

Name of the student:	Lucy Anna Obadia
Title of the thesis:	Mitigating Greenwashing Practices in the Fashion Industry: Assessing the Effectiveness of the New EU Green Claims Directive. A Case Study of Primark
Reviewer:	Javier Arregui

1. KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTION TO THE FIELD

(relevance of the research question, research objective, literature review):

The thesis poses a research question that deals with how effective is the New Green Claims Directive for substantiating green claims within the fashion industry. The central goal is to verify the extent to which the new regulation actually matches the practical green standards implemented by the fashion industry, more in particular, by Primark. This is certainly a relevant topic insofar it could be a nice test of the regulation quality implemented in EU politics. Doing so by a narrative perspective enriches our understanding of how complex regulation could be and how companies frame economic regulation.

In my opinion, the most interesting part of the thesis is the analysis about the matching between regulation and actual Primark's behaviour regarding to green labelling and the production process. This has the potential to generate interesting insights. However, the thesis in the current state is more narrative than actually rooted in theory. This makes difficult to gain real insights about how effective is EU regulation beyond some anecdotal claims found in the empirical section. What I argue here is that the paper lacks theoretical ambition to dive into the factors that determine company's behaviour and how this fits into the quality of EU regulation. This is an extraordinary relevant topic, which has been little studied and that it is key since 95 % of the EU legislation are regulatory policies. In other words, I miss theory development, theory that could help us to understand better the dependent variable (which I guess is degree of effectiveness of EU regulation) (I say I guess since it is not clearly specified in the thesis), our independent variables (which actually are not clearly specified either in the thesis, but in a rather indirect way) and how to integrate the explanation of both, dependent and independent variables. This is missing in the thesis and this is relevant insofar it would have helped to better understand the dynamics and the reasons behind the degree of effectiveness of the regulation under study.

I have also missed a clear specification about what the research question is going to add to the current knowledge about the degree of effectiveness of EU regulations, in general, and in the fashion industry in particular. This is relevant insofar it would have helped to figure out better the relevance not only of the research topic but also of the research approach used in the thesis.

Beyond that, the literature review and the background information about the greenwashing regulations is rather complete and presented in a quite attractive way.

2. ANALYSIS

(methodology, argument, theoretical backing, appropriate work with sources):

In the thesis there is a literature review section as mentioned previously, but I miss a more general approach. The literature review is mainly based on greenwashing practices which is related to company's behaviour but it is completely missing the development of the dependent variable (effectiveness of a regulation, which is not even defined and/or developed from the regulation theory) as well as how related are both dependent and independent variables in terms of the conditions and rationale(s) used by the actors involved in the regulation process.

The methodology is a case study which is basically justified according to the availability and reliability of the data. Probably it is not the best argument but it is understandable. The section is also well explained and it uses reasonable arguments.

Although I have also some doubts about selecting a rather recent regulatory initiative to be studied. It is literally impossible to study something that has been approved a short time ago. This strategy does not provide you with enough perspective to know the real impact of the regulation under study.

On the other hand, I understand the complexity of the analysis, but as the author recognised by analysing only a case, even an important actor in the fashion industry, the number of substantive claims and/or insights that can be made is rather small, unless the study is able to identify real explanatory mechanisms of company's behaviour, which unfortunately is not the case in this thesis.

The analysis is what the author argues "a comprehensive analysis of the EU New Green Claims Directive with a qualitative case study of Primark's sustainability claims". This matching between both it has been made in a rather systematic way and it is presented in a narrative and reasonable way. Perhaps what I missed was some interviews to actors related to Primark (and/or even the European Commission) in order to explain why they did what they did and in the way they did it. It would have provided a richer and complementary interpretation than this one made by the author herself.

3. CONCLUSIONS

(persuasiveness, link between data and conclusions, achievement of research objectives):

The conclusions are more about a summary of the thesis as well as the limitations of the study than about the new ideas and insights derived from the implications of the findings. I believe this is because the findings are rather descriptive and poorly rooted in theory. Thus, it is difficult to construct policy implications about the effectiveness of EU regulations unless they are rooted in regulatory theory.

4. FORMAL ASPECTS AND LANGUAGE

(appropriate language, adherence to academic standards, citation style, layout):

The thesis is, in general, nicely written and uses scholarly language. Although oftentimes (mainly at the beginning of the thesis) some paragraphs are rather repetitive.

The author uses footnote citations.

The references are properly cited and complete.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT

(strong and weak point of the dissertation, other issues)

The thesis has strong points:

- Original research question

- Original information (collected by the author)
- Systematic analysis of the EU New Green Claims Directive and the Primark's implementation
- Good formal aspects and language of the thesis

Weaker points:

- The fitting between the research question and the contribution of the thesis needs a new and more ambitious frame
- Lack of systematic theoretical development
- A single case study remains with a limited explanatory capacity
- Room for better conclusions and above all the main implications of the thesis from a broader perspective

Grade (A-F):	7,5
Date:	Signature:
09/09/2023	Javier Arregui

Percentile	Prague		Krakow		Leiden		Barcelona	
	A (91-100)	91-100 %	8,5%	5	6,7%	8,5-10	5,3%	9-10
B (81-90)	81-90 %	16,3%	4,5	11,7%	7,5-8,4	16,4%	8-8,9	11,0 %
C (71-80)	71-80 %	16,3%	4	20%	6,5-7,4	36,2%	7-7,9	18,4 %
D (61-70)	61-70 %	24%	3,5	28,3%			6-6,9	35,2 %
E (51-60)	51-60 %	34,9%	3	33,4 %	6-6,4	42,1 %	5-5,9	30,1 %

Assessment criteria:

Excellent (A): 'Outstanding performance with only minor errors';

Very good (B): 'Above the average standard but with some errors';

Good (C): 'Generally sound work but with a number of notable errors';

Satisfactory (D): 'Fair but with significant shortcomings';

Sufficient (E): 'Performance meets the minimum criteria';

Fail: 'Some/considerable more work required before the credit can be awarded'.