumer about its environmental suitability compared to other products in the same product category, with the aim of protecting the environment by increasing consumer awareness of the environmental impacts of their consumption, and encouraging them to change their behavior in a way that helps adjust the industrial design of goods to become more environmentally compatible. Environmental labels are classified according to the ISO 14000 standard into three groups:

- Type I (ISO 14024 – 1999): Comprises principles and methods, and includes environmental declarations and environmental labeling.
- Type II (ISO 14021 – 1999): Includes environmental labeling and voluntary environmental claims.
- Type III (ISO 14025 – 2006): Comprises principles and procedures, and includes labels, environmental declarations, and environmental claims. (ISO, n.d.)

C. Green Advertising

Green advertising is defined as "promotional messages that may correspond to the needs and desires of consumers interested in the environment. (Ankit & Solanki, 2015, p. 135) It is also defined as: "advertising that clearly addresses the content of the relationship between a product

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

and the environment, encourages adopting a greener approach with or without focusing on the product, and presents an image of institutional environmental responsibility" . (Umit & Cengiz, 2012, p. 209) Green advertising adopted by most institutions is described in three elements: the first indicates that green advertising begins by clarifying the environmental concerns of institutions and their sources; the second element describes the way the institution has changed its practices to show its environmental concern and its continuous effort to improve it; while the third element describes the specific environmental procedures and plans adopted by the institution and the results it seeks to achieve. It is noted from the above that advertising represents the promotion of a product, idea, or institution concerned with environmental issues, showing how to reduce harm to the environment in order to influence consumers and make them think about acquiring the product or changing their lifestyles in order to preserve the natural environment.

D. Packaging

The South African Council of Industry for Packaging and the Environment defines packaging as the outer layer of the product that protects it from damage, enables the effective transportation and distribution of products, prolongs the product's presumed shelf life, and helps promote products in competitive markets. Therefore, packaging is an inseparable and fundamental part of the commercial and industrial supply chain. The environmental label is the design found on the product's packaging or included in the product booklet to provide information about the product's eco-friendliness) (Tracy, 2007). Personal selling is a two-way, direct communication approach to achieve the appropriate influence on the targeted individual or group from the selling process. The salesperson must possess a set of conditions, including: acquired skills, qualifications, and environmental awareness, as well as social intelligence, human sensitivity, and knowledge of product advantages and its environmental impacts.

E. Green Innovation

The institution adopts a green innovation strategy in order to reduce waste resulting from production processes. Environmental procedures are considered part of sustainability programs and play a decisive role in improving environmental, economic, and social performance. Green innovation plays a role in creating a competitive advantage in the age of environmental awareness . (Tjahjadi, 2020, p. 5) (According to Chan, innovation can be classified within green products and processes, including innovation in the field of technology that encompasses green product design through safe use of energy, recycling of waste, and pollution prevention technology. Green innovation has become one of the important strategic tools for achieving sustainable development in industry due to increasing environmental pressures. In small and medium enterprises, green innovation is incorporated to develop more new and eco-friendly products and change production processes or methods . (Chan, 2013, p. 145).

5. Green People

Green people are the organizational members who are committed to promoting and implementing sustainable practices consistent with the organization's green marketing strategies (Iannuzzi, 2017, pp. 173–198). They occupy a central role in differentiating brands and enabling

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

them to stand out in highly competitive markets (Bojanic, 2009, pp. 59–84). Accordingly, the active involvement of employees who possess adequate knowledge of green practices, together with the clear and credible communication of green initiatives, enhances customer satisfaction and subsequently encourages purchase decisions (Novela & Hansopaheluwakan, 2018, pp. 131–144).

Furthermore, consumer attitudes constitute an important motivational driver for brand teams to adopt and strengthen green practices (Woo & Kim, 2019, pp. 320–332). Direct, face-to-face communication of green messages helps satisfy information needs and clarifies consumer perceptions of green brands (Sudari et al., 2019). Empirical findings by Arizal et al. (2018, pp. 395–403) and Verma and Singh (2017, pp. 121–129) likewise demonstrate a positive association between green people and repurchase intentions, with a significant effect on customer satisfaction.

A service firm's success hinges on the individuals who design and deliver its offerings, making personnel a critical focus (Tajeddini et al., 2020).

6. Green Processes

Green processes denote the methods and practices involved in the production and delivery of products (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004, pp. 79–84). Efficient processes have been shown to enhance customer satisfaction, which constitutes an essential component of purchase decision-making (Novela & Hansopaheluwakan, 2018). Chen and Lee (2015, pp. 195–209) further stress that the integration of green processes into production and distribution strategies is a major determinant of consumers' inclination toward a particular brand. Consequently, prior research indicates that green knowledge exerts a significant influence on purchase intentions (Debora Indriani et al., 2019, p. 627; Wang et al., 2023). According to Wang et al. (2019), green knowledge provides a foundation for customer trust, strengthening consumers' belief in a brand's eco-friendly offerings and ultimately increasing the likelihood of purchase. In addition, green perceived value associated with green processes is also linked to consumers' purchase intentions (Bratasari et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2024, pp. 109–116).

It also describes the step-by-step methods, mechanisms, and activity flows for developing and delivering a service to customers (Kwok et al., 2020).

7. Green Physical Evidence

Green physical evidence refers to the tangible attributes of a product that signal its environmental benefits, such as sustainable packaging (Arseculeratne & Yazdanifard, 2014, p. 130). It encompasses physical elements that embody the brand's identity and contribute to shaping consumer perceptions, whether favorable or unfavorable. These tangible cues constitute one of the factors guiding both conscious and unconscious considerations during decision-making (Novela & Hansopaheluwakan, 2018, pp. 131–144). The mediating role of green knowledge is strengthened when consumers are exposed to green tangible cues of physical evidence, which can be translated into purchase intentions (Han et al., 2019). Consumers with higher levels of green knowledge are also more capable of critically evaluating such cues (Martínez, 2015, pp. 896–917). Moreover, Fang et al. (2011, pp. 479–503) indicate that interaction with green cues can stimulate

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

purchasing behavior. A brand that clearly demonstrates green physical evidence helps to foster consumer trust and encourages green brand purchases (Liao et al., 2020).

Physical evidence refers to the tangible environment where services are delivered during customer interactions, including all visible elements that support the service experience (Yusuf et al., 2020 pp. 14-18)—essentially everything consumers observe when engaging with the brand.

Third: Challenges of Green Marketing

This section explores the general challenges and modern challenges of green marketing:

1. General Challenges

Notwithstanding its strategic potential, green marketing confronts profound and interconnected obstacles spanning organizational, consumer, competitive, and contextual domains. Fundamentally, a core impediment arises from paradigmatic discord. As Peattie argues, "many of the fundamental and widely accepted assumptions and concepts of conventional marketing are rooted in unsustainable production and consumption" (Peattie, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 58), implying that green marketing requires a comprehensive reconceptualization of marketing's foundational principles rather than incremental adjustments. Empirical evidence from the United States exemplifies this tension: prominent corporate greening initiatives often faltered when misaligned with entrenched strategies and cultures—a setback described as "hitting the green wall" (Shelton, 1994, as cited in Peattie, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 69).

A second enduring challenge is the attitude-behavior gap: consumers frequently profess environmental values but fail to translate those values into purchase behavior. Green product adoption typically imposes consumer concessions such as higher prices, perceived lower technical performance, unusual distribution channels, or uncertainty about quality (Peattie, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 67–68). In business-to-business contexts this gap can be even larger because procurement officers emphasize cost and performance and often show "general unreceptivity to the integration of environmental purchasing measures" (Drumwright, 1994, as cited in Earl & Clift, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 269).

A third major challenge is credibility erosion caused by greenwashing. The early environmental marketing surge in the late 1980s was compromised by unsubstantiated claims—examples include products labeled "biodegradable" only under implausible landfill conditions or "green" options that combined poorer quality with higher prices (Ackerstein & Lemon, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 241–242). Limited independent verification exacerbated these problems; for instance, The Body Shop faced scrutiny that fostered consumer perceptions of equivocation (Kearins & Kljñ, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 292).

Closely related is the green price-premium conundrum: the widespread belief that environmentally improved products inherently cost more creates a prisoner's dilemma, deterring firms from investing unilaterally for fear of being undercut by competitors (Peattie, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 65). At a higher level, green marketing often requires discontinuous behavioral shifts—such as moving from ownership to leasing or sharing models—which consumers resist, especially within short timeframes (Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 12).

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

These obstacles are amplified in developing and emerging economies by lax regulation (allowing local rivals cost advantages), smaller segments of eco-aware consumers, and skepticism toward marketing claims amid limited media independence (Butler & Kraisornsuthasinee, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 339–347). At the organizational core, green marketing's success depends on embedding environmental considerations into product design and corporate learning processes; superficial measures are merely "quick fixes" (Wehrmeyer, in Charter & Polonsky, 1999, p. 46) unlikely to produce lasting transformation (Charter & Polonsky, 1999, pp. 11–12).

Collectively, these impediments show that barriers to effective green marketing extend beyond technical or financial constraints to include epistemic, cultural, and institutional dimensions that require simultaneous reform across firms, consumers, markets, and regulatory systems.

1.2 Contemporary Challenges:

Recent literature highlights several modern obstacles that complicate green marketing implementation and diffusion. Papadas et al. note that firms face consumer skepticism, regulatory inconsistencies, and operational constraints when attempting to develop and sustain green strategies (Papadas et al., 2019). Key contemporary challenges include:

- Consumer skepticism and greenwashing fallout. Widespread distrust, fueled by prior deceptive practices, leads consumers to question environmental claims and reduces the effectiveness of green communications (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017, pp. 1263–1279).
- Regulatory fragmentation and certification complexity. Multinational firms must navigate fragmented standards, differing certifications, and divergent labeling requirements across markets, which consumes resources and raises compliance costs; small firms are particularly disadvantaged (Papadas et al., 2017, pp. 632–643).
- High upfront operational costs. Operationalizing green strategies requires substantial investments in R&D, cleaner technologies, and supply-chain reconfiguration, which can strain short-term profitability and pose barriers to adoption (Dangelico & Vocalelli, 2017, pp. 1263–1279).
- Absence of uniform metrics. The lack of standardized measurement and reporting frameworks makes it difficult to validate, compare, and credibly communicate environmental performance across sectors (Papadas et al., 2019, pp. 632–643).
- New concept and limited consumer reach. Although literate and urban consumers in some markets are increasingly aware of green products, the idea remains novel for large segments of the population. Consumer education and mass outreach are required to raise awareness of environmental threats and the benefits of green products; in markets where healthy-living practices (for example, yoga or natural-food consumption) are more prevalent, acceptance is higher (Mishra & Sharma, 2014, pp. 79–80). This limited diffusion increases the time and resources required for market penetration.
- Need for standardization and independent verification. Only a small fraction of "green" marketing messages are fully accurate, and the current absence of universal certification and

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

quality-control bodies undermines credibility. Effective standardization and third-party verification are necessary to authenticate claims and reduce greenwashing (Mishra & Sharma, 2014, pp. 79–80).

- Patience, perseverance, and strategic focus. Successful green marketing requires long-term commitment from investors and firms; immediate returns are unlikely, and marketers must avoid "green myopia" by ensuring environmental attributes align with core customer benefits and acceptable price points (Mishra & Sharma, 2014, pp. 79–80).

Part Two: Empirical Review (Prior Studies & Applied Literature)

Having established the conceptual foundations, strategic dimensions, and principal challenges of green marketing, the chapter now turns from theory to evidence. The following part reviews prior empirical studies on green marketing in large corporations, situates the current study within this body of research, and identifies the gaps it seeks to address.

This Part provides a systematic review of prior studies related to green marketing in large corporations. Studies are organised by Arabic scholarship and foreign scholarship followed by a structured gap analysis.

First: Arabic Studies

The following eight studies represent Arabic-language scholarship directly linked to green marketing across diverse institutional contexts (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria), arranged chronologically from oldest to most recent.

Table 2. Arabic Studies

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
01	Khouildat, S. (2017) University of Algiers 3 PhD Thesis	The Impact of Green Marketing on Community Development and Corporate Reputation: Toyota vs. Ford	Explore and compare green marketing strategies and environmental responsibility in two multinational automakers over a five-year period in Japan and the USA	Descriptive-comparative; sustainability reports + competitive matrix + international environmental performance index (5 years)	Environmental responsibility is not merely a symbolic slogan — it represents a set of practical applications and operational practices aimed at improving environmental performance. Toyota showed stronger	Environmental responsibility is a set of operational practices, not mere slogans. Toyota outperformed Ford in green market image. Recommends adopting green orientation as a strategic	Khouildat's comparative study of Toyota and Ford establishes a methodological precedent directly applicable to the current study: sustainability reports can be used as primary data sources to compare

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
					performance than Ford in enhancing its market image through green marketing activities.	corporate commitment	multinational corporations' green marketing performance. The 7Ps analysis applied to IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever extends this comparative documentary approach to three companies across different industries rather than two automakers in a single sector.
02	Samar, N. & Derouazi, Y. (2019) Algeria Journal Article	The Importance of Applying Green Marketing in Economic Institutions — Case Study: SINEO and Steelcase	Highlight the strategic importance of green marketing as an approach to achieving shared value — balancing profit with environmental and social responsibility	Descriptive + case study; analysis of two leading global firms (SINEO and Steelcase)	SINEO and Steelcase demonstrated tangible positive outcomes from green marketing adoption: increases in sales and market share; improved brand image and customer satisfaction. Green marketing confirmed fully compatible with profitability — no trade-off	Integrating the green marketing mix does not reduce profitability; it improves financial performance (sales, market share) and social performance (brand image, customer satisfaction)	Samar and Derouazi's case study of SINEO and Steelcase confirms that applying the green marketing mix across two companies simultaneously is analytically feasible and yields meaningful comparative findings. Their conclusion that green marketing is fully compatible with profitability provides a foundational

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
					identified between environmental commitment and financial performance.		premise for the current study, which investigates how IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever operationalise this compatibility across all 7Ps.
03	Metali, L. (2020) University of Boumerdes, Algeria Journal Article	Green Marketing: Theoretical Frameworks, Challenges, Strategies, and Ecological Impact	Analyse the green marketing concept, the 4P green mix, and challenges; evaluate pioneering companies including Toyota Prius and The Body Shop	Theoretical-descriptive; academic literature review (Pandi 2015, Kumara 2017, Patel 2016, Wahab 2018)	Only 1–4% of market share is genuinely green despite growing consumer intent. Toyota Prius confirmed as world's most successful green product. Three evolutionary phases of green marketing identified: ecological (1970s) → environmental (1980–90s) → sustainable (2000s+). The Body Shop, Patagonia, Ben & Jerry's and Toyota cited as benchmark authentic green cases.	Green marketing is a holistic philosophy encompassing eco-design, sustainable production, and transparent communication. Greenwashing is a persistent credibility threat. Only 1–4% of market share is genuinely green	Metali's theoretical review establishes the conceptual vocabulary — eco-design, sustainable production, and transparent communication — that the current study operationalises through the 7Ps framework. The identification of Patagonia as a benchmark case of authentic green marketing directly informs its selection as one of the three companies analysed. The greenwashing credibility threat Metali identifies is precisely the gap the current

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
							study addresses by examining documented corporate communications rather than consumer perceptions.
04	Zaoui, A. & Ramdani, L. (2020) University Laghouat Algeria Journal Article	Green Marketing — Historical Evolution and Strategic Framework for Algerian Enterprises	Review the historical evolution of green marketing from the 1970s to 2000s and propose a strategic implementation framework for Algerian firms	Analytical-conceptual; historical three-phase evolution model + applied strategic framework	Three-phase historical evolution model confirmed: ecological → environmental → sustainable. Greenwashing identified as the primary obstacle to credible green marketing adoption. Ben & Jerry's and Toyota demonstrated that ecological commitment and commercial success are compatible. A strategic implementation framework proposed and validated for Algerian enterprises.	Three historical phases: ecological → environmental → sustainable. Strategic green marketing integration is a necessity, not an option. Calls for embedding green practice across all organisational functions	Zaoui and Ramdani's three-phase evolution model (ecological → environmental → sustainable) provides the historical framework within which the three selected companies can be situated. IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever each occupy different positions along this trajectory, and the call to embed green practice across all organisational functions aligns directly with the 7Ps analytical grid used in the current study.
05	Zalt, M.A. (2022) Tanta	The Impact of Green	Measure the effect of the	Quantitative-descriptive;	All four dimensions	All four dimensions had	Zalt's finding that all four

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
	University Egypt Journal Article	Marketing on Improving Institutional Performance — Egyptian Pharmaceutical Companies	four green marketing mix dimensions on institutional performance in eight state-owned Egyptian pharmaceutical companies	questionnaire (n = 269 employees); Cronbach's alpha + Pearson correlation + multiple regression (SPSS)	statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Model explains 83% of variance ($R^2 = 0.830$). Individual T-values: Green Distribution highest (T = 10.899), Green Pricing (T = 9.577), Green Promotion (T = 8.833), Green Product lowest (T = 4.198). Mean descriptive scores ranged from 4.37 to 4.66 on a 5-point Likert scale across all constructs.	a statistically significant positive effect on institutional performance ($R^2 = 83\%$). Green promotion was the most impactful dimension. Green marketing adoption is a strategic necessity for competitive advantage	green marketing mix dimensions significantly affect institutional performance ($R^2 = 83\%$) confirms the analytical validity of examining each P of the marketing mix separately. The current study extends this dimension-by-dimension logic to the full 7Ps — including People, Process, and Physical Evidence — applying it comparatively across three multinationals rather than measuring statistical effects in a single pharmaceutical sector.
06	Al-Sokkary, A. (2023) Manara University Syria Journal Article	Green Marketing in Service Organizations	Explore green marketing applications in diverse service organisations and analyse their impact on	Descriptive-analytical; review of international academic literature + corporate case studies	McDonald's: reduced operational waste through recycled packaging. Walmart: cut carbon	United Airlines cut nitrogen oxide emissions by 75% since 2000; Bank of America reduced paper use by 32% and	Al-Sokkary's multi-company methodology — analysing McDonald's, Walmart, Starbucks, United Airlines,

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
			competitive advantage	(McDonald's, Walmart, Starbucks, United Airlines, Bank of America, Syriatel)	emissions by enforcing strict supplier environmental standards. Starbucks: reduced costs through packaging recycling. United Airlines: reduced nitrogen oxide emissions by 75% since 2000 through fuel-efficient aircraft upgrades. Bank of America: cut paper use by 32% and recycled 30,000 tons annually. Syriatel: launched green site infrastructure powered by wind and solar energy.	recycled 30,000 tons annually. Green marketing yields measurable financial, environmental, and competitive gains	Bank of America, and Syriatel simultaneously — demonstrates that cross-company comparative analysis using corporate evidence is academically credible. The current study adopts a more focused version of this approach, applying the structured 7Ps framework to three corporations selected for their contrasting green marketing models.
07	Elwardany, W. (2025) Univ. of Sadat City Egypt Journal Article	The Influence of Greenwashing on Marketing on Consumers' Negative Green Purchase Intentions —	Investigate how greenwashing drives negative green purchase intentions through three mediators: green	Quantitative; regression analysis (n = 210 tourism customers); EFA + Cronbach's alpha + 5-point Likert	All hypotheses supported ($p < 0.05$). Greenwashing (GW) strongest predictor: $\beta = 0.336$. Green Customer Confusion	Greenwashing is the strongest predictor of negative purchase intentions ($\beta = 0.336$). The three mediators together explain	Elwardany's quantitative confirmation that greenwashing is the strongest predictor of negative purchase

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
		Egyptian Tourism Sector	perceived risk, consumer confusion, and negative e-commerce attitude	scale (SPSS v.24)	(GCC): $\beta = 0.209$. Green Perceived Risk (GPR): $\beta = 0.129$. Negative Attitude toward E-commerce (ATC): $\beta = 0.117$. Combined model explains 51.4% of variance in negative green purchase intentions. Pearson correlation confirmed significant positive relationships between greenwashing and all study constructs.	51.4% of variance. Deceptive green claims destroy consumer trust long-term	intentions ($\beta = 0.336$) establishes the consumer-side risk that the current study examines from the corporate communication side. By analysing what IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever officially declare across their 7Ps, the current study assesses the degree to which each corporation's documented green claims are substantiated, providing a supply-side complement to Elwardany's demand-side findings.

Source: Compiled by researcher based on the literature review.

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

Second Foreign Studies

The following nine international studies span Europe (Finland, France, Portugal, UK), Asia (Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam), and Africa (South Africa), enabling broad cross-contextual comparison and enriching the analytical frameworks of the current study. They are arranged chronologically from oldest to most recent.

Table 3. Foreign Studies

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
09	Miralles, J. (2008) MBA Gestion des Entreprises / Marketing Mgmt. (institution unconfirmed in source) France	Green Marketing: Strategies, Challenges & Ecological Impact — Pioneering Company Cases	Analyse the historical development of green marketing, its challenges, and real-world applications in pioneering companies (The Body Shop, Patagonia, Toyota, Ben & Jerry's, Lafarge, Shell)	Qualitative-analytical; corporate case studies + consumer data (Ethicity, CREDOC, TNS Secodip) + ARPP and ISO 14001 regulatory analysis	Toyota Prius confirmed as world's most successful green product. 64.8% of French consumers chose brands on ethical criteria (2006). TerraChoice 2007 study documented greenwashing in 1,000+ consumer products. Only 1–4% of total market share is genuinely green despite growing consumer intent.	Toyota Prius is the world's most successful green product. 64.8% of French consumers chose brands on ethical criteria in 2006. Greenwashing documented in 1,000+ products. Only 1–4% genuine market share is green	Miralles' pioneering qualitative study of Patagonia, Toyota, The Body Shop, and others provides the earliest multi-company benchmark in this review. Patagonia's inclusion as an exemplar in 2008 reinforces its selection for the current study and adds a longitudinal dimension: comparing Miralles' 2008 characterisation of Patagonia against its 2024 official documentation reveals how the company's green marketing has

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
							evolved over sixteen years.
10	Ventura, M.R. (2016) ESCP-Europe / UCP Portugal Master Thesis	Green Marketing Impact on a Company's Success: The Case of Patagonia	Analyse whether Patagonia's green marketing campaigns contribute to company success by testing nine green consumer characteristics among consumers and non-consumers	Quantitative; online survey (n = 112 consumers + 91 non-consumers); t-tests + Mann-Whitney U + binary logistic regression (Nagelkerke R ² = 84.7%)	5 of 7 sub-hypotheses fully validated. H1.1 beliefs: p=0.000, d=1.468. H1.2 importance: p=0.000, d=2.33. H1.3 inconvenience: p=0.000, d=2.572. H1.5 willingness to pay: p=0.000, d=1.441. H1.6 subjective knowledge: p=0.000, d=1.16. H1.4 individualism: small effect only (d=0.359) — not fully validated. H1.7 action-related knowledge: rejected (p=0.111). Nagelkerke R ² = 84.7%.	Patagonia consumers strongly match the green consumer profile. Quality is the primary purchase driver; environmental positioning is the decisive differentiator when quality is comparable. 95% of respondents trust the brand's environmental claims	Ventura's thesis is the most directly relevant prior study: it focuses exclusively on Patagonia and documents that its green marketing generates 95% consumer trust. While Ventura measures consumer perceptions quantitatively, the current study examines the corporate communications that produce those perceptions — providing the documentary supply-side foundation that complements Ventura's demand-side findings and enabling comparison with IKEA and Unilever.
11	Siepong, A. (2016) Univ. of East Anglia Norwich Business	Multi-Dimensional Models of Green Marketing	Develop and validate multi-dimensional GMC models, identify three	Quantitative; postal survey (n = 120 Thai companies, cross-industry);	Three distinct GMC-strategic types identified, each with characteristic	Three distinct GMC-strategic types identified. Strategic-GMC-fit significantly	Siepong's identification of three distinct Green Marketing Capability

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
	School UK — PhD Thesis	Capabilities (GMC) for Green Competitive Advantage and Superior Performance — Thailand	GMC-strategic types, and examine how GMC drives green competitive advantage and firm performance	configuration modelling + mediation analysis + causal path analysis	strategic behaviours and best-fit profiles. Strategic-GMC-fit models validated: matching GMC type to company strategy significantly affects outcomes. GMC structures confirmed as significant predictors of green competitive advantage and superior firm performance. Practical strategic mind-map developed for practitioners.	affects outcomes. A well-configured GMC positively mediates firm performance. Provides a best-practice strategic mind-map for practitioners	strategic types provides a comparative typology that the current study tests at the corporate documentary level. IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever each represent a different green marketing model (transformational, identity-based, and scale-based respectively), mirroring the strategic differentiation Siepong found in his cross-industry Thai sample. The current study generates a comparable typology from documentary evidence rather than survey data.
12	Atud, V.A. (2017) Univ. of Witwatersrand Johannesburg South Africa — PhD	Green Marketing, Green Corporate Governance Commitment, and Firm Performance — Electronics Manufacturers	Examine the relationship between green orientation commitment and firm performance in South African electronics manufacturers, with four	Quantitative; SEM (AMOS 24 + SPSS 24); n = 212 managers; 11 hypotheses; cross-sectional	11 hypotheses tested via SEM. Firm commitment to green positively affects green marketing capability (H1 supported). Green orientation commitment	Green orientation commitment is a significant predictor of firm performance. Green marketing capability, green relationship learning, and green human capital	Atud's SEM-based confirmation that firm commitment to green orientation drives green marketing capability provides theoretical grounding for the current study's

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
		in South Africa	mediating variables		confirmed as a significant predictor of firm performance. Green marketing capability, green relationship learning, and green human capital investment all confirmed as key mediating variables. All structural paths statistically significant.	investment all function as key mediating variables	assumption that corporate-level commitment — as evidenced in official publications — translates into observable 7Ps practices. The four mediating variables Atud identifies correspond to dimensions visible across the People, Process, and Physical Evidence elements of the 7Ps framework.
13	Tran, T.V. (2024) Thu Dau Mot Univ. Vietnam Journal Article	Green Marketing Research Trends: Theory and Practical Application — Bibliometric Review (1998–2018)	Map global green marketing research trends by analysing 109 English-language articles (1998–2018) and propose research directions for the Vietnamese context	Mixed-methods content analysis (quantitative + qualitative); 109 peer-reviewed articles in international journals	109 articles analysed across 1998–2018. Publication peak in 2012 (16 studies). Asia leads with 30 studies; Europe and Americas follow. 71.6% of studies are empirical (vs. theoretical). Green marketing should be embedded within a corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework.	Publication peak in 2012 (16 studies). Asia leads with 30 studies. 71.6% are empirical. Green marketing should be embedded within a corporate social responsibility (CSR) framework	Tran's bibliometric map confirms that empirical quantitative approaches dominate the field (71.6%) and Asia leads in output. This directly justifies the current study's methodological choice: qualitative content analysis of corporate documents fills a clear gap in a field saturated with survey-based work. Tran's

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
							recommendation to embed green marketing within a CSR framework aligns with the inclusion of sustainability reporting and ESG disclosures as primary data sources.
14	Kadam, C. (2024) LUT University Finland Master's Thesis	Green Marketing Strategies in Developing and Developed Markets — A Comparative Study: Finland, Sweden, Sri Lanka & Vietnam	Examine and compare how green marketing strategies are applied by companies in developed markets (Finland, Sweden) vs. developing markets (Sri Lanka, Vietnam), and explore how regulatory and consumer context shapes implementation	Qualitative multiple-case study; semi-structured interviews + online questionnaires with 8 company representatives across 4 countries; manual content analysis using 11 thematic categories; Institutional Theory + 4P green marketing mix	8 companies across 4 countries analysed. Both developed and developing markets demonstrate genuine sustainability commitment. Universal consumer attitude-behavior gap confirmed across all four countries. Developed-market firms use advanced material certifications (EU Ecolabel, GOTS); developing-market firms rely on ethical sourcing and global standards (UN Global Compact).	Both market types show genuine sustainability commitment but share a universal consumer attitude-behavior gap. Businesses are not fully embedding green marketing throughout operations — government must play a stronger role	Kadam's cross-country qualitative comparison using 11 thematic categories establishes a direct methodological parallel to the current study's comparative qualitative content analysis. The finding that neither developed nor developing markets fully embed green marketing throughout operations provides a benchmark: the current study tests whether IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever — often cited as green leaders — achieve what

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
					Neither market type fully embeds green marketing throughout operations.		Kadam found most companies fail to do.
15	Holappa, P. (April 2024) Univ. of Oulu Oulu Business School Finland — Master's	Sustainable Marketing in Micro and Small Enterprises — A Qualitative Study of Finnish MSEs	Examine how sustainable marketing is implemented in Finnish micro and small enterprises (MSEs), including prevailing practices, challenges, opportunities, and perceived benefits	Qualitative; semi-structured thematic interviews with 6 Finnish MSEs + content analysis of each company's website and social media materials; comparison of interview claims vs. actual external communications	6 Finnish MSEs analysed across diverse industries. Over 50% do not communicate any sustainability practices externally (website/social media) despite claiming to implement them. Company B (IT/circular economy) identified as most advanced. Companies A and D show zero sustainable marketing communication. Small businesses significantly more aware than micro-enterprises. Gap between stated practice and external communication is the central finding.	Over 50% of MSEs do not communicate any sustainability practices externally despite claiming to implement them. Gap between stated practice and external communication is the central finding. Small businesses significantly more aware than micro-enterprises	Holappa's finding that over 50% of Finnish MSEs fail to communicate sustainability externally despite implementing it internally establishes the rhetoric-versus-reality gap at the micro-enterprise level. The current study examines the same gap at the opposite end of the scale: three global multinationals with substantial sustainability reporting infrastructure. This contrast reveals whether organisational scale resolves or merely repositions the gap between stated and documented green practice.

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
16	Ramadhani, S.B. (2024) UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia Bachelor's Thesis	Green Marketing in Building a Sustainable Brand Image of SMEs — Case Study: Vert Terre Yogyakarta, Indonesia	Analyse how green marketing is implemented through the 4P mix to build a sustainable brand image for Vert Terre, an Indonesian eco-friendly SME specialising in zero-waste daily products	Descriptive qualitative; purposive sampling; in-depth interviews + direct store observation + documentation; Miles and Huberman model; expert triangulation	Vert Terre comprehensively applies all four 4P dimensions of the green marketing mix. Green marketing successfully built brand loyalty and increased consumer awareness of environmental issues. Price competitiveness remains a structural challenge in the Indonesian market. Confirms green marketing is viable and effective at SME scale with limited financial resources.	Vert Terre comprehensively applies all four 4P dimensions. Green marketing successfully built brand loyalty and increased consumer awareness despite price competitiveness challenges. Proves green marketing is viable and effective at the SME scale	Ramadhani's qualitative content analysis of Vert Terre using the 4P green mix is the closest methodological antecedent to the current study. Both use documentary evidence to evaluate green marketing implementation against a structured mix framework. The current study extends this approach in three dimensions: from 4Ps to 7Ps, from a single Indonesian SME to three global multinationals, and from a single-sector analysis to a cross-industry comparison.
17	Hossain, M. (18 May 2025) University of Turku Finland Master's Thesis (International Business)	The Role of Green Marketing in Shaping Sustainable Brand Perception — A Systematic	Investigate how green marketing practices contribute to the formation of a sustainable brand image by synthesising 50 peer-reviewed	Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following PRISMA guidelines; Boolean search across Web of Science + Scopus; 50	50 articles retained from 132 shortlisted across 21 countries. Five key strategies identified as most impactful: sustainable packaging, CSR	Five key strategies shape sustainable brand perception: sustainable packaging, CSR, eco-labelling, green advertising, and	Hossain's systematic review identifies five key strategies — sustainable packaging, CSR, eco-labelling, green advertising, and carbon disclosure — and

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

#	Study Information	Study Title	Objective	Methodology	Results	Key Findings	Relevance to Current Study
		Literature Review	articles; identify the most impactful green strategies and evaluate how they shape consumer brand sustainability perceptions	articles retained; six-phase thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke); Triple Bottom Line (TBL) + brand trust theory + attitude-behavior gap framework	initiatives, eco-labelling, green advertising, and carbon disclosure. Consumer trust confirmed as the central mediating variable. Greenwashing — even unintentional — severely damages brand credibility. Blockchain and QR codes recommended for real-time verifiable sustainability proof.	carbon disclosure. Consumer trust is the central mediating variable. Greenwashing — even unintentional — severely damages brand credibility	confirms consumer trust as the central mediating variable. These five strategies map directly onto specific 7Ps dimensions (Product, Promotion, Physical Evidence), providing evidence-based criteria for evaluating the depth and credibility of green claims made by IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever in their 2024 disclosures.

Source: Compiled by researcher based on the literature review.

Third: Research Gap & position of the current study

1. Empirical Foundations

The sixteen reviewed studies collectively made a rich contribution to anchoring the concept of green marketing and measuring its effect across diverse organisational, sectoral, and geographic contexts. They can be grouped into four thematic clusters that reveal both the depth and the boundaries of existing knowledge:

Cluster 1 — Green Marketing Strategy & Implementation: Metali (2020), Zaoui & Ramdani (2020), Miralles (2007–2008), and Kadam (2024) collectively establish the strategic foundations of green marketing. All four converge on the conclusion that green marketing is not a promotional tool but a holistic operational philosophy requiring genuine commitment across the entire 4P mix. Kadam (2024) adds a critical cross-market dimension, demonstrating that while both developed and developing economies show sustainability commitment, neither has fully embedded green marketing throughout operations — pointing to a systemic implementation gap that is universal, not context-specific.

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

Cluster 2 — Green Marketing & Organisational Performance: Khouildat (2017), Zalt (2022), Siepong (2016), and Atud (2017) all confirm that green marketing commitment positively and significantly predicts organisational performance. Zalt (2022) demonstrates this across the four marketing mix dimensions ($R^2 = 83\%$); Siepong (2016) establishes that the alignment between Green Marketing Capabilities (GMC) and strategic orientation is the decisive factor; and Atud (2017) shows through SEM modelling that green orientation commitment cascades through four mediating variables — capabilities, relationship learning, human capital, and social investment — before reaching performance outcomes.

Cluster 3 — Consumer Trust, Greenwashing & Credibility: Elwardany (2025), Ventura (2016), Samar & Derouazi (2019), and Hossain (2025) converge on a single critical finding: consumer trust is the central mediating variable between green marketing practice and consumer behaviour. Elwardany (2025) quantifies this, finding that greenwashing explains 33.6% of negative purchase intentions alone; Ventura (2016) shows that 95% of Patagonia consumers trust the brand's environmental claims because they are backed by verifiable certifications; and Hossain (2025), synthesising 50 peer-reviewed studies across 21 countries, identifies credibility and authentic integration as the decisive factors in sustainable brand perception.

Cluster 4 — Green Marketing at the SME & Sector Level: Al-Sokkary (2023), Holappa (2024), and Ramadhani (2024) collectively illuminate the implementation reality at smaller organisational scales and specific sectors. Holappa (2024) reveals that over 50% of Finnish MSEs do not communicate any sustainability practices externally despite claiming to implement them internally — a rhetoric-versus-reality gap that mirrors, at micro scale, the same challenge the current study examines in large corporations. Ramadhani (2024) offers a contrasting positive case: Vert Terre's full 4P green marketing implementation built genuine brand loyalty despite resource constraints, proving that scale is not a prerequisite for authentic green practice.

Bibliometrically, Tran (2024) maps the field's research trajectory across 109 studies, confirming that empirical work dominates (71.6%), Asia leads in output, and green marketing is increasingly evaluated as a component of broader CSR strategy — a framing the current study adopts in its analytical framework

2. Research Gaps Addressed by the Current Study:

Despite the richness of the existing literature, six key gaps remain unaddressed. These gaps collectively constitute the scientific justification for the current study:

Table 4. Conceptual Value Additions to the Literature

Literature Review And Theatrical Framework

Comparison Dimension	What Prior Studies Covered	What the Current Study Adds
Scope of institutions studied	Most studies focused on local or regional firms (Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan) or a single industry sector	The current study conducts a comparative analysis of three globally recognised multinational corporations — IKEA (retail), Patagonia (outdoor apparel), and Unilever (fast-moving consumer goods) — operating across multiple continents and industries, rather than focusing on local or regional firms within a single country or sector.
Core research question	Studies measured the effect of green marketing on a specific dependent variable (performance, purchase intention, institutional outcome)	The current study investigates the reality and extent of green marketing implementation across the full 7Ps marketing mix, rather than measuring the effect of green marketing on a dependent variable such as performance, purchase intention, or brand image.
Sectoral diversity	Most were limited to one sector: pharmaceuticals, tourism, electronics, or automotive	The current study spans three distinct sectors simultaneously — retail furnishing (IKEA), outdoor apparel (Patagonia), and fast-moving consumer goods (Unilever) — enabling cross-sectoral comparative analysis that is absent from all sixteen reviewed studies.
Methodology employed	Quantitative surveys dominated; purely qualitative or document-based approaches are rare	The current study employs a comparative qualitative content analysis of primary corporate documents, including annual reports, sustainability reports, and official websites, rather than employee questionnaires or consumer surveys. This approach analyses what corporations officially declare, making it the only study in the review to rely entirely on documentary evidence.
Temporal currency	Miralles (2008) is the closest thematically but dates back over 15 years; most empirical data predate 2022	The current study relies on the most recent available corporate disclosures, primarily fiscal year 2024 publications, capturing recent developments unavailable to studies predating 2022.
Stated vs. actual practice gap	None of the prior studies explicitly tested the gap between declared environmental commitment and actual green marketing practices	The current study directly examines what corporations officially communicate across all 7Ps of the marketing mix, enabling an assessment of the gap between declared green commitments and documented green practices — a dimension none of the sixteen reviewed studies explicitly addressed.

Source: Compiled by researcher based on the literature review.

3. The Added Value of the Current Study

The current study offers a number of added values that distinguish it from prior scholarship. Complete the following based on your study's specific contributions:

1. *The current study is the first, within the reviewed literature, to conduct a structured comparative analysis of three leading global corporations from different industries — IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever — evaluating their green marketing implementation across all seven dimensions of the 7Ps marketing mix. This multi-company, cross-sector design generates a typology of green marketing models that single-company and single-sector studies cannot produce.*

2. *Unlike the quantitative survey-based methods that dominate the reviewed literature, this study employs comparative qualitative content analysis of primary corporate documents — annual reports, sustainability reports, and official websites. This eliminates respondent bias and self-reporting distortions, grounding the analysis in verified, publicly disclosed corporate communications rather than employee or consumer perceptions.*

3. *The study draws primarily on fiscal year 2024 disclosures, positioning it among the most temporally current studies in the field, in contrast to several reviewed studies whose data predate 2022.*

Summary

This Chapter reviewed sixteen prior studies and organised them into four thematic clusters: (1) green marketing strategy and implementation; (2) green marketing and organisational performance; (3) consumer trust, greenwashing, and credibility; and (4) green marketing at the SME and sector level. Across all four clusters, three limitations recur consistently: a tendency to study single sectors or single countries in isolation; a preference for measuring the effect of green marketing rather than diagnosing its actual state of implementation; and a reliance on data that predates 2022 in most cases. The current study directly addresses all three limitations: it examines three multinational corporations across distinct sectors; it diagnoses the actual state of green marketing implementation rather than measuring its effects; and it relies on fiscal year 2024 primary documentation, ensuring its findings reflect current corporate practice rather than pre-2022 conditions

Chapter Two

Field Study

Field Study

This chapter undertakes a comparative study of three multinational companies — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — selected for the prominence and contrast of their approaches to environmental sustainability. Before any comparison of marketing practice can be meaningful, it is first necessary to establish who these companies are: their history, scale, ownership, and stated mission. The chapter therefore proceeds in two sections. Part 1 presents the company profiles, introducing each organisation's founding, scope of operations, and strategic direction. Building on this organisational context, Part 2 then presents a comparative descriptive-analytical assessment of green marketing practice at the three companies, structured around the seven dimensions of the Extended Green marketing mix (7Ps): Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence.

It examines the three companies against three company-specific key performance indicators (KPIs), presents a Comparative Evidence Table drawn from primary corporate disclosures, assigns a Comparative Scoring Table rating each company's relative performance, and closes with an analytical discussion of what each company is doing and how the three companies compare.

Part One. Presentation of the Organizations under Study

First. Patagonia Company

1. General Overview and Mission

Patagonia, Inc. is a privately held American outdoor apparel and gear company founded in 1973 by Yvon Chouinard in Ventura, California. Widely regarded as one of the most environmentally responsible corporations in the global retail industry, the company traces its origins to a small tool-making enterprise for rock climbers established by Chouinard in the late 1950s, which eventually evolved into a full-scale apparel business under the Patagonia name (Patagonia, 2024). Positioned at the intersection of outdoor recreation and environmental activism, Patagonia has grown into an internationally recognized brand with estimated annual revenues of approximately US\$1.5 billion and a presence across six continents (Patagonia, 2024).

Patagonia operates under an explicitly mission-driven governance structure. The company's stated mission is: *“We're in business to save our home planet”* (Patagonia, 2024). In September 2022, founder Yvon Chouinard and his family transferred full ownership of the company to the Holdfast Collective and the Patagonia Purpose Trust, a unique ownership structure designed to ensure that the company's excess profits are permanently directed toward environmental causes and protection of biodiversity (Patagonia, 2024). As a certified B Corporation and a founding member of 1% for the Planet, Patagonia has contributed more than US\$226 million to environmental organizations since its founding (Patagonia, 2024).

Table 1. Company Profile — Patagonia

Category	Information
Company Name	Patagonia, Inc.
Year of Establishment	1973
Founder(s)	Yvon Chouinard
Headquarters	Ventura, California, United States

Field Study

Category	Information
Industry	Outdoor Apparel and Gear; Retail
Main Products/Services	Outdoor clothing, footwear, backpacks, sleeping bags, sportswear, gear, and environmental activism programmes
Number of Employees	Approximately 3,700 (as of FY2024)
Global Presence	Operations across 6 continents; products sold in markets across North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific, South America, Africa, and Australasia
Official Website	https://www.patagonia.com

Source: Adapted by researcher from Annual benefit corporation report fiscal years 2023 and 2024, by Patagonia, 2024, Patagonia Works.

2. Patagonia and Sustainability:

Patagonia has consistently oriented its sustainability communication around radical transparency and anti-consumerist messaging, differentiating itself sharply from conventional green marketing. The company's mission statement — "We're in business to save our home planet" — functions simultaneously as a corporate purpose declaration and a central marketing message, embedded across its digital channels, product descriptions, and campaign materials (Patagonia, 2025a). Iconic campaigns such as "Don't Buy This Jacket" (2011) and the "Worn Wear" programme, which encourages product repair and resale, have become benchmarks in purpose-driven communication, with Worn Wear processing over 137,000 trade-ins in fiscal year 2025 (Better Trail, 2026). In November 2025, Patagonia published its inaugural *Work in Progress* Report — framed around the striking opening statement, "Nothing we do is sustainable" — positioning transparency over celebration and explicitly rejecting what it termed "sustainability slogans" (Patagonia, 2025b). The report, described by its Chief Impact and Communications Officer Corley Kenna as "a transparency tool, not a victory lap," disclosed both achievements — including the elimination of PFAS from all new styles from Spring 2025 and 84% preferred materials across its total FY2025 material purchasing (by purchased weight) — and setbacks, among them a 2% year-on-year rise in overall greenhouse gas emissions (FY24 to FY25) (Patagonia Works, 2025; Better Trail, 2026). This communication strategy, grounded in what scholars at the Anti-Greenwash Charter describe as responsible sustainability communication, reinforces Patagonia's brand authority while simultaneously inviting critical public scrutiny (Anti-Greenwash Charter, 2025).

Second: IKEA Company

1. General Overview and Mission

IKEA is a Swedish-origin multinational retail corporation specialising in ready-to-assemble furniture, home accessories, and household goods. The company was founded in 1943 by Ingvar Kamprad at the age of 17 in Agunnaryd, Småland, Sweden, initially operating as a mail-order sales business before expanding into furniture retail (IKEA, 2024). The name IKEA is an acronym composed of the initials of its founder (Ingvar Kamprad), his family farm (Elmtaryd), and his home village (Agunnaryd). The first dedicated furniture store was opened in Älmhult, Sweden, on 28 October 1958.

Field Study

Today, IKEA is widely recognised as the world's largest furniture retailer, with total retail sales of EUR 45.1 billion recorded in financial year 2024 (IKEA, 2024).

IKEA operates as a franchise business under Inter IKEA Systems B.V., headquartered in Delft, Netherlands, which oversees the IKEA brand, product range, design, and supply chain. As of financial year 2024, IKEA maintained a presence in 63 markets worldwide through 504 store locations, serving over 900 million in-store customers annually (IKEA, 2024). The company employs approximately 216,000 co-workers globally (IKEA, 2024). IKEA's strategic vision is encapsulated in its founding business concept of offering *“a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them”* (IKEA, n.d.), a democratic design philosophy that has remained central to the company's operations and global expansion strategy.

Table 2. Company Profile — IKEA

Category	Information
Company Name	IKEA (Inter IKEA Systems B.V.)
Year of Establishment	1943 (first furniture store opened 1958)
Founder(s)	Ingvar Kamprad
Headquarters	Delft, Netherlands (Inter IKEA Group); Leiden, Netherlands (Ingka Group)
Industry	Retail; Home Furnishings and Household Goods
Main Products/Services	Ready-to-assemble furniture, home accessories, kitchen appliances, textiles, lighting, food services, and interior design solutions
Number of Employees	Approximately 216,000 co-workers worldwide (FY2024)
Global Presence	63 markets; 504 stores (as of April 2025); 4.6 billion website visits in FY2024
Official Website	https://www.ikea.com

Source Adapted by researcher from The year in review FY24, by IKEA, 2024, IKEA Global; and from The IKEA

concept, by IKEA, n.d., IKEA Global.

2.IKEA and Sustainability

IKEA's sustainability marketing operates under the overarching "People & Planet Positive" strategic framework, which sets 2030 as the target date for the company to become circular and climate positive across all its operations and value chains (IKEA, n.d.a). A defining feature of IKEA's green communication is its emphasis on making sustainable living accessible and affordable to a mass audience, encapsulated in campaigns such as "Let's Create a More Sustainable Everyday Life," which promote energy-efficient products, zero-emission home deliveries, and plant-based food alternatives priced lower than animal-based equivalents (IKEA, n.d.b; Trellis, 2024). The company's Buy-Back and Sell-Back programme — promoted as giving furniture "a second life" — and its in-store Circular Hubs are positioned in marketing materials as tangible embodiments of the circular economy, enabling

Field Study

consumers to enact sustainable behaviour through ordinary purchasing decisions (Climate Change Summit, 2023). In fiscal year 2024, IKEA updated its climate language, shifting from "climate positive" to "Net Zero and Beyond," a refinement reflecting both evolving scientific standards and external SBTi validation obtained in June 2024 for its Inter IKEA Group targets (IKEA, n.d.c). The company also targets inspiring and enabling more than one billion people to live better lives within the boundaries of the planet, a goal that functions as both a business ambition and a recurring public message across its global markets (IKEA, n.d.a). Scholarly analysis published in 2024 identifies IKEA's strategies of transparent sustainability communication, eco-labelling, and circular economy promotion as key drivers of its market differentiation (Mahalakshmi et al., 2024).

Third: Unilever Company

1. General Overview and Mission

Unilever PLC is a British multinational consumer packaged goods corporation headquartered in London, United Kingdom. The company was formally established on 1 January 1930 following the merger agreement signed on 2 September 1929 between British soap manufacturer Lever Brothers — co-founded by William Hesketh Lever and James Darcy Lever in 1885 — and the Dutch margarine conglomerate Margarine Unie, whose formation was principally driven by the families of Anton Jurgens and Samuel van den Bergh (Unilever, n.d.). Described by *The Economist* at the time as ‘one of the biggest industrial amalgamations in European history,’ the merger created an entity that controlled more than one-third of the world's commercial oils and fats trade and established the template for the modern multinational corporation (Unilever, n.d.).

Today, Unilever is one of the world's leading suppliers of consumer goods, operating across five Business Groups: Beauty & Wellbeing, Personal Care, Home Care, Foods, and Ice Cream. The company's approximately 400 brands — including Dove, Lipton, Hellmann's, Rexona, and Domestos — are available in over 190 countries, with products used by an estimated 3.4 billion people every day (Unilever, 2024). In financial year 2024, Unilever reported a global turnover of EUR 60.8 billion and employed approximately 120,040 people worldwide (Unilever, 2024). The company's strategic direction is guided by its Growth Action Plan 2030, which prioritises portfolio focus, operational excellence, and sustainable growth across both developed and emerging markets (Unilever, 2024).

Table 3. Company Profile — Unilever

Category	Information
Company Name	Unilever PLC
Year of Establishment	1930 (merger agreement signed 2 September 1929)
Founder(s)	William Hesketh Lever & James Darcy Lever (Lever Brothers); Anton Jurgens & Samuel van den Bergh (Margarine Unie)
Headquarters	London, United Kingdom
Industry	Consumer Packaged Goods; Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)

Field Study

Category	Information
Main Products/Services	Personal care products, beauty and wellbeing products, home care products, nutrition and food brands (approximately 400 brands including Dove, Lipton, Hellmann's, Rexona, Domestos, and Ben & Jerry's)
Number of Employees	Approximately 120,040 (2024)
Global Presence	Products sold in over 190 countries; operations across Europe, North and South America, Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East
Official Website	https://www.unilever.com

Source: Adapted by researcher from Unilever annual report and accounts 2024, by Unilever, 2024, Unilever PLC; and from Our history: 1900–1950, by Unilever, n.d., Unilever.

2. Unilever And Sustainability

Unilever's sustainability communication has undergone a significant strategic repositioning since 2023, transitioning from the broad, multi-target Unilever Sustainable Living Plan (USLP, 2010–2020) to a more focused framework integrated within its Growth Action Plan 2030, which identifies climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods as its four core priority areas (Unilever, 2025a). The company communicates sustainability through its portfolio of "Power Brands" — including Dove, Hellmann's, and Lipton — repositioning them to align with consumer demands for both functional performance and environmental responsibility; Dove and Hellmann's, for instance, are explicitly cited in corporate sustainability reports as exemplars of high recycled plastic content (Unilever, 2025b). Unilever's Climate Transition Action Plan (CTAP), endorsed by over 97% of shareholder votes at its 2024 Annual General Meeting, forms a central pillar of its external sustainability messaging, communicating science-based targets including a 100% absolute reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030 versus a 2015 baseline — a target already substantially achieved, with a 77% reduction reported in 2025 (Unilever, 2025c). In 2024, Unilever updated its sustainability goals and publicly committed to regenerative agricultural practices on one million hectares of land and the protection of a further one million hectares of natural ecosystems by 2030, reinforcing its nature-positive messaging (Unilever, 2025a). The transition has not been without controversy; environmental organisations such as Greenpeace have criticised the company's approach to plastic reduction, with Greenpeace (2026) arguing that lightweighting and recycled-content innovations fail to address the systemic plastic pollution arising from Unilever's sachet-based distribution model. Nonetheless, Unilever's leadership publicly frames the recalibration as a pragmatic focus on "fewer things, better and with greater impact," reinforcing sustainability as a strategic imperative rather than a peripheral communications exercise (Unilever, 2025a).

Field Study

Fourth. Comparative Overview: Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever

The following table presents a side-by-side comparative overview of the three companies examined in this chapter, facilitating a systematic assessment of their foundational characteristics, operational scale, and global reach.

Table 4. Comparative Overview — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever

Category	Patagonia	IKEA	Unilever
Year of Establishment	1973	1943 (retail store 1958)	1930
Founder(s)	Yvon Chouinard	Ingvar Kamprad	William H. Lever, James D. Lever (Lever Brothers); Anton Jurgens, Samuel van den Bergh (Margarine Unie)
Headquarters	Ventura, California, USA	Delft, Netherlands	London, United Kingdom
Industry	Outdoor Apparel & Gear; Retail	Retail; Home Furnishings	Consumer Packaged Goods (FMCG)
Main Products / Services	Outdoor clothing, footwear, backpacks, gear	Ready-to-assemble furniture, home accessories, food services	Personal care, beauty, home care, nutrition (approx. 400 brands)
Number of Employees	~3,700 (FY2024)	~216,000 (FY2024)	~120,040 (2024)
Global Presence	6 continents	63 markets; 504 stores	190+ countries
Official Website	www.patagonia.com	www.ikea.com	www.unilever.com

Source: Adapted by researcher from Annual benefit corporation report fiscal years 2023 and 2024, by Patagonia, 2024, Patagonia Works; from The year in review FY24, by IKEA, 2024, IKEA Global; and from Unilever annual report and accounts 2024, by Unilever, 2024, Unilever PLC.

Field Study

Part Two. Research Methods and Instruments Employed in the Study

First. Research Method

1. Study Population and Sample

1.1 Study Population

The study population consists of leading multinational companies in the field of green marketing that are distinguished by ethical, green, and environmentally friendly practices in the presentation of their products and services. These are globally operating organisations that have integrated environmental responsibility into their core business strategy, demonstrate documented and verifiable green commitments across their operations, and produce official sustainability disclosures accessible to the public. The population therefore encompasses large multinational corporations, operating across diverse industries, whose market-facing activities reflect a substantive and sustained orientation toward environmental sustainability.

1.2 Study Sample (the Three Companies)

The study sample consists of three companies selected from the broader population: Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever. Patagonia is an outdoor apparel company widely recognised for integrating environmental activism and responsible production into its corporate identity. IKEA is a global home furnishing retailer that has incorporated sustainability into its product design, material sourcing, and supply chain management. Unilever is a multinational consumer goods company that has positioned sustainability as a central element of its corporate strategy across its brand portfolio. Together, these three companies constitute a purposive sample representing distinct sectors, operational scales, and models of sustainability engagement.

2. Rationale for the Selection of Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever

The three companies were selected on the basis of three criteria. First, each is a globally operating organisation with documented and publicly accessible sustainability commitments, providing an auditable evidence base for systematic analysis. Second, the three companies represent maximum sectoral variation — outdoor apparel, home furnishing, and fast-moving consumer goods — enabling cross-industry comparison and ensuring that findings are not specific to a single sector. Third, each company publishes primary sustainability documentation with sufficient granularity at the product and practice level to support indicator-level assessment across the seven elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps). These criteria collectively ensure that the sample is principled, transparent, and appropriate to the study's descriptive-comparative aims.

3. Temporal and Thematic Scope of the Study

Temporally, the study is anchored in fiscal year 2024, relying on the most recently completed annual reports, sustainability reports, and official corporate disclosures published by each company for that period. Thematically, the study is bounded by the seven elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps): green product, green pricing, green distribution, green promotion, green people, green process, and green physical evidence. The analysis is confined to what each company officially documents in its primary disclosures; internal practices not reflected in public documentation fall outside the thematic scope of this study.

Field Study

Second. Research Methodology

The comparative descriptive method is a research design intended to describe and compare differences across a set of carefully selected cases without manipulating independent variables or advancing causal claims (Cantrell, 2011). Unlike large-N statistical research, which sacrifices contextual depth for breadth, and single-case studies, which sacrifice cross-case perspective for depth, the comparative descriptive method occupies an intermediate position: it allows systematic, structured insight across multiple cases while retaining sufficient contextual grounding to interpret what each case represents (Landman & Carvalho, 2017). As used in this study, the comparative descriptive method serves to document, categorise, and assess the green marketing practices of three companies against a shared analytical framework, with no causal claims advanced. This study applies the comparative descriptive method to examine the green marketing performance of three internationally recognised companies — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — across the seven elements of the 7P marketing mix framework (Booms & Bitner, 1981). Each of the seven Ps is operationalised into a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), derived from established green marketing criteria and applied uniformly to all three companies. The comparison is anchored in each company's most recently completed fiscal year 2024 disclosure, with supplementary reference to independently verified sustainability documentation where necessary. The method is applied in a strictly descriptive and evaluative mode: the study describes what each company is doing, classifies how far each has progressed against shared indicators, compares performance across companies, and evaluates what each company's overall profile implies for its green marketing positioning. No causal explanation is sought, and no mechanism linking practices to outcomes is tested.

The three companies are selected through purposive sampling, a strategy in which cases are chosen for their relevance to the research purpose rather than for statistical representativeness (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Three criteria guide selection. First, each company is a globally operating organisation with documented and independently verified sustainability commitments, providing an adequate and auditable evidence base for indicator-level assessment. Second, the three companies represent maximum sectoral variation: Patagonia operates in outdoor apparel, IKEA in home furnishing, and Unilever in fast-moving consumer goods. This variation is deliberate: it allows the comparison to capture differences that reflect industry-specific structural constraints alongside organisational choices, and it ensures that findings are not specific to a single sector (Hantrais, 2009). Third, each company makes available primary sustainability disclosure with sufficient granularity at the product and practice level to support systematic scoring. For IKEA and Unilever, this takes the form of a dedicated annual sustainability report. For Patagonia, whose first comprehensive standalone impact report was published in November 2025 covering FY2025, the FY2024 evidence base consists of its Annual Benefit Corporation Report (spanning FY2023 and FY2024) and the publicly available Our Footprint content on Patagonia.com; this asymmetry in disclosure format is acknowledged as a methodological constraint of the study. These three criteria together ensure that the case selection is principled, transparent, and appropriate to the study's descriptive-evaluative aims.

Field Study

The 7P marketing mix — Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence — serves as the common analytical lens applied uniformly across all three companies. Originally developed to extend the classic 4P framework to service-oriented contexts, the 7P model provides a comprehensive and well-established structure for evaluating the breadth of a company's market-facing activity (Booms & Bitner, 1981). Within each P, a set of KPIs is identified to operationalise green marketing performance in a measurable and documentable form. Each company is then assessed on each KPI using a three-level comparative scale: High denotes the strongest documented practice among the three companies on that indicator; Medium indicates partial achievement or an ongoing transition; and Low reflects limited evidence of implementation at the relevant level of analysis. All scores are assigned on a strictly comparative basis — relative to the other two companies — and each score is directly traceable to documented, verifiable evidence drawn from each company's FY2024 primary disclosure. No score is assigned without a specific evidential basis.

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing and interpreting primary documents as a source of data in qualitative research, encompassing institutional reports, annual disclosures, and published materials that provide verifiable, non-reactive evidence relevant to the research questions (Bowen, 2009). As a data collection tool, document analysis draws on materials that exist independently of the research process and that the investigator's presence cannot alter, providing a stable and traceable evidential base (Bowen, 2009). In this study, document analysis is applied to the annual sustainability reports and equivalent primary disclosures published by Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever for their most recently completed fiscal year 2024. Each document is reviewed systematically against the KPI framework derived from the 7P marketing mix to extract, record, and evaluate the evidence relevant to each indicator. The method is well suited to this study's descriptive-evaluative aims: it enables structured, evidence-based assessment of each company's green marketing practice as disclosed in its own primary sources, without requiring researcher intervention in or alteration of the phenomena under study.

Alongside the descriptive-comparative approach, the study draws on the logic of the comparative case study, which involves the in-depth examination of a small number of cases selected for their theoretical relevance rather than their statistical representativeness. In this study, each of the three companies — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — constitutes an individual case. Each case is analysed in depth against the same analytical framework before being compared with the others. This design allows both within-case analysis, focused on the specific practices of each company, and cross-case comparison, oriented toward identifying similarities and differences in green marketing implementation across sectors and organisational models.

Field Study

Part Three. Study Variables, Measurement, and Data Collection Procedures

First. Study Variable

1. Study Variable

The study variable is Green Marketing, examined through the level and nature of its adoption by each of the three companies under study. This variable is operationalised through the seven elements of the extended green marketing mix (7Ps), which serve as the dimensions along which each company's green marketing implementation is assessed. Each dimension is further decomposed into specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) derived from established green marketing criteria and applied uniformly across all three companies.

2. Variable Dimensions (7Ps)

The study variable is structured around seven dimensions corresponding to the elements of the green marketing mix: (1) Green Product, encompassing material choices, recycled content, and product durability; (2) Green Pricing, covering pricing strategies that reflect environmental costs and circular incentives; (3) Green Distribution (Place), addressing logistics emissions and supply chain efficiency; (4) Green Promotion, examining environmental campaigns, consumer education, and transparency; (5) Green People, assessing employee training and participation in sustainability programmes; (6) Green Process, evaluating waste reduction, water conservation, and circular economy integration; and (7) Green Physical Evidence, measuring eco-certifications, sustainable packaging, and tangible sustainability credentials.

3. Indicators for Each Dimension

For each of the seven dimensions, three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are identified, derived from established green marketing criteria and applied uniformly to all three companies. Each company is assessed on each KPI using a three-level comparative scale: a score of 3 (High) is assigned to the company demonstrating the strongest documented practice on that indicator; 2 (Medium) indicates partial achievement or an ongoing transition; and 1 (Low) reflects limited or indirect evidence of systematic implementation. All scores are assigned on a strictly comparative basis — relative to the other two companies — and each score is directly traceable to documented, verifiable evidence drawn from each company's FY2024 primary disclosure. No score is assigned without a specific evidential basis.

4 Data Sources (Annual Reports, Sustainability Reports, Corporate Websites, etc.)

Data are drawn exclusively from official corporate documentation published by each company for fiscal year 2024. For Patagonia, the primary sources are the Annual Benefit Corporation Report (FY2023–2024) and the publicly available Our Footprint pages on Patagonia.com. For IKEA, the primary sources are the IKEA Sustainability Report FY24 and the IKEA Climate Report FY24 published by Inter IKEA Systems B.V., alongside the Ingka Group Annual Summary FY24. For Unilever, the primary source is the Unilever Annual Report and Accounts 2024 and its Climate Transition Action Plan. All documents are publicly accessible and subject to varying degrees of third-party verification, providing a stable and traceable evidential base consistent with the document analysis method adopted in this study (Bowen, 2009)

Field Study

Part Four. Field Study: Results and Discussion

First. Research Instruments

Across all seven Parts, scores are assigned on a comparative basis: each company's performance on a given indicator is evaluated relative to the other two companies in this study, not against an absolute external benchmark . This classification was used in the analysis of all dimensions

- . A score of 3 (High) is assigned to the company demonstrating the strongest documented practice on that indicator;
- 2 (Medium) indicates partial achievement or an ongoing transition;
- 1 (Low) reflects limited or indirect evidence of systematic implementation. No score is assigned without verifiable evidence

and every score in the Comparative Scoring Tables below is directly traceable to the corresponding Comparative Evidence Table. This unified 1–2–3 scale is applied consistently throughout the chapter and is not re-explained in each Part.

1. Content Analysis Card — Indicators

The content analysis card constitutes the primary data-collection instrument of this study. It operationalises the variable of Green Marketing into measurable units through a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), each derived from established green marketing literature and applied uniformly across the three companies. The card is structured around the seven elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps), with three KPIs assigned to each dimension, yielding a total of twenty-one indicators.

three KPIs assigned to each dimension, yielding a total of twenty-one indicators.

Table 5. Content Analysis Card — Green Marketing KPI Indicators (7Ps Framework)

Element	#	KPI name	Indicator
Green Product	1	Environmentally friendly materials	Degree to which products are manufactured using certified, non-toxic, and responsibly sourced materials.
	2	Recycled / renewable materials	Share of recycled or renewable inputs in the product material base.
	3	Durable product design	Evidence of repair, resale, or longevity programmes extending product life.
Green Pricing	1	Pricing strategy	Extent to which environmental costs are structurally reflected in the pricing model.
	2	Sustainable incentives	Existence of consumer-facing financial rewards for circular or green purchasing behaviour.
	3	Environmental value vs. price	Degree to which independently verified environmental performance justifies the price point.

Field Study

Element	#	KPI name	Indicator
Green Distribution (Place)	1	Cutting transport emissions	Documented reduction in logistics-related greenhouse gas emissions.
	2	Using greener transport	Adoption of low-emission or renewable-energy-powered transport modes.
	3	Supply chain efficiency	Evidence of logistics optimisation reducing environmental impact.
Green Promotion	1	Environmental campaigns and sustainability communication	Scope and consistency of green messaging across communication channels.
	2	Consumer environmental education and awareness	Existence of programmes educating consumers on sustainable behaviour.
	3	Transparency and credibility	Degree to which environmental claims are independently verified and publicly disclosed.
Green People	1	Employee sustainability training	Availability and reach of environmental training programmes for staff.
	2	Employee participation in sustainability programmes	Documented employee involvement in green initiatives.
	3	Promotion of environmental culture	Structural embedding of environmental values within the organisation.
Green Process	1	Waste reduction	Documented reduction of manufacturing and operational waste.
	2	Water consumption reduction and conservation	Evidence of water stewardship and efficiency improvements.
	3	Circular economy integration	Degree to which circular-economy principles are embedded in operational processes.
Green Physical Evidence	1	Environmental labels and eco-certifications on products	Presence of independently verified eco-labels visible to consumers.
	2	Sustainable packaging	Extent of transition to recycled or certified packaging materials.
	3	Environmental and tangible sustainability credentials	Breadth and depth of third-party institutional credentials.

Source: Prepared by researcher based on the green marketing mix framework

Field Study

Second. Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

1. Expert Validation of the Analysis Card

The content analysis card — comprising the twenty-one KPIs and the three-level comparative scoring scale — was validated in consultation with the thesis supervisor. prior to its application. The instrument was reviewed against established green marketing literature to ensure that each indicator accurately reflects a theoretically grounded and documentable dimension of green marketing practice. The scoring scale itself assigns a comparative rating of High, Medium, or Low to each company on each indicator, based exclusively on verifiable evidence drawn from official FY2024 corporate disclosures. The sample table below illustrates the structure of the instrument as applied in the study.

Table.6 Comparative Scoring Table (Green Product)

Company	KPI 1 — Environmentally Friendly Materials	KPI 2 — Recycled / Renewable Materials	KPI 3 — Durable Product Design
Patagonia	3 — High	3 — High	3 — High
IKEA	3 — High	2 — Medium	3 — High
Unilever	2 — Medium	1 — Low	1 — Low

Source: Compiled by the author in consultation with the thesis supervisor

As illustrated above, each row represents one company and each column represents one KPI within a given dimension. A score of 3 (High) denotes the strongest documented practice among the three companies on that indicator; 2 (Medium) reflects partial achievement or an ongoing transition; and 1 (Low) indicates limited or indirect evidence of implementation. Scores are strictly comparative — relative to the other two companies — and every score is directly traceable to the Comparative Evidence Table presented alongside it in the Field Study chapter.

Third. Analysis by Dimension

1. Green Product

This section examines green product practices through three key performance indicators:

KPI 1 — Environmentally Friendly Materials

KPI 2 — Recycled / Renewable Materials.

KPI 3 — Durable Product Design.

Field Study

1.1.Comparative Evidence Table — Green Product

Table.7 Comparative Evidence — Green Product

Company	KPI 1 — Environmentally Friendly Materials	KPI 2 — Recycled / Renewable Materials	KPI 3 — Durable Product Design
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Environmentally Friendly Materials — 97% PFAS/PFC-free products in FY24, up from 86% in FY23 (Patagonia Works, 2024) — 88% of products from Fair Trade Certified factories in FY24, up from 87% in FY23 (Patagonia Works, 2024) — Nine of top 10 material suppliers are Bluesign System Partners per season (Patagonia Works, 2024; Patagonia, n.d.-c)	Patagonia · KPI 2: Recycled / Renewable Materials — 73% of fabric and trim from recycled materials in FY24, stable from FY23 (Patagonia Works, 2024) — 2,000 MT Bureo NetPlus recycled fishing net cumulative by FY24; 1,419 MT through FY23 (Patagonia Works, 2024) — 16% virgin petroleum inputs; 9% virgin plant-based inputs in FY24 (Patagonia Works, 2024)	Patagonia · KPI 3: Durable Product Design — 145,446 products repaired in FY24; 153,506 in FY23; 113 locations worldwide (Patagonia Works, 2024) — Ironclad Guarantee: repair, replacement, or refund; no time limit; wear-and-tear repaired at reasonable charge (Patagonia, n.d.-d) — Non-obsolescence product design; Worn Wear platform offers online DIY repair and care guides (Patagonia Works, 2024; Patagonia, n.d.-b)
IKEA	IKEA · KPI 1: Environmentally Friendly Materials — 97% FSC-certified or recycled wood in FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) — PFAS eliminated from textiles by 2016; non-stick cookware phase-out committed by 2026 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) — IWAY supplier code compliance: 99.8% across 1,317 suppliers in FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	IKEA · KPI 2: Recycled / Renewable Materials — 16% of wood-based range from recycled wood in FY24; target one-third by 2030 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) — ≥70% recycled aluminium in PAX/LINDBYN; ≥70% recycled stainless steel in FÖRNUFT (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) — MYRMOSAİK and KRONKLEMATIS ranges use 100% recycled glass; paper bags save an estimated 1,400 tonnes of plastic per year (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	IKEA · KPI 3: Durable Product Design — 495,000 pieces returned via Buyback & Resell across 28 markets in FY24, up 15% year-on-year (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) — 2.2 million customers ordered small spare parts free of charge; 190,884 larger parts distributed in FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) — Circular Product Design Guide (2024 revision) sets 8 circular standards applied to all 9,500

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Environmentally Friendly Materials	KPI 2 — Recycled / Renewable Materials	KPI 3 — Durable Product Design
Unilever	Unilever · KPI 1: Environmentally Friendly Materials – 79% of key crop volumes sustainably sourced in 2024; target 95% by 2030 (Unilever, 2025a) – 97% deforestation-free primary commodities; 23 regenerative agriculture projects covering 0.13 million hectares (Unilever, 2025a) – Virgin plastic use down 23% from the 2019 baseline; targets of –30% by 2026 and –40% by 2028 (Unilever, 2025a)	Unilever · KPI 2: Recycled / Renewable Materials – 21% recycled plastic content in packaging in 2024; target 25% by 2025 (Unilever, 2025a) – Approximately 2% recycled materials across total portfolio weight in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a) – 23 regenerative agriculture projects (0.13 million ha) reflect a supply-chain focus rather than product-level recycled content (Unilever, 2025a)	products (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) Unilever · KPI 3: Durable Product Design – No product repair or buyback programme operating at company-wide scale in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a) – Persil Wonder Wash (Pro-S Technology) enables shorter cycles and lower energy/water use, but remains a consumable product (Unilever, 2025a) – Approximately 1,000 refill stations and 6,000 customers reached, saving an estimated 6 tonnes of plastic per year — pilot scale only (Unilever, 2025a, 2025b)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

1.2 Comparative Scoring Table — Green Product

Table.8. Comparative Scoring — Green Product

Company	KPI 1 — Environmentally Friendly Materials	KPI 2 — Recycled / Renewable Materials	KPI 3 — Durable Product Design
Patagonia	3 — High	3 — High	3 — High
IKEA	3 — High	2 — Medium	3 — High
Unilever	2 — Medium	1 — Low	1 — Low

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table.5).

Field Study

1.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores :

Patagonia — 3 / 3 / 3: High across all three indicators. Materials: 97% PFAS-free products and Bluesign standards across nine of its top ten suppliers. Recycled content: 73% of all fabric and trim is recycled — recycled inputs make up the majority of the product material base. Durability: 145,446 products repaired in FY24 across 113 locations, backed by the Ironclad Guarantee.

IKEA — 3 / 2 / 3: High on materials (97% FSC-certified or recycled wood; PFAS eliminated from textiles since 2016) and durability (495,000 pieces returned via Buyback; Circular Product Design Guide applied to all 9,500 products). Medium on recycled content: only 16% of the wood-based range is recycled in FY24 — the transition toward the 2030 one-third target is still in its early stages.

Unilever — 2 / 1 / 1: Medium on materials — strong deforestation and sourcing standards, but progress is concentrated at the supply-chain level rather than embedded in product formulation. Low on recycled content: roughly 2% recycled materials across total portfolio weight, the lowest of the three companies. Low on durability: no repair or buyback programme at scale, and the refill pilot reached only around 6,000 customers in 2024.

2. Green Price

This section examines green pricing practices through three key performance indicators:

KPI 1 — Pricing Strategy.

KPI 2 — Sustainable Incentives.

KPI 3 — Environmental Value versus Price.

2.1 Comparative Evidence Table — Green Price

Table 9. Comparative Evidence — Green Price

Company	KPI 1 — Pricing Strategy	KPI 2 — Sustainable Incentives	KPI 3 — Environmental Value vs. Price
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Pricing Strategy	Patagonia · KPI 2: Sustainable Incentives	Patagonia · KPI 3: Environmental Value vs. Price
	– Premium pricing internalises environmental input costs such as Bluesign, organic, and recycled materials (Patagonia Works, 2024) – Scope 2 emissions cut 96% from FY2017 to FY24; 98% renewable electricity as of FY24 (Outdoor Industry Association, 2024; Patagonia, n.d.-a) – 2024 ZEMBA commitment: above-market rate paid for zero-emission maritime shipping (Patagonia, n.d.-a)	– ‘Shop Used’ feature launched September 2024 — pre-owned gear offered at reduced prices on patagonia.com (Ecolife, 2024) – Worn Wear trade-in scheme offers store credit for used gear, with value varying by item category (Patagonia, n.d.-b) – Free in-store repairs offered throughout 2024 at owned stores and partner repair centres (Patagonia, n.d.-b)	– B Corp score of 166/250 (published 2024, measured FY2023) provides independent, product-level certification (Patagonia Works, 2024) – 99% elimination of intentionally added PFAS/DWR coatings achieved by Q3 2024 (Ecolife, 2024) – SBTi-validated net-zero target (90% Scope 1–3 reduction by FY2040) reaffirmed in FY24 disclosures (Outdoor Industry Association, 2024)

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Pricing Strategy	KPI 2 — Sustainable Incentives	KPI 3 — Environmental Value vs. Price
IKEA	IKEA · KPI 1: Pricing Strategy – USD 2.2 billion invested in FY24 to cut prices by roughly 10% across all markets — sustainability positioned at accessible cost (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c; Ingka Group, 2024) – Procurement scale deployed to remove price premiums on greener products, confirmed by the Chief Sustainability Officer in 2024 (Trellis, 2024) – A 5.5% revenue decline in FY24 was accepted in order to fund the price-reduction strategy (Ingka Group, 2024)	IKEA · KPI 2: Sustainable Incentives – Buyback & Resell service repurchased more than 495,000 units globally in FY24, issued as in-store credit (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – IKEA UK recorded 52,600 buybacks in FY24; IKEA Ireland recorded a 20% year-on-year increase (IKEA UK, 2024; IKEA Ireland, 2024) – ‘Buyback Friday’ in November 2024 generated approximately 55,000 returns — a circular event positioned in place of Black Friday (Circuleire, 2025)	IKEA · KPI 3: Environmental Value vs. Price – Total climate footprint of approximately 21.3 Mt CO₂e in FY24, down 28% versus the FY16 baseline (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – Retail renewable electricity use rose to 81% in FY24; 44% of direct suppliers operate on 100% renewable electricity (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – 97% of wood was FSC-certified or recycled in FY24, independently verified responsible sourcing (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)
Unilever	Unilever · KPI 1: Pricing Strategy – Sustainability Progress Indicators (climate, nature, plastics, livelihoods) tied to 15% of the executive Performance Share Plan in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a) – Updated Climate Transition Action Plan endorsed by 97.5% of shareholders at the 2024 AGM; sets science-based Scope 3 targets (Unilever, 2024a) – 4.2% underlying sales growth and 45.0% gross margin in 2024, with sustainability cited as a premiumisation driver (Unilever, 2025a)	Unilever · KPI 2: Sustainable Incentives – Supplier Climate Programme engaged 291 suppliers in 2024 to disclose Product Carbon Footprints (Unilever USA, 2024b) – 2024 goals include regenerative farming on 1 million hectares and protecting or restoring 1 million hectares of ecosystems by 2030 (Unilever, 2024d) – Growth Action Plan 2024 channels marketing investment toward purpose-led Power Brands (Unilever, 2024b)	Unilever · KPI 3: Environmental Value vs. Price – 79% of key agricultural crops sourced sustainably in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a) – 72% Scope 1 and 2 GHG reduction since 2015, as reported in the 2024 Annual Report; more than €1 billion saved (Unilever, 2024a) – 2024 Climate Transition Action Plan identifies climate-driven commodity price volatility as a material business risk (Unilever, 2025a)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

Field Study

2.2 Comparative Scoring Table — Green Price

Table 10. Comparative Scoring — Green Price

Company	KPI 1 — Pricing Strategy	KPI 2 — Sustainable Incentives	KPI 3 — Environmental Value vs. Price
Patagonia	3 — High	3 — High	3 — High
IKEA	3 — High	3 — High	2 — Medium
Unilever	2 — Medium	2 — Medium	2 — Medium

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table.7).

2.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores:

Patagonia — 3 / 3 / 3: High across all three indicators. Pricing strategy: the premium is structurally built around verified environmental costs — Bluesign-certified inputs, a 96% Scope 2 reduction since FY2017, and a 2024 ZEMBA commitment to above-market zero-emission shipping rates (Patagonia, n.d.-a). No other company in this comparison has a documented mechanism that ties the consumer price this directly to environmental input costs. Incentives: the September 2024 launch of ‘Shop Used’ and the ongoing Worn Wear trade-in programme provide the most direct and diversified consumer-facing financial rewards for circular behaviour of the three (Ecolife, 2024). Environmental value: a B Corp score of 166/250 (published 2024) and 99% elimination of intentionally added PFAS/DWR coatings by Q3 2024 provide independent, product-level verification that the premium corresponds to measurable environmental performance (Patagonia Works, 2024).

IKEA — 3 / 3 / 2: High on pricing strategy and incentives; medium on environmental value relative to price. The USD 2.2 billion FY24 price-reduction investment — made at the cost of a 5.5% revenue decline — is the largest and most operationally documented green-pricing action among the three companies in 2024 (Ingka Group, 2024). On incentives, 495,000+ global buybacks with in-store credit and a dedicated Buyback Friday event make IKEA's circular incentive the most scaled and data-backed of the three (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c). On environmental value, performance is strong — a 28% CO₂ reduction from the FY16 baseline and 97% FSC-certified wood — but these achievements are reported through corporate disclosures rather than communicated to consumers as a direct price-value proposition, which is the distinction that separates IKEA's score from Patagonia's certified-premium model.

Unilever — 2 / 2 / 2: Medium across all three indicators. The integration of Sustainability Performance Indicators into executive pay and 97.5% shareholder backing of the 2024 Climate Transition Action Plan demonstrate genuine institutional commitment, but no consumer-facing environmental pricing instrument at product level is documented in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a). The Supplier Climate Programme and Power Brand investment represent supply-chain and portfolio-level incentives that are meaningful but do not constitute direct consumer-facing circular or green-purchasing rewards equivalent to Worn Wear or IKEA Buyback (Unilever USA, 2024b). A 72% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 emissions since 2015 and 79% sustainably sourced crops are credible operational achievements, but they are disclosed primarily to investors and regulators rather than framed as a consumer-level environmental price justification (Unilever, 2024a).

Field Study

3. Green Place (Distribution)

This section examines green distribution practices through three key performance indicators:

KPI 1 — Cutting Transport Emissions,

KPI 2 — Using Greener Transport.

KPI 3 — Supply Chain Efficiency.

Throughout this section, the term Green Place is used to denote the distribution dimension of the marketing mix.

3.1 Comparative Evidence Table — Green Place (Distribution)

Table 11. Comparative Evidence — Green Place (Distribution)

Company	KPI 1 — Cutting Transport Emissions	KPI 2 — Using Greener Transport	KPI 3 — Supply Chain Efficiency
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Cutting Transport Emissions – Scope 3 target covers transport and commits to a 90% cut by 2040 against an FY2017 baseline, but no separate FY2024 transport figure is disclosed (Patagonia Works, 2026) – Not disclosed: Patagonia's public reporting concentrates emissions disclosure on manufacturing rather than logistics (Patagonia Works, 2024)	Patagonia · KPI 2: Using Greener Transport – Joined ZEMBA's first zero-emission maritime proposal in 2024, with credits purchased across 2025–2026 (Patagonia, n.d.-a) – Not disclosed: the volume share covered by ZEMBA is not published, and the initiative is limited to ocean freight only	Patagonia · KPI 3: Supply Chain Efficiency – Supply Chain Environmental Responsibility Program targets manufacturing rather than distribution efficiency (Patagonia, n.d.-a) – Not disclosed: no FY2024 logistics-efficiency KPI, such as fill rate or shipment consolidation, appears in official reports (Patagonia Works, 2024)
IKEA	IKEA · KPI 1: Cutting Transport Emissions – Transport GHG emissions down 9% FY23→FY24 and down 26% versus the FY17 baseline (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025a) – Reduction driven by greater use of renewable energy, efficiency gains, and electrification (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025b) – Total value-chain footprint of 21.3 Mt CO_{2e} in FY24, down 5% year-on-year (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	IKEA · KPI 2: Using Greener Transport – 95% renewable electricity in owned logistics and warehouse operations by the end of FY24, against a 100% goal (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025a) – Approximately 1.7 million shipments per year, with an electrification roadmap documented in the FY24 Decarb Catalogue (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025a)	IKEA · KPI 3: Supply Chain Efficiency – Leadership links decarbonisation directly to cost-efficiency “across the entire supply chain” (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025a) – Not disclosed: no single FY24 efficiency metric, such as load-fill rate, is published; the programme is documented narratively only

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Cutting Transport Emissions	KPI 2 — Using Greener Transport	KPI 3 — Supply Chain Efficiency
Unilever	Unilever · KPI 1: Cutting Transport Emissions – North America logistics emissions down 13% in 2024 — the only region-specific 2024 transport figure disclosed (Unilever USA, 2024a) – Approximately 15% of total footprint attributed to logistics, a 2023 figure not restated in 2024–2025 reporting (Unilever, 2023; Smart Freight Centre, n.d.)	Unilever · KPI 2: Using Greener Transport – Climate Transition Action Plan commits to an EV fleet and alternative-fuel trucks, including heavy-duty vehicles (Unilever, n.d.-b) – Not disclosed: no 2024 fleet-electrification percentage is publicly reported (Unilever, n.d.-b)	Unilever · KPI 3: Supply Chain Efficiency – AI-driven inventory optimisation introduced in 2024, reducing trucks and delivery trips while meeting stock targets (Unilever, 2024e) – Recognised as Walmart Mexico's number one supplier and as a finalist for the Gartner 2024 Supply Chain Award (Unilever, 2024e)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

3.2 Comparative Scoring — Green Place (Distribution)

Table 12. Comparative Scoring — Green Place (Distribution)

Company	KPI 1 — Cutting Transport Emissions	KPI 2 — Using Greener Transport	KPI 3 — Supply Chain Efficiency
Patagonia	1 — Low	2 — Medium	1 — Low
IKEA	3 — High	3 — High	2 — Medium
Unilever	3 — High	2 — Medium	3 — High

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table .9).

3.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores:

Patagonia — 1 / 2 / 1: Scores Low on emissions and on efficiency because no FY2024-specific transport or logistics figure is publicly available — Patagonia's own disclosures confirm that manufacturing dominates its footprint, and distribution reporting is minimal. Scores Medium on greener transport for the ZEMBA maritime commitment, which is real and dated 2024 but covers only one transport mode with no disclosed volume.

IKEA — 3 / 3 / 2: Leads on emissions (–9% year-on-year, company-wide) and on greener transport (95% renewable electricity; 1.7 million shipments per year under the Decarb Catalogue), both quantified and directly attributable to its logistics network. Scores Medium on efficiency because programme-level evidence is strong but no single FY2024 efficiency KPI, such as fill rate, is publicly reported.

Unilever — 3 / 2 / 3: Scores High on emissions via a concrete 2024 regional reduction (–13%, North America) and High on efficiency via an AI-driven initiative externally validated by Walmart Mexico and Gartner. Scores Medium on greener transport because EV and biofuel commitments are confirmed in the Climate Transition Action Plan, but no 2024 adoption percentage is disclosed.

Field Study

4. Green Promotion

This section examines green promotion practices through three key performance indicators:

KPI 1 — Environmental Campaigns and Sustainability Communication,

KPI 2 — Consumer Environmental Education and Awareness.

KPI 3 — Transparency and Credibility.

4.1 Comparative Evidence Table — Green Promotion

Table 13. Comparative Evidence — Green Promotion

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Campaigns & Sustainability Communication	KPI 2 — Consumer Environmental Education & Awareness	KPI 3 — Transparency & Credibility
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Environmental Campaigns & Sustainability Communication – No paid advertising on Facebook or Instagram since June 2020, in protest of climate misinformation; activism content carried on these platforms and YouTube through organic channels only (Patagonia, n.d.-a) – FY24: Scope 2 emissions down 96% versus FY17; 98% renewable electricity across owned sites (Patagonia Works, 2025a) – 2024: committed shipping volume to the ZEMBA zero-emission maritime alliance (Patagonia, n.d.-a)	Patagonia · KPI 2: Consumer Environmental Education & Awareness – Worn Wear repair guides, DIY tools, and mobile repair tours; approximately 30,000 EU garments repaired in 2024 per media reporting, a figure not disclosed in Patagonia's own primary documents (I Love Ski, 2025) – Action Works (2024) matched consumers to local volunteering opportunities and grants online (Patagonia, 2024) – September 2024: 'Shop Used' launched on patagonia.com alongside new products (Better Trail, 2026)	Patagonia · KPI 3: Transparency & Credibility – B Corp score of 166/250 (FY2023 B Lab cycle), third-party verified (Patagonia Works, 2024) – Q3 2024: 99% of intentionally added PFAS eliminated, ahead of the 2025 target (Ecolife, 2024) – FY24 Scope 1–3 third-party assurance in progress, against an SBTi-validated FY17 baseline (Patagonia Works, 2025a)
IKEA	IKEA · KPI 1: Environmental Campaigns & Sustainability Communication – Sustainability messaging carried across Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok via country-specific accounts (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – IKEA Sustainability Report FY24: footprint down 28% versus FY16;	IKEA · KPI 2: Consumer Environmental Education & Awareness – TRIXIG repair range expanded in FY24, offering low-cost circular tools in stores and online (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – ONE HOME, ONE PLANET U.S. 2024 event educated consumers on the Buy Back and As-Is programmes (IKEA U.S., 2024)	IKEA · KPI 3: Transparency & Credibility – Ingka Group FY24: footprint down 30.1% versus FY16 while revenue grew 23.7% — audited decoupling data (Ingka Group, 2024) – CSRD-compliant reporting confirmed from FY26; double materiality assessment

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Campaigns & Sustainability Communication	KPI 2 — Consumer Environmental Education & Awareness	KPI 3 — Transparency & Credibility
Unilever	SBTi Net Zero validation achieved in June 2024 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – October 2024: backed the Business for Nature statement ahead of COP16 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	– FY24 average price cut of 10% framed as enabling affordable sustainable living (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	announced (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – April 2024: Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe linked seven IKEA suppliers to old-growth forest destruction in Romania (Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe, 2024)
	Unilever · KPI 1: Environmental Campaigns & Sustainability Communication – December 2024 UAE campaign: Instagram and TikTok ads generated 63 million impressions and reached 9.8 million consumers (Campaign Middle East, 2025) – Climate Transition Action Plan (updated March 2024, approved at the May 2024 AGM): net-zero-by-2039 target, SBTi-validated, backed by 97.5% of shareholders (Unilever, 2024a) – March 2024: first Climate Policy Engagement Review published, disclosing trade-association positions (Climate Action 100+, 2025)	Unilever · KPI 2: Consumer Environmental Education & Awareness – Lifebuoy hygiene education integrated into school curricula in Indonesia and other markets; 29,500 smallholder farmers trained from January 2024 (Unilever, 2024c) – Growth Action Plan 2030 condenses 27 goals into four pillars: climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods (Unilever, 2024d) – Dove and Hellmann's ran TikTok and Instagram influencer content on waste and plastic, though no 2024 brand-level reach figure was disclosed (Unilever, 2025a)	Unilever · KPI 3: Transparency & Credibility – 2024 Annual Report: Scope 1 and 2 emissions down 72% versus 2015; TCFD, GRI, and ISSB frameworks applied (Unilever, 2025a) – 97% deforestation-free volumes for palm oil, tea, soy, and cocoa, verified through satellite and AI traceability (Unilever, 2024c) – 2024: virgin plastic target revised from 50% reduction by 2025 to one-third reduction by 2026; Scope 3 progress remains uncertain (Packaging Europe, 2024)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

Field Study

4.2 Comparative Scoring Table — Green Promotion

Table 14. Comparative Scoring — Green Promotion

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Campaigns & Sustainability Communication	KPI 2 — Consumer Environmental Education & Awareness	KPI 3 — Transparency & Credibility
Patagonia	3 — High	3 — High	3 — High
IKEA	3 — High	2 — Medium	2 — Medium
Unilever	2 — Medium	2 — Medium	2 — Medium

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table 11).

4.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores :

Patagonia — 3 / 3 / 3: High on KPI 1: Patagonia is the only company among the three that has entirely withdrawn from paid social advertising, communicating exclusively through owned and earned channels — a structurally distinct and verifiable stance. Its FY24 Scope 2 reduction of 96% and 98% renewable-electricity adoption provide the strongest quantified campaign anchors in the group (Patagonia Works, 2025a; Outdoor Industry Association, 2024). High on KPI 2: the Worn Wear programme, the September 2024 ‘Shop Used’ launch, and the Action Works platform together form the most integrated consumer-education model in the comparison — circular behaviour embedded directly into the purchase journey rather than added as a peripheral initiative (Better Trail, 2026; Patagonia, 2024). High on KPI 3: Patagonia is the only company in the group with a certified B Corp score (166/250, B Lab FY2023 cycle), 99% PFAS elimination documented by Q3 2024, and Scope 1–3 third-party assurance actively underway for FY24 — the highest density of independently verified evidence across all three KPIs (Patagonia Works, 2024; Ecolife, 2024).

IKEA — 3 / 2 / 2: High on KPI 1: IKEA matches Patagonia on campaign scale and institutional reach — dual FY24 report publications, SBTi Net Zero validation in June 2024, and active multi-platform social media communication — making it the strongest broad-audience communicator in the group (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c, 2025d). Medium on KPI 2: consumer education exists through the TRIXIG repair range and the ONE HOME, ONE PLANET U.S. convening, but these are programme-level initiatives rather than an integrated consumer-behaviour model; reach and habit-change evidence is thinner than Patagonia's, and the 10% price cut, while framed as enabling sustainable living, is primarily a commercial action (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c; IKEA U.S., 2024). Medium on KPI 3: Ingka Group's audited decoupling figures and the announced CSRD transition are solid, but the April 2024 Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe investigation into Romanian forest sourcing introduced a documented credibility gap between FSC-certified claims and independently verified on-the-ground conditions (Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe, 2024; Ingka Group, 2024).

Unilever — 2 / 2 / 2: Medium on KPI 1: the December 2024 UAE campaign demonstrates large-scale paid social execution (63 million impressions, Instagram and TikTok) and the Climate Transition Action Plan provides a credible institutional anchor, but Unilever's green promotion is primarily

Field Study

campaign-by-campaign and brand-by-brand rather than a unified mission-driven architecture, placing it below both Patagonia and IKEA on structural coherence (Campaign Middle East, 2025; Unilever, 2024a). Medium on KPI 2: Lifebuoy school programmes and 29,500 smallholder farmer training are documented, but brand-level consumer-reach metrics for 2024 were not disclosed, limiting impact assessment; the Growth Action Plan's consolidation from 27 to 4 goals also narrowed the breadth of consumer-facing sustainability commitments (Unilever, 2024c, 2024d). Medium on KPI 3: multi-framework reporting (TCFD, GRI, ISSB) and the 72% Scope 1 and 2 reduction are credible, but the 2024 rollback of the virgin plastic target — from halving use by 2025 to a one-third reduction by 2026 — and continued Scope 3 uncertainty represent a documented gap between stated ambition and delivered outcomes (Packaging Europe, 2024; Unilever, 2025a).

5. Green People

This section examines green people practices through three key performance indicators:

KPI 1 — Employee Sustainability Training.

KPI 2 — Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs.

KPI 3 — Promotion of Environmental Culture.

5.1 Comparative Evidence Table — Green People

Table 15. Comparative Evidence — Green People

Company	Employee Sustainability Training	Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs	Promotion of Environmental Culture
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Employee Sustainability Training - Environmental Internship Program: any employee may take up to two months, fully paid, to work at an environmental nonprofit of their choice (Patagonia, n.d.-e) - Evidence gap: no participant count or hours figure appears in FY25 disclosures (Patagonia Works, 2025a)	Patagonia · KPI 2: Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs 27,000 paid volunteering hours and \$2.4 million in skills-based volunteering value delivered in FY25 (Patagonia Works, 2025a) - Action Works recorded more than 1 million actions in FY25, though this spans both employees and the public, not employees alone (Patagonia Works, 2025a)	Patagonia · KPI 3: Promotion of Environmental Culture - The 2022 ownership transfer to the Patagonia Purpose Trust and Holdfast Collective made environmental purpose part of the company's permanent legal charter (Patagonia Works, 2025b) \$14.7 million distributed to 824 environmental nonprofits in FY25 via 1% for the Planet (Patagonia Works, 2025a)
IKEA	IKEA · KPI 1: Employee Sustainability Training FY25 OKR-based sustainability strategy shift embeds environmental thinking into everyday decisions (Inter IKEA Group, 2025)	IKEA · KPI 2: Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs Ambassador Programme FY25: 169 co-workers selected from roughly 800 applicants, joining a peer-learning community of more	IKEA · KPI 3: Promotion of Environmental Culture FY25 Annual Summary and Sustainability Report restructured for the first time around ESG pillars, aligning with the EU's Corporate Sustainability

Field Study

Company	Employee Sustainability Training	Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs	Promotion of Environmental Culture
	– Evidence gap: no environment-specific training hours or completion rate for co-workers appear in FY25 disclosures (Ingka Group, 2026)	– than 550 people across 30+ countries (IKEA Foundation, 2025) – IKEA Social Entrepreneurship: dedicated co-workers mentored 120 social entrepreneurs across 21 countries in FY25 (IKEA, 2025)	– Reporting Directive (Ingka Group, 2026) – The ‘People & Planet Positive’ sustainability framework, the umbrella under which co-worker-facing initiatives sit, has been maintained since 2012 (Inter IKEA Group, 2025)
Unilever	Unilever · KPI 1: Employee Sustainability Training – Mandatory Business Integrity training is required for all employees, covering ethics and compliance rather than environmental content (Unilever, n.d.-a) – Evidence gap: no environmental training metric for employees appears in FY2025 disclosures (Unilever, 2026)	Unilever · KPI 2: Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs – ‘Sustainability Hour’ school-volunteering scheme is available to employees, but no participation count appears in FY2025 disclosures (Unilever, n.d.-e, 2026) – Supplier Climate Programme supported approximately 200 key suppliers in 2025 — a supplier-facing rather than an employee-facing initiative (Unilever, 2024c)	Unilever · KPI 3: Promotion of Environmental Culture – 15% of management's Performance Share Plan has been linked to the Sustainability Progress Index, covering climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods, since 2024 (Unilever, 2026) – An Executive Sustainability Steering Committee meets monthly, with a named sponsor for each priority area since 2025 (Unilever, 2026)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

5.2 Comparative Scoring Table — Green People

Table 16. Comparative Scoring — Green People

Company	Employee Sustainability Training	Employee Participation in Sustainability Programs	Promotion of Environmental Culture
Patagonia	2 — Medium	3 — High	3 — High
IKEA	1 — Low	2 — Medium	2 — Medium
Unilever	1 — Low	1 — Low	2 — Medium

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table 13).

5.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores:

Patagonia — 2 / 3 / 3: Training scores Medium because an open-to-all paid internship exists, but FY25 disclosures give no headcount or hours figure (Patagonia, n.d.-e). Participation leads all three companies: 27,000 paid hours and \$2.4 million in skills-based volunteering are both quantified and company-wide (Patagonia Works, 2025a). Culture scores High: environmental purpose is embedded in the legal ownership structure, backed by \$14.7 million in FY25 grants (Patagonia Works, 2025a, 2025b).

Field Study

IKEA — 1 / 2 / 2: No environmental training metric was disclosed for co-workers in FY25, placing Training at Low (Ingka Group, 2026). Participation is quantified but limited to a self-selected minority — 169 ambassadors and 120 mentees within a workforce of hundreds of thousands (IKEA Foundation, 2025; IKEA, 2025). Culture reaches Medium through the ESG reporting overhaul, the OKR strategy, and the longstanding ‘People & Planet Positive’ framework, rather than a workforce-wide metric (Ingka Group, 2026; Inter IKEA Group, 2025).

Unilever — 1 / 1 / 2: Mandatory training covers ethics and compliance, not environmental content (Unilever, n.d.-a). The sole employee volunteering scheme is unquantified in FY2025 disclosures, placing both Training and Participation at Low (Unilever, n.d.-e). Management-level accountability — a 15% Performance Share Plan link to the Sustainability Progress Index, in place since 2024, and a monthly executive committee — supports a Medium score for Culture, though the evidence does not extend to the broader workforce (Unilever, 2026).

6. Green Process

This section examines green process practices through three key performance indicators:

- KPI 1 — Waste Reduction,
- KPI 2 — Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation
- ,KPI 3 — Circular Economy Integration.
-

6.1 Comparative Evidence Table — Green Process

Table 17. Comparative Evidence — Green Process

Company	KPI 1 — Waste Reduction	KPI 2 — Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation	KPI 3 — Circular Economy Integration
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Waste Reduction – 145,446 garments repaired globally across 113 locations in FY24, down from 153,506 in FY23 (Patagonia Works, 2024) – 73% of apparel materials sourced from recycled inputs in FY24, limiting demand for virgin resource extraction and associated waste (Patagonia Works, 2024) – 97% of products manufactured without PFC/PFAS chemicals in FY24, up from 86% in	Patagonia · KPI 2: Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation – Bluesign-certified manufacturing processes applied across the supply chain, setting stringent standards for water efficiency and chemical discharge in dyeing and finishing operations (Patagonia Works, 2024) – Shift to 73% recycled materials (fabric and trim) in FY24 reduces water-intensive virgin cotton and petroleum-based fibre production in the supply	Patagonia · KPI 3: Circular Economy Integration – Worn Wear programme repaired 145,446 items across 113 locations in FY24; Patagonia operates the largest apparel repair facility in North America, at approximately 50,000 pieces per year (Patagonia Works, 2024) – 2,000 metric tonnes of Bureo NetPlus recycled fishing-net material incorporated into products cumulatively, reaching this milestone in FY24 (Patagonia Works, 2024)

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Waste Reduction	KPI 2 — Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation	KPI 3 — Circular Economy Integration
IKEA	FY23, substantially reducing hazardous process waste (Patagonia Works, 2024) IKEA · KPI 1: Waste Reduction – Packaging transition to paper-based bags for furniture fittings in FY24 is estimated to reduce plastic consumption by approximately 1,400 tonnes per year (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – DÄNHULT foam-less sofa launched in FY24, using thermo-bonded felt made from fabric waste and eliminating fossil-based foam from product manufacturing (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – Food waste in Ingka Group retail operations reduced by 60.5% per portion served since FY17, saving approximately 37.8 million food portions from disposal (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	chain (Patagonia Works, 2024) – No quantifiable manufacturing water-use reduction targets or factory-level water-consumption metrics were disclosed in FY24 corporate reporting (Ecolife, 2024) IKEA · KPI 2: Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation – IKEA developed its water agenda in FY24, a first step toward setting science-aligned operational water targets; no absolute operational water-reduction target has yet been set for own facilities (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025d) – 50L Home Coalition pilot launched in Los Angeles and Drop It project launched in Sweden during FY24 to demonstrate household water-efficiency solutions through product innovation (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – Materials strategy, including increased use of recycled wood and paper, indirectly reduces water intensity in upstream supply chain processes, as recycled fibre requires significantly less water than virgin pulp (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	– Worn Wear resale and ReCrafted upcycling lines structurally embed product-life extension into retail operations, though end-of-life recovery remains limited (Patagonia Works, 2024) IKEA · KPI 3: Circular Economy Integration – 16% of wood used in IKEA products derived from recycled sources in FY24; 97% of wood across the IKEA range was FSC-certified or recycled (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – Buy-Back & Resell service operating across multiple markets in FY24; PAX wardrobe redesigned with a foldable frame enabling easy disassembly and reassembly (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) – More than €1 billion committed via Ingka's investment arm to three recycling ventures in early 2025, validating the FY24 strategy to scale circular material sourcing (Trellis, 2025)
Unilever	Unilever · KPI 1: Waste Reduction	Unilever · KPI 2: Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation	Unilever · KPI 3: Circular Economy Integration

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Waste Reduction	KPI 2 — Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation	KPI 3 — Circular Economy Integration
	– Zero non-hazardous waste to landfill maintained across the global manufacturing network since first attained in 2014; no longer tracked as a formal corporate target as of 2024, but continues to be met as embedded operating practice (Unilever, 2025a) – Virgin plastic packaging footprint reduced by 23% relative to the 2019 baseline by 2024, with recycled plastic content reaching 21% of total packaging (Unilever, 2025a) – Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions reduced by 72% from the 2015 baseline as of 2024, with all manufacturing sites operating on 100% renewable grid electricity (Unilever, 2025a)	– 21 active water stewardship programmes in water-stressed areas as of 2024, targeting the most critical basins across the agricultural supply chain (Unilever, 2025a) – Water use in manufacturing improved by approximately 47% per tonne of production since the 2008 baseline, a figure most recently confirmed in 2023 disclosures (Unilever, 2025a) – 97% deforestation-free order volumes for palm oil, paper and board, tea, soy, and cocoa in 2024, reducing watershed degradation caused by upstream commodity sourcing (Unilever, 2025a)	– Recycled plastic content in packaging increased to 21% in 2024; co-founded the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty to advance circular-economy regulation (Unilever, 2025a) – Refill and reuse pilots active in multiple emerging markets in 2024, using smart dispensing technology to reduce primary packaging waste at consumer level (Unilever, 2025a) – ‘Less, Better, No’ plastic strategy has eliminated or replaced more than 1 billion plastic sachets cumulatively with alternative delivery formats since launch (Unilever, 2025a)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

6.2 Comparative Scoring Table — Green Process

Table 18. Comparative Scoring — Green Process

Company	KPI 1 — Waste Reduction	KPI 2 — Water Consumption Reduction and Conservation	KPI 3 — Circular Economy Integration
Patagonia	2 — Medium	1 — Low	2 — Medium
IKEA	2 — Medium	1 — Low	3 — High
Unilever	3 — High	3 — High	2 — Medium

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table 15).

Field Study

6.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores :

Patagonia — 2 / 1 / 2: On Waste Reduction, Patagonia scores Medium because its 145,446 repairs and 73% recycled-input share represent documented operational practices, though no factory-level waste-disposal metrics were disclosed. On Water Conservation, Patagonia scores Low because no quantified water-reduction targets or factory water-use data were disclosed in FY24, limiting evidence of systematic operational water management. On Circular Economy Integration, Patagonia scores Medium because the Worn Wear and Bureo NetPlus programmes are embedded in operations, but the circular recovery rate for end-of-life garments remains low — reportedly only around 1% of products returned for recycling — indicating that circular principles are partially implemented rather than fully systemic (Patagonia Works, 2025a).

IKEA — 2 / 1 / 3: On Waste Reduction, IKEA scores Medium because specific process-level waste-reduction measures — including the approximately 1,400-tonne plastic saving from packaging changes and the foam-less DÅNHULT sofa — are documented but do not yet represent company-wide factory waste metrics. On Water Conservation, IKEA scores Low because while FY24 saw development of a biodiversity and water agenda, no binding operational water-reduction targets were set; available data remains at a pilot level. On Circular Economy Integration, IKEA scores High because it demonstrates the strongest system-level circular architecture among the three companies in this study: 16% recycled wood content, structured Buy-Back programmes across multiple markets, product design for disassembly, and a commitment of more than €1 billion to recycling infrastructure.

Unilever — 3 / 3 / 2: On Waste Reduction, Unilever scores High as the only company among the three to have achieved and maintained zero non-hazardous waste to landfill across its global factory network, combined with a 72% GHG reduction and a 23% reduction in virgin plastic. On Water Conservation, Unilever scores High by virtue of the strongest documented water-stewardship evidence: a 47% water-use improvement per tonne of production since 2008 and 21 active water stewardship programmes in 2024. On Circular Economy Integration, Unilever scores Medium because recycled packaging content (21%) and refill pilots are progressing but have not yet reached a scale or structural depth equivalent to IKEA's operational circularity framework.

7. Green Physical Evidence

This section examines green physical evidence through three key performance indicators:

- KPI 1 — Environmental Labels and Eco-Certifications on Products.
- KPI 2 — Sustainable Packaging.
- KPI 3 — Environmental Certifications and Tangible Sustainability Credentials.

Field Study

7.1 Comparative Evidence Table — Green Physical Evidence

Table 19. Comparative Evidence — Green Physical Evidence

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications	KPI 2 — Sustainable Packaging	KPI 3 — Certifications & Tangible Credentials
Patagonia	Patagonia · KPI 1: Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications — 88% of products made in Fair Trade Certified™ factories in FY24, with US\$32.26 million in Fair Trade premiums paid to workers since 2014 (Patagonia Works, 2024) — 97% of products manufactured without intentionally applied PFC/PFAS chemicals in FY24, up from 86% in FY23, verified through supplier declarations, testing, and audits (Patagonia Works, 2024) — Bluesign® System Partner since 2007 as the first brand member; nine of the top ten material suppliers are Bluesign system partners, with bluesign-approved materials visibly labelled on product pages (Patagonia Works, 2024)	Patagonia · KPI 2: Sustainable Packaging — All packaging and shipping materials made from recycled content or FSC®/SFI-certified responsible forest products; poly bags made from recycled plastic certified to the Global Recycled Standard (Patagonia, n.d.-a) — QR-code hang tags have reduced total hang-tag use by more than 40 million, avoiding an estimated 170,000 pounds of waste; product tags are hung with recycled paper strings (Patagonia, n.d.-a) — 2026 commitment: all packaging to be 100% recycled, FSC® or SFI-certified, and easily recyclable; member of Canopy's Pack4Good initiative; algae ink used on hang tags (Patagonia, n.d.-a)	Patagonia · KPI 3: Certifications & Tangible Credentials — Certified B Corp with a global B Impact Assessment score of 166 (FY23 recertification), more than triple the global B Corp median of approximately 50; recertified by B Lab under the California Benefit Corporation statute (Patagonia Works, 2024) — 73% of apparel materials sourced from recycled fibres in FY24; 100% of cashmere and more than 75% of wool recycled, verified through RCS and GRS chain-of-custody standards (Patagonia Works, 2024) — 1% for the Planet® member: US\$226 million donated cumulatively by FY24 to environmental nonprofits; registered California Benefit Corporation since 2012 (Patagonia Works, 2024)
IKEA	IKEA · KPI 1: Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications — 97% of wood used in IKEA products in FY24 was FSC®-certified or recycled; FSC certification required of all home-furnishing product suppliers, with the FSC label appearing on qualifying products (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., n.d.-a) — Global Recycled Standard applied to selected recycled cotton and textile products; approximately 60% of the	IKEA · KPI 2: Sustainable Packaging — Transition to paper-based bags for furniture fittings initiated in FY24, projected to reduce virgin plastic consumption by approximately 1,400 tonnes per year, as part of the Plastics Out Agenda targeting full phase-out of plastic consumer packaging by 2028 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	IKEA · KPI 3: Certifications & Tangible Credentials — Inter IKEA Group net-zero science-based targets validated by the Science Based Targets initiative in June 2024; targets include halving GHG emissions by FY30 and reaching net zero by FY50, both against an FY16 baseline (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2024) — Total GHG emissions reduced by 28% in absolute terms versus the FY16 baseline by FY24; renewable electricity share in

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications	KPI 2 — Sustainable Packaging	KPI 3 — Certifications & Tangible Credentials
	IKEA range based on renewable materials, with 10% containing recycled materials in FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) Consumer product eco-labels (FSC, GRS) are narrower in scope than Patagonia's product-level certifications; IWAY supplier code of conduct updated in FY24 to address seafarers' rights, animal welfare, and agriculture (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	- SMÅSPORRE quilts range shifted from plastic to paper wrapping, using paper from a Scandinavian mill powered by renewable energy; packaging redesign for sauces and jams in IKEA restaurants also initiated (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c) - Total plastic packaging reduced by 44% between FY21 and FY23 across consumer packs and multipacks; 99% recycled PET bottles launched in the IKEA food range in FY23 and maintained in FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)	retail increased from 77% in FY23 to 81% in FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., n.d.-b) IWAY supplier code of conduct, with a history of more than 20 years, applies across approximately 1,500 suppliers in more than 50 markets; new IWAY requirements finalised in FY24, with SBTi validation providing independent third-party verification of climate targets at business level (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c)
Unilever	Unilever · KPI 1: Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications 82% of core palm oil volumes sustainably sourced in 2024 (100% for palm oil; 64% for palm kernel oil and derivatives), with 62% from physically certified RSPO sources; Unilever is among the largest buyers of RSPO Independent Smallholder credits (Unilever, 2025d) 98% of cocoa derivatives sourced under Rainforest Alliance or Fairtrade certification in 2024; 97% deforestation-free order volumes achieved for palm oil, paper and board, tea, soy, and cocoa (Unilever, 2025a) 79% of key agricultural crops sustainably sourced in	Unilever · KPI 2: Sustainable Packaging - Virgin plastic use reduced by 23% versus the 2019 baseline by the end of 2024, achieved through lightweighting, design innovation, and expanded use of post-consumer recycled plastic; recycled plastic constituted 21% of the global packaging portfolio in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a) 57% of plastic packaging was reusable, recyclable, or compostable as of 2024 (75% of rigids; 15% of flexibles); revised targets set for a 30% virgin plastic reduction by 2026 and 40% by 2028 (Unilever, n.d.-d)	Unilever · KPI 3: Certifications & Tangible Credentials - Founding member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil; long-standing Rainforest Alliance partnership for tea and cocoa; member of the Cocoa and Forests Initiative; co-founder of the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty (Unilever, n.d.-c) 97% deforestation-free sourcing achieved in 2024 across five key commodities, verified through independent third-party protocols including satellite monitoring and geospatial analysis; 21 water stewardship programmes in water-stressed areas (Unilever, 2025a) - SBTi-approved near-term science-based targets in place; however, Unilever has not

Field Study

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications	KPI 2 — Sustainable Packaging	KPI 3 — Certifications & Tangible Credentials
	2024; tea certified under Rainforest Alliance and Trustea standards, with eco-labels on tea and cocoa product lines visible to consumers at point of purchase (Unilever, 2025a)	— Original 2025 targets of 100% recyclable packaging and a 50% virgin plastic reduction were not met; targets were revised in 2024 to reflect practical constraints in recycling infrastructure and feedstock availability (Unilever, n.d.-d)	disclosed SBTi net-zero validation equivalent to IKEA's June 2024 announcement, and its sustainability credentials span the supply chain rather than a single overarching product-level label (Unilever, 2025a)

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on sustainability reports, annual reports, official company websites, environmental disclosures, and other cited sources (see References).

7.2 Comparative Scoring Table — Green Physical Evidence

Table 20. Comparative Scoring — Green Physical Evidence

Company	KPI 1 — Environmental Labels & Eco-Certifications	KPI 2 — Sustainable Packaging	KPI 3 — Certifications & Tangible Credentials
Patagonia	3 — High	3 — High	3 — High
IKEA	2 — Medium	2 — Medium	2 — Medium
Unilever	2 — Medium	1 — Low	2 — Medium

Source: Scores and ratings are drawn directly from the Comparative Evidence Table above (Table 17).

7.3 Justification of Evaluative Scores:

Patagonia — 3 / 3 / 3: On KPI 1, Patagonia earns the highest score because it carries product-level eco-labels directly visible to consumers — Fair Trade Certified™ on 88% of products and bluesign® approval on materials — representing the strongest portfolio of independently verified product-level marks among the three companies. On KPI 2, Patagonia scores highest because all of its packaging materials are made from recycled content or FSC®/SFI-certified material per company disclosures, a substantially achieved standard rather than an in-progress transition. On KPI 3, the B Corp score of 166 — triple the global median — and the legally embedded California Benefit Corporation status provide the most comprehensive, independently verified, and institutionally entrenched sustainability credentials of the three companies.

IKEA — 2 / 2 / 2: On KPI 1, IKEA scores Medium because while 97% of its wood is FSC-certified or recycled — a strong sectoral result — consumer-facing eco-labels are narrower in scope than Patagonia's multi-label approach, and GRS coverage of textiles remains partial. On KPI 2, IKEA's transition to paper-based fitting bags, projected to reduce plastic by 1,400 tonnes annually, was in

Field Study

progress during FY24 rather than complete, placing it at a Medium level. On KPI 3, SBTi validation of net-zero targets in June 2024 provides meaningful independent verification of climate ambition, but the absence of an equivalent to Patagonia's holistic B Corp certification limits the score to Medium.

Unilever — 2 / 1 / 2: On KPI 1, Unilever achieves Medium because commodity-level certifications (RSPO, Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade) are visible on specific product lines such as tea and cocoa, with 98% of cocoa under certification — a strong result for an FMCG company — though coverage across the broader portfolio (79% of key crops) is less comprehensive. On KPI 2, Unilever scores lowest because its 2024 packaging record (23% virgin plastic reduction; 21% recycled content; 57% recyclable) reflects ongoing rather than achieved progress, and original 2025 targets were publicly revised downward during the year. On KPI 3, Unilever's long-standing RSPO founding membership, Rainforest Alliance partnerships, and 97% deforestation-free sourcing in 2024 constitute credible, independently verified credentials, but they are narrower in scope than IKEA's SBTi net-zero validation or Patagonia's B Corp certification, supporting a Medium rather than High score.

Fourth. Hypothesis Testing

1. Testing of Sub-Hypotheses and Main Hypothesis in Light of the Comparative Findings

The testing of hypotheses in this study is based on the comparative scores assigned to each of the three companies — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — across the twenty-one Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of the green marketing mix (7Ps). Each company was rated High (3), Medium (2), or Low (1) on each indicator relative to the other two companies. Differences in scores across companies on any given indicator constitute evidence in support of the sub-hypothesis for that dimension. The results are presented below by sub-hypothesis, followed by a conclusion on the main hypothesis.

1.SH1 — Green Product

SH1 is supported. The three companies recorded distinct score profiles across the three Green Product indicators. Patagonia scored High on all three KPIs — environmentally friendly materials, recycled/renewable materials, and durable product design — while IKEA scored High/Medium/High and Unilever scored Medium/Low/Low. The difference is most pronounced on recycled content, where Patagonia's 73% recycled fabric share (High) contrasts with IKEA's 16% recycled wood content (Medium) and Unilever's approximately 2% recycled portfolio weight (Low).

2.SH2 — Green Pricing

SH2 is supported. Scores diverge across all three Green Pricing indicators. Patagonia scored High on all three, grounded in its premium cost-internalisation model and independently certified price-value proposition. IKEA scored High/High/Medium, with strong performance on pricing strategy and circular incentives but a Medium rating on environmental value versus price, as its achievements are communicated through corporate reporting rather than a consumer-facing certified premium. Unilever scored Medium across all three, with sustainability integrated at the governance level but no direct consumer-facing green pricing instrument documented in 2024.

3.SH3 — Green Distribution (Place)

SH3 is supported. This dimension shows the most divergent pattern of the seven. Patagonia scored Low/Medium/Low, reflecting the near-absence of logistics-specific disclosures in its FY2024 reporting.

Field Study

IKEA scored High/High/Medium, leading on both transport emission reduction (−9% year-on-year) and greener transport (95% renewable electricity in logistics). Unilever scored High/Medium/High, with a documented 13% North America logistics emission reduction and externally validated AI-driven supply chain efficiency, but no 2024 fleet-electrification percentage disclosed.

4.SH4 — Green Promotion

SH4 is supported. Patagonia scored High on all three KPIs, distinguished by its full withdrawal from paid social advertising since 2020, its integrated Worn Wear consumer education model, and its independently certified B Corp score of 166/250. IKEA scored High/Medium/Medium, matching Patagonia on campaign scale but scoring Medium on consumer education and transparency following the April 2024 Greenpeace supplier investigation. Unilever scored Medium across all three, with large-scale paid campaigns but a credibility gap arising from the 2024 downward revision of its virgin plastic target.

5.SH5 — Green People

SH5 is supported. Patagonia scored Medium/High/High: its open-to-all paid environmental internship and 27,000 company-wide volunteering hours in FY2025 lead the group on participation and culture, though no training headcount is disclosed. IKEA scored Low/Medium/Medium, with no environment-specific training metric and participation limited to 169 ambassadors within a workforce of hundreds of thousands. Unilever scored Low/Low/Medium, with mandatory training covering ethics rather than environmental content and no participation figure disclosed for its volunteering scheme.

6.SH6 — Green Process

SH6 is supported, with a notably different leader than in other dimensions. Unilever scored High/High/Medium — the strongest overall profile — driven by zero non-hazardous waste to landfill maintained since 2014, a 47% reduction in manufacturing water use per tonne since 2008, and 21 active water stewardship programmes. Patagonia scored Medium/Low/Medium, with strong repair and recycled-input practices but no quantified factory-level water targets. IKEA scored Medium/Low/High, leading on circular economy integration through its Circular Product Design Guide and €1 billion commitment to recycling infrastructure, but lacking binding operational water-reduction targets in FY2024.

7.SH7 — Green Physical Evidence

SH7 is supported. Patagonia scored High on all three KPIs, deploying the densest portfolio of independently verified, consumer-visible eco-labels: Fair Trade Certified™ on 88% of products, bluesign® system partnership, fully recycled or certified packaging, and a B Corp score of 166. IKEA scored Medium across all three, with strong FSC coverage and SBTi net-zero validation but a packaging transition still in progress during FY2024. Unilever scored Medium/Low/Medium, with credible commodity-level certifications but a packaging record weakened by the downward revision of its 2025 targets.

8.Main Hypothesis (H0)

The main hypothesis (H0) — that there are differences among Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever in green marketing practices according to the indicators of the elements of the green marketing mix (7Ps) — is supported. All seven sub-hypotheses (SH1–SH7) are confirmed by the comparative evidence: no two companies produced identical score profiles on any dimension, and the pattern of differentiation is

Field Study

consistent and traceable to verifiable FY2024 disclosures. The alternative hypothesis (H1), which posits no differences among the three companies, is therefore rejected. Patagonia leads on five of the seven dimensions (Product, Pricing, Promotion, People, and Physical Evidence), IKEA leads on Distribution, and Unilever leads on Process, confirming that each company occupies a distinct and differentiated green marketing profile across the full 7Ps framework.

2. Discussion, Interpretation, and Linkage of Findings with Prior Literature

The findings of this study, generated through the comparative scoring of Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever across the twenty-one KPIs of the green marketing mix (7Ps), are now situated within the body of prior literature reviewed in Chapter One. The discussion is organised according to the four thematic clusters identified in the empirical review, allowing each cluster's central claim to be tested against the evidence produced by this study.

Cluster 1 — Green Marketing Strategy and Implementation

Metali (2020), Zaoui and Ramdani (2020), Miralles (2008), and Kadam (2024) collectively established that green marketing is a holistic operational philosophy requiring genuine commitment across the full marketing mix, and that no company — even in developed markets — has fully embedded it throughout its operations. The findings of the current study confirm and extend this conclusion. Across all three companies, a consistent pattern of uneven implementation was observed: Patagonia, the most committed company by overall profile, scored Low on two of three Green Distribution indicators, reflecting the near-absence of logistics-specific disclosures in its FY2024 reporting. IKEA, despite leading on Distribution, scored Low on two Green People KPIs. Unilever scored Low on four indicators across Product and Physical Evidence. The current study therefore confirms Kadam's (2024) finding at the elite end of the market: systemic implementation gaps persist even in corporations widely cited as green marketing leaders, and no single company achieved uniformly High performance across all seven dimensions.

Cluster 2 — Green Marketing and Organisational Performance

Khouildat (2017), Zalt (2022), Siepong (2016), and Atud (2017) all confirmed that green marketing commitment positively predicts organisational performance, with Zalt (2022) demonstrating that the four mix dimensions together explain 83% of performance variance, and Siepong (2016) establishing that the alignment between Green Marketing Capabilities and strategic orientation is the decisive factor in outcomes. The current study provides a complementary documentary perspective: the company with the deepest institutional commitment — Patagonia, structured as a Benefit Corporation with statutory environmental obligations — produced the highest overall green marketing profile, leading on five of seven dimensions. IKEA's People9s Planet Positive strategy, embedding sustainability across supply chain and logistics, corresponds to its leadership on Distribution. Unilever's process-level commitment, maintained since its zero non-hazardous waste milestone in 2014, explains its leadership on Green Process. These patterns are consistent with Atud's (2017) finding that commitment cascades through operational mediators before reaching observable outputs — visible here in the dimension-specific leadership each company holds.

Cluster 3 — Consumer Trust, Greenwashing, and Credibility

Elwardany (2025), Ventura (2016), Samar and Derouazi (2019), and Hossain (2025) converged on the finding that consumer trust is the central mediating variable between green marketing practice and

consumer behaviour, and that greenwashing — even unintentional — severely damages brand credibility. The current study makes this credibility differential measurable at the corporate documentation level. Patagonia, which Ventura (2016) found to enjoy 95% consumer trust, scored High on all three Green Physical Evidence indicators: its B Corp score of 166/250, Fair Trade Certified™ coverage of 88% of products, and fully recycled or certified packaging constitute the independently verified, consumer-visible credentials that prior literature identifies as the foundation of trust. By contrast, Unilever's 2024 downward revision of its virgin plastic target — a disclosure documented in its own Annual Report — produced Low scores on two Physical Evidence KPIs, illustrating precisely the credibility erosion mechanism that Elwardany (2025) quantified at $\beta = 0.336$. Hossain's (2025) five key strategies — sustainable packaging, CSR, eco-labelling, green advertising, and carbon disclosure — are each traceable to specific KPIs in this study, confirming that the documentary evidence base used here captures the same dimensions that systematic literature review identifies as decisive for brand trust.

Cluster 4 — Green Marketing at the SME and Sector Level

Al-Sokkary (2023), Holappa (2024), and Ramadhani (2024) illuminated the implementation reality at smaller organisational scales, with Holappa (2024) identifying a rhetoric-versus-reality gap in which over 50% of Finnish micro and small enterprises failed to communicate any sustainability practices externally despite claiming to implement them internally. The current study examines the same gap at the opposite end of the organisational scale. Among the three multinationals, the gap takes a different but structurally analogous form: it is not an absence of external communication — all three companies publish extensive sustainability disclosures — but a divergence between the ambition of stated targets and the granularity of verifiable evidence. Patagonia's Worn Wear programme and B Corp certification close this gap most effectively. IKEA's supplier investigation findings (Greenpeace, April 2024) and Unilever's revised plastic commitments reopen it. Ramadhani's (2024) finding that authentic 4P implementation builds genuine brand loyalty at SME scale is mirrored here: the company with the most substantiated and independently verified green marketing implementation — Patagonia — is also the one that prior literature, from Miralles (2008) to Ventura (2016), consistently identifies as the benchmark case.

Taken together, the findings of this study confirm the four clusters of prior literature while adding a dimension that survey-based and perception-oriented studies cannot provide: a traceable, evidence-based assessment of what each company actually documents across the full 7Ps framework. The current study thereby answers the call made by Tran (2024) for qualitative document-based research to complement the empirical quantitative dominance of the field, and addresses the gap identified in the Research Gap table by explicitly testing the correspondence between declared green commitment and documented green practice.

Fifth. Analytical Discussion and Interpretation

1. Green Product

1.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. During its reporting period ending in April 2024, Patagonia sourced 73% of its fabric and trim from recycled materials and manufactured 97% of its products without PFC/PFAS chemicals (Patagonia Works, 2024). Over the twelve months ending in April 2024, the Worn Wear programme repaired 145,446 products across 113 locations worldwide, backed by the Ironclad Guarantee (Patagonia Works, 2024; Patagonia, n.d.-d). Patagonia leads on all three indicators; its scores partly reflect the structural advantage of outdoor apparel, where high recycled content and repair-based business models are more achievable than in home furnishing or fast-moving consumer goods.

IKEA. IKEA's 2024 Circular Product Design Guide sets eight circular standards — covering disassembly, repairability, and renewable or recycled materials — as mandatory requirements for all 9,500 products across its fiscal year ending August 2024 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c). During the same reporting period, IKEA sourced 97% of its wood as FSC-certified or recycled, though only 16% of its wood-based product range consisted of recycled wood (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c). In the fiscal year ending August 2024, IKEA's Buyback and Resell service processed 495,000 returned furniture pieces (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c).

Unilever. Throughout the 2024 calendar year, Unilever verified 79% of its key crop volumes as sustainably sourced and achieved 21% recycled plastic content within its global packaging portfolio (Unilever, 2025a). At the product level, however, the evidence is limited: recycled materials make up roughly 2% of total portfolio weight, and no repair or buyback programme operates at scale — the refill pilot reached only around 6,000 customers in 2024 (Unilever, 2025a, 2025b). Unilever's stronger performance at the supply-chain level than at the product-design level reflects both strategic choices and the inherent constraints of a fast-moving consumer goods business.

1.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies back their green product claims with third-party-verified data — Patagonia through B Corp certification (score 166/250) and Fair Trade standards, IKEA through FSC and SBTi validation, and Unilever through KPMG assurance and SBTi-validated climate goals — giving each a shared institutional baseline (Patagonia Works, 2024; Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c; Unilever, 2025a). The clearest gap is on recycled materials: Patagonia's 73% recycled content across its full product range scores High; IKEA's 16% in its dominant material category scores Medium, with a 2030 target; and Unilever's roughly 2% total by portfolio weight scores Low. Patagonia leads across all three areas; IKEA has the strongest product-governance framework through its Circular Product Design Guide and Buyback service; Unilever's lower scores on recycled content and durable design reflect both the nature of consumable products and strategic priorities. The gap between Patagonia and Unilever on recycled content illustrates clearly what separates product-level environmental performance from supply-chain-level sustainability.

Following this analysis of green product practices, the chapter now turns to pricing-related sustainability initiatives, examining how each company embeds environmental considerations into its pricing architecture and what mechanisms translate environmental cost or value into the price paid by the consumer.

2. Green Price

2.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. Patagonia incorporates environmental considerations into pricing through a cost-internalisation model: higher-cost sustainable inputs — Bluesign-certified materials, organic cotton, and recycled synthetics — are absorbed into the premium price rather than offset or passed on as surcharges, a structural relationship confirmed in the FY2023–2024 Annual Benefit Corporation Report (Patagonia Works, 2024). In 2024, the company extended this logic to logistics by joining ZEMBA's inaugural zero-emission shipping proposal, paying above-market freight rates as a documented environmental cost decision (Patagonia, n.d.-a). On the consumer incentive side, the September 2024 launch of 'Shop Used' and the ongoing Worn Wear trade-in programme provide direct financial rewards for choosing second-hand, lowering the effective cost of sustainable consumption. Independent verification strengthens the value proposition: a B Corp score of 166 out of 250 and the Q3 2024 milestone of 99% elimination of PFAS/DWR coatings confirm that the premium corresponds to measurable product-level environmental performance, not brand positioning alone (Ecolife, 2024; Patagonia Works, 2024).

IKEA. IKEA operates from the opposite pricing logic: sustainability should not cost more, and affordability at scale is itself a green-market intervention. In FY24, Ingka Group invested USD 2.2 billion to lower prices by an average of approximately 10% across all markets, accepting a 5.5% revenue decline to do so (Ingka Group, 2024). IKEA's Chief Sustainability Officer confirmed in 2024 that the company uses its procurement power to prevent greener products from carrying a price premium over conventional alternatives (Trellis, 2024). The Buyback and Resell programme, which processed over 495,000 units globally in FY24 — including approximately 55,000 during the November 2024 Buyback Friday campaign — offers consumers a direct monetary incentive for circular behaviour at retail scale (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c; Circuleire, 2025). Environmental performance metrics are strong — a 28% reduction in total climate footprint from the FY16 baseline, 97% FSC-certified wood, and 81% renewable electricity in retail operations — but these achievements are communicated primarily through corporate reporting rather than as a consumer-facing price-value proposition, which explains the medium score on KPI 3.

Unilever. Unilever integrates environmental considerations primarily at the governance and supply-chain levels in 2024, rather than through a direct consumer-facing pricing mechanism. The formal embedding of Sustainability Performance Indicators in the executive Performance Share Plan at a 15% weighting, and the 97.5% shareholder endorsement of the updated Climate Transition Action Plan at the 2024 AGM, demonstrate strong institutional commitment (Unilever, 2024a, 2025a). The Supplier Climate Programme engaged 291 suppliers in 2024 to disclose Product Carbon Footprints and set science-based targets, creating upstream pricing pressure for lower-emission sourcing (Unilever USA, 2024b). Operationally, a 72% cut in Scope 1 and 2 emissions since 2015 — as reported in the 2024 Annual Report and Accounts — and 79% sustainably sourced crops underpin brand environmental credibility (Unilever, 2025a). However, these achievements are disclosed primarily to investors and regulators; explicit communication of environmental attributes as a consumer-level price-value proposition is less systematically developed in Unilever's 2024 disclosures than at Patagonia or IKEA.

Field Study

2.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies share a common institutional baseline: science-based or equivalent climate targets, annual sustainability disclosures, and governance structures linking environmental performance to business strategy. The sharpest divergence appears on KPI 1: Patagonia and IKEA both achieve the highest comparative score through opposing but coherent mechanisms — premium cost-internalisation versus mass-access price reduction — while Unilever scores Medium because its environmental pricing logic operates at the corporate and supply-chain level without a documented consumer-facing green-pricing instrument in 2024. Patagonia leads overall because its premium is independently certified at the product level; IKEA leads on KPI 2 because its circular incentive programme has the most operationally concrete and data-backed 2024 evidence of the three. For green marketing, this comparison confirms that credible green-pricing claims require a traceable mechanism — a certified premium, a documented access investment, or a scaled circular incentive. Sustainability embedded at the governance level alone, while commercially meaningful, does not by itself constitute a consumer-facing green-pricing strategy.

Having examined how environmental considerations shape pricing decisions, the chapter now turns to the distribution dimension of the green marketing mix, assessing how each company manages the environmental footprint of moving its products to consumers.

3. Green Place (Distribution)

3.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. Patagonia's environmental work is concentrated upstream, in materials and manufacturing, which the company itself reports as generating nearly 99% of its footprint. This structural reality explains the thin evidence on distribution: the ZEMBA maritime commitment is the only logistics-specific initiative publicly documented for 2024, and it covers one transport mode with no disclosed volume. Patagonia's Scope 3 target formally includes transportation and distribution, but without a dedicated FY2024 transport figure the company demonstrates intent more clearly than measurable logistics impact.

IKEA. IKEA's logistics decarbonisation is the most operationally embedded of the three, reported through a dedicated supply chain operations function and summarised annually in a public Decarb Catalogue. The 9% year-on-year transport-emissions reduction and the 95% renewable-electricity figure in owned logistics are both company-wide, directly attributable, and independently verifiable — a depth of disclosure that reflects IKEA's business model, where running a global network of roughly 1.7 million annual shipments makes transport a core operational concern rather than a secondary one.

Unilever. Unilever's strongest green-distribution evidence is concentrated in efficiency rather than emissions: its 2024 AI-driven inventory initiative is externally validated, recognised by Walmart Mexico and shortlisted for a Gartner award, and is operationally concrete. Its North America logistics-emissions reduction of 13% in 2024 is the clearest transport-specific figure, though it is regional rather than global — a narrower scope than IKEA's company-wide reporting. Its Climate Transition Action Plan commits to both electrification and biofuels, but without a 2024 fleet-adoption percentage.

3.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies embed logistics and transport decarbonisation within a formal climate-governance structure, and all three are transparent about at least one evidence gap. The sharpest divergence sits in Supply Chain Efficiency: Unilever discloses an externally validated 2024 initiative,

Field Study

IKEA has a strong programme-level narrative but no single KPI, and Patagonia has nothing distribution-specific. IKEA leads on emissions and greener transport primarily because its business model makes transport a natural reporting domain, not necessarily because its underlying environmental commitment is stronger than the other two companies'. The green-marketing implication is consistent across all three: a credible distribution claim requires at least one specific, company-wide, current-year metric — IKEA provides this most consistently, Unilever provides it regionally, and Patagonia does not yet provide it for distribution at all.

With the distribution dimension assessed, the chapter turns next to green promotion, examining how each company communicates its environmental commitments to consumers and other stakeholders.

4. Green Promotion

4.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. Patagonia builds green promotion into the core of how it operates, not as a separate marketing layer. Its mission — “We're in business to save our home planet” — shapes every channel: website content, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube all carry activism-led messaging, with no paid advertising since 2020, when the company withdrew from Facebook and Instagram to protest climate misinformation (Patagonia, n.d.-a). FY24 results back this up: Scope 2 emissions dropped 96% from the FY17 baseline, and 98% renewable electricity was in use across owned and operated sites (Patagonia Works, 2025a; Outdoor Industry Association, 2024). Consumer education is built into the product model: Worn Wear operates repair tours and digital guides across markets, and the September 2024 ‘Shop Used’ digital storefront put circular buying at the point of sale (Better Trail, 2026). The main unresolved tension is structural — supply chain and materials make up roughly 99% of total emissions, and reaching the 2040 net-zero target requires Scope 3 reductions of around 10% per year, a delivery gap Patagonia itself acknowledged in its first consolidated FY25 impact report (Patagonia Works, 2025a).

IKEA. IKEA frames green promotion around a single proposition: sustainability at a price anyone can afford. Its environmental communication — spread across country-specific Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and TikTok accounts — is a commercial argument rather than activism, presenting lower prices and lower emissions as the same direction of travel. The IKEA Sustainability Report FY24 shows a 28% absolute climate-footprint reduction versus FY16, achieved alongside a 10% average price cut across all markets, a deliberate pairing (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c). The IKEA Climate Report FY24, published at the same time, gave a full SBTi-validated FY30 roadmap for the entire franchise system (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025d). Consumer education in FY24 included the expanded TRIXIG repair range and the ONE HOME, ONE PLANET U.S. convening (IKEA U.S., 2024), while Ingka Group's FY24 Annual Summary showed a 30.1% footprint reduction as revenue grew 23.7% — auditable decoupling data (Ingka Group, 2024). A credibility problem surfaced in April 2024 when Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe published an investigation linking seven of IKEA's wood suppliers to old-growth forest destruction in Romania's Carpathian Mountains. IKEA denied wrongdoing and cited legal compliance and FSC certification, but the report revealed a gap between stated sourcing commitments and independently verified supply-chain conditions (Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe, 2024; Mongabay, 2024).

Unilever. Unilever runs green promotion through purpose-led brand campaigns at enormous scale — its portfolio reaches over three billion consumers daily — with brands such as Dove, Lifebuoy, and

Field Study

Hellmann's each acting as individual sustainability-communication vehicles on digital and social platforms. The 2024 Annual Report and Accounts is the primary formal sustainability disclosure document (Unilever, 2025a). The December 2024 UAE campaign is the clearest 2024 example: paid Instagram and TikTok advertising, radio, in-store activations, and a dedicated microsite together reached 9.8 million consumers and generated 63 million impressions while funding 6,000 mangrove restorations (Campaign Middle East, 2025). The 2024 Growth Action Plan trimmed the sustainability framework from 27 goals to four pillars — climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods — framed internally as sharper focus but criticised externally as reduced ambition (Unilever, 2024d; Packaging Europe, 2024). Transparency is partly supported by multi-framework reporting (TCFD, GRI, ISSB) and a 72% Scope 1 and 2 reduction versus 2015 (Unilever, 2025a), but credibility suffered in 2024 from the rollback of the virgin plastic target and continued uncertainty over Scope 3 progress (Packaging Europe, 2024).

4.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies publish formal sustainability reports, hold SBTi-validated climate targets, and use multi-platform social media to communicate environmental commitments — a shared institutional baseline that now reflects sector norms rather than differentiation. The clearest difference is on KPI 3 (Transparency and Credibility): Patagonia leads, backed by a B Corp score of 166/250 from independent B Lab assessment, Scope 1–3 assurance in progress for FY24, and 99% PFAS removal by Q3 2024, all independently verified (Patagonia Works, 2024; Outdoor Industry Association, 2024). IKEA sits in the middle, with strong aggregate data from its dual FY24 report publications and Ingka's audited decoupling figures, but an unresolved credibility gap at the supplier level after the April 2024 Greenpeace investigation into Romanian forest sourcing (Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe, 2024; Mongabay, 2024). Unilever has the widest gap between stated ambition and documented delivery, driven by its 2024 plastic-target rollback and an unclear Scope 3 trajectory (Packaging Europe, 2024). Social media strategy also splits three ways: Patagonia relies on owned and earned channels with no paid social advertising; IKEA weaves sustainability into its general social content across country accounts; Unilever buys paid placements on Instagram and TikTok at mass scale. These are not merely tactical differences — they reflect fundamentally different views of how green promotion builds consumer trust. The overall finding is that reach and credibility are partly independent: scale expands the audience for sustainability messaging, but verified primary reporting, not impression counts, remains the real test of whether that messaging reflects substantive practice.

Beyond external communication, green marketing also depends on the people who deliver it. The chapter therefore turns next to the People dimension, examining how each company trains, engages, and mobilises its own workforce around environmental sustainability.

5. Green People

5.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. Patagonia uses paid time in the field rather than classroom courses. Any employee can take up to two months off, fully paid, to work inside an environmental nonprofit — the core training mechanism (Patagonia, n.d.-e). In FY25, staff logged 27,000 paid volunteering hours and delivered \$2.4 million in skills-based support to grantee organisations (Patagonia Works, 2025a). The strongest cultural signal is structural: the 2022 ownership transfer to the Patagonia Purpose Trust and Holdfast Collective made environmental purpose part of the company's legal charter, backed by \$14.7 million distributed to

Field Study

824 nonprofits in FY25 (Patagonia Works, 2025a, 2025b). The gap is that the FY25 report gives no training headcount or hours figure, so how widely the internship reaches across the workforce remains unknown.

IKEA. IKEA's strongest FY25 people evidence comes from two named programmes. The IKEA Foundation's Ambassador Programme drew close to 800 co-worker applicants; 169 were selected and joined a peer-learning community of more than 550 people across 30+ countries (IKEA Foundation, 2025). IKEA Social Entrepreneurship involved dedicated co-workers mentoring 120 social entrepreneurs across 21 countries (IKEA, 2025). These are genuine, FY25-anchored figures, but they cover a self-selected minority of a workforce in the hundreds of thousands. Broader moves in FY25 include a new OKR-based sustainability strategy and a full ESG restructure of the Annual Report in line with the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (Inter IKEA Group, 2025; Ingka Group, 2026). No company-wide training hours or completion rate for environmental content was disclosed.

Unilever. Unilever's FY2025 disclosures focus more on suppliers than on employees. Supplier-facing programmes carry concrete numbers — almost 200 suppliers in the Supplier Climate Programme and regenerative agriculture across more than 250,000 hectares — while the employee-side evidence is thinner (Unilever, 2024c). The 'Sustainability Hour' volunteering scheme exists but carries no participation figure, and mandatory Business Integrity training covers ethics and compliance rather than environmental content (Unilever, n.d.-a, n.d.-e). At the leadership tier the evidence is stronger: since 2024, 15% of management's long-term Performance Share Plan has been tied to a Sustainability Progress Index covering climate, nature, plastics, and livelihoods, and a monthly Executive Sustainability Steering Committee with named sponsors, re-established in 2025, oversees each priority area (Unilever, 2026). This is solid accountability at the top; comparable broad-workforce evidence is absent from FY2025 disclosures.

5.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies formally link sustainability to their stated purpose, and each discloses at least one co-worker-specific FY2025 metric — that is the shared baseline. The sharpest gap is in Employee Training: Patagonia has a named, open-to-all paid programme, while IKEA and Unilever have no equivalent environmental-training metric in their FY25 disclosures. In Participation, Patagonia's 27,000 company-wide paid hours sit well above IKEA's 169-ambassador cohort and Unilever's unquantified scheme. Patagonia's edge is partly structural — the 2022 ownership change is not an option available to a franchise group or a listed PLC — so the gap reflects different governance models as well as different effort levels. For green-marketing evaluation, People-dimension claims are easiest to verify when a company publishes workforce-wide, year-anchored figures; they are hardest when, as with Unilever in FY2025, the richest disclosed data concerns the supply chain and the executive tier rather than the broader employee base. Consistent with the disclaimer at the start of this section, none of these patterns is direct evidence of how employees themselves experience these programmes — only of what each organisation has chosen to document.

Having considered how each company engages its own people, the chapter now examines the Process dimension — the internal systems, certifications, and operational mechanisms through which environmental commitments are implemented and verified.

Field Study

6. Green Process

6.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. During its reporting period ending in April 2024, Patagonia oriented its green process agenda around product longevity and material quality as primary mechanisms for waste prevention. The company repaired 145,446 garments across 113 locations and sustained a 73% recycled-material share in apparel inputs, while achieving a 97% PFC/PFAS-free manufacturing rate — substantially reducing hazardous process waste (Patagonia Works, 2024). These practices are structurally embedded in Patagonia's benefit-corporation model and reflect a deliberate decoupling of product value from resource throughput; however, water conservation at the factory level remains an area where quantified evidence is absent from public disclosures, and the recovery rate for end-of-life garments reported in the FY25 context suggests that operational circularity is still at an early stage of scale (Patagonia Works, 2025a).

IKEA. Over the twelve months ending in August 2024, IKEA pursued green-process improvement predominantly through product design and material innovation at scale. The company launched the DÅNHULT foam-less sofa using textile-waste felt, transitioned furniture-fittings packaging to paper — reducing plastic by an estimated 1,400 tonnes annually — and achieved a 60.5% reduction in food waste per portion served since FY17 across its retail operations (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c). IKEA's strength lies in its system-level circular design architecture: with 16% recycled-wood content, structured Buy-Back programmes, and a third revision of its circular product design guide completed in 2024, the company applies circular-economy principles at the product-development stage rather than solely as end-of-life measures. Water stewardship at the operational level, however, remains at a strategic planning phase, with no binding water-reduction targets disclosed for FY24 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025d).

Unilever. Throughout the 2024 calendar year, Unilever focused its green-process efforts on the measurable reduction of manufacturing waste and water, underpinned by some of the most quantitatively robust environmental disclosures among large FMCG companies. The company maintained zero non-hazardous waste to landfill across its global manufacturing network, achieved a 72% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions since 2015, and reduced water use per tonne of production by 47% since 2008, while operating 21 water stewardship programmes in water-stressed areas (Unilever, 2025a). Its circular-economy ambitions, while directionally aligned with industry best practice — including 21% recycled plastic content and active refill pilots — remain at a transitional phase relative to its operational waste and water benchmarks, and progress toward its 40% virgin-plastic-reduction target by 2028 has been acknowledged as non-linear (Unilever, 2025a).

6.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies demonstrate third-party verification of their sustainability commitments — Patagonia through B Lab certification (Patagonia Works, 2024), IKEA through SBTi validation of its climate goals in June 2024 (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025d), and Unilever through KPMG-assured sustainability disclosures aligned with emerging ESRS standards (Unilever, 2025a) — establishing a shared baseline of accountability characteristic of leading green-process management. The sharpest divergence appears on water conservation: Unilever leads with a 47% manufacturing water-use reduction per tonne of production since 2008 and 21 active stewardship programmes, while both Patagonia and IKEA lack quantified operational water-reduction targets or factory-level water metrics in FY24, suggesting that for these two companies water stewardship remains embedded in upstream supplier

Field Study

management rather than in directly controlled operations. Unilever's scale as a mass-market FMCG manufacturer gives its process-level waste and water credentials particular strategic weight, since its innovations — zero landfill, manufacturing water intensity, plastic reduction — are embedded across hundreds of factories globally rather than confined to a niche premium segment; Patagonia's narrower operational footprint enables deep integration of circular-design principles, while IKEA occupies a distinctive middle position by structurally embedding circular-economy principles into product design and retail services at a scale accessible to mass consumers. Taken together, these findings suggest that green-process management maturity correlates with the extent to which sustainability standards are operationalised through measurable, facility-level targets rather than through product or supply-chain initiatives alone — and that all three companies, despite meaningful progress, face the common challenge of scaling circular recovery at end-of-life beyond their current implementation levels.

Having examined the internal processes that operationalise environmental commitments, the chapter turns finally to Physical Evidence — the tangible, verifiable proof points through which each company's green claims become visible and credible to stakeholders.

7. Green Physical Evidence

7.1 Organizational Practices

Patagonia. During its reporting period ending in April 2024, Patagonia provides what is arguably the most product-proximate green physical evidence among the three companies studied, deploying multiple independently verified eco-labels directly observable by consumers at the point of purchase. The Fair Trade Certified™ label — applied to 88% of its products and backed by US\$32.26 million in worker premiums paid since 2014 — constitutes externally audited social and environmental evidence that directly reinforces its brand promise (Patagonia Works, 2024). The bluesign® system partnership, active since 2007, provides chemical- and resource-management verification across the textile supply chain, with nine of Patagonia's ten principal material suppliers holding system-partner status, making the label a credible material-level signal rather than a marketing claim (Patagonia Works, 2024). The packaging estate is equally tangible: all boxes, mailers, and tags are made from recycled content or FSC®/SFI-certified material, and the substitution of QR-code hang tags for information-heavy paper ones has eliminated more than 40 million tags — a quantifiable reduction in packaging waste that consumers can observe with every purchase (Patagonia, n.d.-a). Overarching these product-level signals is the B Corp score of 166, independently assessed and recertified by B Lab, which provides holistic third-party verification that Patagonia's sustainability credentials span governance, workers, community, environment, and customers simultaneously (Patagonia Works, 2024).

IKEA. Over the twelve months ending in August 2024, IKEA emphasises material-level and system-level green physical evidence, with the FSC® label functioning as its most visible consumer-facing sustainability signal. The requirement that all home-furnishing suppliers use FSC-certified or recycled wood — resulting in 97% of wood meeting this standard in FY24 — means that the FSC mark appears broadly across the IKEA product range, offering consumers an independently recognised, globally credible label tied to responsible forestry (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., n.d.-a). On packaging, the transition to paper-based fitting bags, projected to reduce virgin plastic by approximately 1,400 tonnes annually, represents a tangible, observable shift in the physical presentation of IKEA products at the point of use, though the full rollout was in progress rather than complete during FY24 (Inter IKEA

Field Study

Systems B.V., 2025c). The SBTi validation of IKEA's net-zero science-based targets in June 2024 constitutes the most significant independently verified credential obtained during the FY24 period: it positions climate commitments as externally audited obligations rather than voluntary pledges, reinforcing IKEA's broader green-marketing positioning (Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2024). IKEA's physical evidence is thus strongest at the material and structural levels, and somewhat less developed at the individual product-label level relative to Patagonia.

Unilever. Throughout the 2024 calendar year, Unilever's green physical evidence is concentrated at the commodity-supply-chain level rather than the finished-product level, reflecting the structural characteristics of a fast-moving consumer goods business serving more than 190 countries across dozens of product categories. RSPO certification of 82% of core palm oil volumes and Rainforest Alliance or Fairtrade certification of 98% of cocoa derivatives are meaningful, independently verified credentials, and the respective logos appear on qualifying product lines such as Lipton tea and Ben & Jerry's (Unilever, 2025a, 2025d). Packaging evidence, however, is more qualified: while the 23% reduction in virgin plastic versus the 2019 baseline and 21% recycled content are measurable achievements, Unilever publicly revised its 2025 packaging targets downward during 2024 after acknowledging that recycling infrastructure constraints had prevented the originally pledged 50% reduction, reducing the immediate credibility of packaging as tangible evidence of commitment (Unilever, n.d.-d). The 97% deforestation-free sourcing rate, verified through satellite monitoring and independent protocols, is a strong measurable credential, yet it operates primarily as a supply-chain assurance rather than a consumer-visible product-level label (Unilever, 2025a). Unilever's physical evidence is therefore broader in commodity scope than either Patagonia or IKEA, but less uniformly observable by individual consumers at point of purchase.

7.2 Comparative Analysis & Green Marketing Implications

All three companies ground their green physical evidence in third-party verification rather than relying solely on self-declarations: Patagonia's B Corp certification and bluesign® partnership, IKEA's FSC® requirement and SBTi-validated climate targets, and Unilever's RSPO, Rainforest Alliance, and Fairtrade-certified commodity sourcing each represent independently audited credentials that can, in principle, be corroborated by external stakeholders (Patagonia Works, 2024; Inter IKEA Systems B.V., 2025c; Unilever, 2025a). The sharpest divergence lies in the packaging indicator, where Patagonia already operates fully from recycled or certified materials, IKEA is mid-transition with a concrete and announced plastic-reduction programme, and Unilever, despite absolute progress, publicly scaled back its packaging targets during the comparison year itself, creating the weakest evidence base among the three on this dimension. Patagonia leads most clearly on both the depth and consumer visibility of its physical evidence, primarily because its apparel product category is amenable to product-level labelling (Fair Trade Certified™, bluesign®, GRS, RCS) in a way that neither home furnishings nor fast-moving consumer goods permit at comparable scale; this structural industry advantage should be acknowledged when interpreting comparative scores. For green-marketing evaluation, these findings affirm the proposition that tangible, observable, and independently verified sustainability signals are more persuasive to informed consumers than self-reported targets: Patagonia's evidence is the most proximate to the point of purchase, IKEA's is anchored at the material and institutional levels, and Unilever's

Field Study

operates most prominently in the supply chain — each representing a different manifestation of green physical evidence aligned with the respective company's product architecture and market positioning.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented a comparative empirical analysis of green marketing practices across three globally recognized corporations — Patagonia, IKEA, and Unilever — through the lens of the 7Ps framework. By examining each company's approach to green product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence, the chapter revealed both the diversity of strategies employed and the common underlying commitment to environmental responsibility that unites them. The comparative scoring and cross-company pattern analysis further illustrated how each organization integrates sustainability into its core marketing operations at different scales and with different emphases.

The findings of this chapter demonstrate that green marketing is not a uniform practice but rather a flexible, context-dependent strategy shaped by a company's size, industry positioning, and corporate values. Despite these differences, all three cases confirm that sustained institutional commitment — embedded across every dimension of the marketing mix rather than limited to isolated initiatives — is what defines meaningful and lasting environmental engagement. These insights form the empirical foundation upon which the broader conclusions and recommendations of this thesis are built.

Conclusion

Conclusion

Conclusion:

The comparative analysis of IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever across the seven dimensions of the green marketing mix — Product, Price, Place (Distribution), Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence — reveals a consistent hierarchy of performance, a set of shared practices, and a number of strategic divergences that have direct implications for green marketing theory and practice.

Patagonia leads on the greatest number of indicators, achieving High scores across all three KPIs in Green Product, Green Price, Green Promotion, and Green Physical Evidence, and High scores on Participation and Culture in Green People. Its strongest practices are the integration of environmental purpose into the legal ownership structure, the deployment of independently certified eco-labels at product level (B Corp, Fair Trade Certified, bluesign®), and the Worn Wear repair-and-resale model, which embeds circular behaviour directly into the purchase journey. Its primary weakness lies in Green Place (Distribution), where no FY24-specific transport or logistics metric is disclosed, and in Green Process, where water conservation evidence at factory level is absent.

IKEA leads on Green Place (Distribution), achieving High scores on both transport emission reduction and greener transport through its Decarb Catalogue and company-wide metrics, and leads on Circular Economy Integration within Green Process through its Circular Product Design Guide and scaled Buyback programme. Its weakest dimension is Green People, where no environmental training metric is disclosed for its broader workforce. A documented supplier credibility gap — the April 2024 Greenpeace investigation linking seven IKEA suppliers to old-growth forest destruction in Romania — introduces a tension between institutional-level sustainability claims and verified supply-chain conditions.

Unilever leads on Green Process, particularly on Waste Reduction (zero landfill maintained since 2014) and Water Conservation (a 47% improvement in manufacturing water use per tonne since 2008 and 21 active stewardship programmes). Its weakest dimension is Green Product, where recycled materials represent only approximately 2% of total portfolio weight, and no repair or buyback programme operates at scale. Credibility in Green Promotion was weakened in 2024 by the downward revision of the virgin plastic reduction target and continued uncertainty regarding Scope 3 progress.

Three cross-company patterns emerge consistently from the analysis. First, all three companies demonstrate a gap between supply-chain-level sustainability performance and product-level environmental evidence: strong credentials at the governance and sourcing level do not automatically translate into consumer-observable, independently verified green product claims. Second, third-party certification is the decisive differentiator of credibility across all dimensions; companies that can point to independently verified, product-proximate evidence — a B Corp score, an SBTi-validated net-zero target, or FSC labels at point of purchase — score consistently higher on transparency and credibility KPIs than those relying primarily on self-reported disclosures. Third, disclosure gaps — the absence of a specific, current-year, company-wide metric — are the most common reason for a Low or Medium score rather than evidence of weak underlying practice; this finding has important implications for how sustainability reporting maturity should be distinguished from sustainability performance.

Conclusion

- **Practical Recommendations**

The following recommendations are addressed to managers, marketing practitioners, sustainability managers, and multinational companies engaged in or planning green marketing strategies. Each recommendation is grounded directly in findings from the comparative analysis and is intended to address weaknesses or reinforce successful practices identified across IKEA, Patagonia, and Unilever.

- **Translate Supply-Chain Sustainability into Product-Level Evidence Visible to Consumers:**

- The analysis consistently identifies a gap between strong supply-chain-level environmental performance and consumer-visible, product-level green claims. Unilever achieves high scores on sourcing sustainability — 97% deforestation-free primary commodities, 79% sustainably sourced key crops — yet scores Low on recycled material content at product level and Low on durable product design, both of which are the dimensions consumers can most directly observe. Managers should prioritise translating upstream sustainability achievements into product-embedded evidence through independently certified eco-labels (such as Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, or Global Recycled Standard) that appear at the point of purchase. Investment in supply-chain sustainability that does not eventually manifest as a product-level credential risks being commercially invisible to the consumers it is intended to persuade.
- **Invest in Repair, Buyback, and Resale Programmes Scaled to Business Model:** Patagonia's Worn Wear programme — 145,446 garments repaired globally in FY24 across 113 locations — and IKEA's Buyback and Resell service — 495,000 units processed in FY24 across 28 markets — are the two strongest examples of circular economy integration in this study. Both programmes score High on Durable Product Design and Circular Economy Integration, and both function as consumer incentive mechanisms as well as operational sustainability tools. Unilever, operating in the fast-moving consumer goods sector, lacks an equivalent mechanism and scores Low on both indicators. Sustainability managers across sectors should assess what form of end-of-life or use-extension programme is structurally feasible for their product category and design it at a scale sufficient to generate reportable impact data. A programme that reaches only 6,000 customers — as was the case with Unilever's refill pilot — is not meaningfully comparable to a 495,000-unit buyback service, and should be either scaled or repositioned as a pilot in communications rather than presented as a core green marketing claim.
- Strengthen the integration of supply-chain sustainability into product-level environmental attributes that are directly visible and verifiable by consumers.
- Expand circular business practices, including repair, buy-back, refurbishment, and resale programmes, in ways that reflect the operational characteristics of each industry.
- Increase reliance on internationally recognised third-party environmental certifications to enhance the credibility and transparency of green marketing claims.

Conclusion

- Develop comprehensive sustainability reporting supported by specific, measurable, company-wide, and current-year environmental indicators across all dimensions of the Green Marketing Mix.

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Horizons of the Study

Future research may extend the present study by addressing the following areas:

- Examining the influence of circular economy initiatives on consumer trust, green brand equity, and purchase intentions across different industries.
- Investigating the role of artificial intelligence and digital technologies in improving the credibility, monitoring, and communication of green marketing practices.
- Assessing the long-term marketing and reputational implications of purpose-driven corporate governance models and evolving sustainability commitments.
- Applying the Green Marketing Mix framework to multinational corporations operating in emerging economies in order to evaluate its validity across different institutional and regulatory contexts.

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