Hotels in Sweden in the regard of green marketing

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Abstract

Although marketing has been prevalent for many decades, the concept of green marketing remains relatively novel to both consumers and businesses. In the light of the evolving global climate, and escalating concerns regarding sustainability, businesses are compelled to explore new approaches. Among various industries, the hotel industry has been affected one of the most, particularly in recent years. Both green and conventional hotels have been facing challenges stemming from sustainability. A particular emphasis has been on fulfilling market demands. Consequently, hotels need to contemplate how to effectively communicate their ongoing changes in their sustainability practices. This is where marketing assumes a pivotal role. Given the nascent nature of green marketing and its lack of standardised definition, this research endeavours to open hotel managers’ interpretations of green marketing in Sweden. The author conducts an in-depth examination and analysis of the websites of four prominent hotel chains - Scandic Hotels, Nordic Choice Hotels, Radisson Hotel Group and Ligula Hospitality Group. To enhance comprehension, ten interviews with managers from the mentioned hotels in Sweden are also conducted and analysed. To address the research questions, this paper employs discourse analysis as a methodological framework. The study encompasses spoken and written text analysis utilising Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Framework on different levels, as well as visual analysis from the theoretical perspective of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen.

Keywords: green marketing, hotels, Sweden, managers, discourse, sustainability
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1. Introduction

For numerous years, sustainability and the concept of “going green” have become widely used lexicons across various disciplines, including marketing. Nevertheless, the definition of sustainability, both within and beyond marketing, remains debatable (McDonagh & Prothero, 2014). The contradictory nature of marketing is currently a subject of contention, specifically whether marketing can be green when it is based on continuous consumption. Green marketing is not limited to a specific industry or product category, as it can be applied to any product or service with environmental implications. Existing studies have explored the factors driving green marketing practices in a variety of industries, including the hotel industry (Chan, 2013). Consequently, many hotel managers are attempting to boost their financial performance through various environmental initiatives while also improving their hotel’s brand image. Nonetheless, green marketing has its challenges. The desire of customers generates opportunities for hotel businesses to advertise their green products and services. Despite this, many businesses are cautious about conducting ecologically focused campaigns due to fear of being accused of "greenwashing". Previous scholars (Ahmadi et al., 2015) have argued that marketing may also be used to encourage more environmentally friendly customer behaviour, thus, green marketing has been born.

While many consumers may possess environmental awareness, the premium price for eco-friendly products might be an obstacle. Therefore, companies are faced to ensure that their marketing efforts are targeted towards the appropriate audience and that their products are competitively priced. Furthermore, companies usually employ both written and visual green advertising. The language and visuals utilised in green advertisements perform discursive labour by representing things such as ecologically beneficial products/services. Moreover, it constructs social realities such as corporate responsibility for the environment and the values and meanings associated with green consumption. This process of representation and production is influenced by the formation and operationalization of language by specific actors (Fairclough, 1992). From this perspective, advertising discourses can favour or exaggerate particular interpretations of reality, as well as empower certain anticipated and advertised behaviours. Green marketing and communication are presumed to play an instrumental function in facilitating, rather than merely reflecting, consumers’ environmental responsibility choices, with an emphasis on categorising people and assessing if "green" appeals have marketing results. While practising any kind of marketing, it is crucial to use appropriate language to effectively send the message to the target audience (Barcelos et al., 2019).

However, it is still unclear how exactly hotels communicate the understanding of green marketing through discourse. In light of this research gap, this paper aims to explore the potential of discourse analysis in examining how hotels employ language in the context of green marketing. By analysing textual, visual, and verbal language found both on hotel websites and through interviews with hotel managers, this study seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the language adopted by hotels in green marketing context. To begin, this study addresses the existing research gap by synthesising the current literature and looking at issues in the hotel industry regarding green marketing. Secondly, by investigating the language used
in sustainability discussions on hotel chain websites, this research promotes a critical understanding of how firms construct meaning and knowledge regarding environmental consumption. Lastly, this study contributes to the literature gap on green marketing by exploring how managers in Sweden perceive green marketing. The following research questions are proposed:

- How do hotels in Sweden present their sustainability efforts on their official websites?
- How do hotel managers in Sweden perceive green marketing?
2. Literature review

2.1. Green marketing in theory

Numerous businesses worldwide are already adjusting their practices to meet the growing demand for sustainability from environmentally conscious customers. Sarkar (2012) states that the term "green" has come to represent brand positioning strategies for environmentally friendly and organic products. The functional aspects of green products which are directly linked to their performance, are believed to be primary attributes that green brand customers seek to experience so-called "environmental care" during product usage (Simanjutak et al., 2023). Green marketing has various terms such as environmental marketing, and ecological marketing. The history of green advertisement can be traced back to the 80s-90s. According to Roper Organization (1990), over eighty two percent of American customers were willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly items. Encouraged by such data, businesses found that green marketing may help not just value-conscious businesses, but also companies focusing on eco-friendly consumers. In the subsequent years, concepts such as sustainability, clean technology, environmental performance, and green customers gained prominence. In the 1990s, the scope of green marketing widened when scholars started investigating why people engage in sustainable practices (Pride and Ferrell, 1993). According to Pride and Ferrell (1993), green marketing is defined as an organisation's strategies on creating, promoting and distributing environmentally friendly products. Similarly, Elkington (1994) describes a green consumer as an individual who avoids items that are likely to threaten the customer's or others' health or create severe environmental damage. In the same year, Polonsky (1994) argued that most people view green marketing only as being limited to advertising of products with environmental characteristics. While researchers employ the term “green marketing” as an umbrella term for products, it represents a broader concept applicable to consumer, industrial goods and even services as a whole.

In the 2000s the term green marketing retained its focus on the promotion or advertising of environmentally conscious products. Moreover, there are commonly used words in the context of green marketing such as sustainable, recyclable, zero carbon and eco-friendly (Sarkar, 2012). However, Sarkar (2012) argues that green marketing has gained a broader definition that encompasses a range of activities including product modification, improvements to the manufacturing process, packaging adjustments and advertising modification. Heath and McKechnzie (2019) describe green marketing as "the comprehensive management process responsible for recognizing, predicting, and serving the demands of consumers and society financially and sustainably" (p. 141). Green marketing is currently viewed as an ideology advocating for sustainable development (Nekmahmud & Fekete-Farkas, 2020). Moreover, sustainability is recognised in the research field as the 17th component of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, n.d.) thereby compelling industries to be more mindful of their environmental impact.

It can be observed that some green marketing concepts nowadays are rooted in earlier literature. Ginsberg and Bloom (2004), for example, categorised green marketing into four basic
strategies based on the primary marketing-mix instruments known as 4Ps (product, price, place, and promotion): lean green strategy, defensive green strategy, shaded green strategy, and extreme green strategy. They also contend that the company's green strategy may shape customers' impressions regarding the underlying motivation behind its green marketing. For instance, companies that use the lean green approach often refrain from publicly promoting green initiatives due to the primary objective of cost savings through various environmental programs (Ginsberg & Bloom, 2004). Apart from the four main strategies, businesses have implemented a diverse range of green marketing strategies, such as the development of green products, creation of green advertisements, implementation of price increases for environmentally friendly products, and identifying more environmentally friendly ways to deliver products to market to meet the demands of their targeted green customers (Widyastuti et al., 2019). Evidently, the term “green marketing” has been covered by researchers from different years yet it is a broad concept to be researched further.

2.2. Green marketing in hotel industry

Despite hotels being the most profitable segment of the hospitality sector, there is a strong relationship between hotels and environmental challenges. The hotel sector, in particular, is heavily reliant on natural resources and requires a significant amount of energy. Energy, water, and non-renewable resources, for example, create a considerable quantity of greenhouse gas emissions, mostly carbon dioxide, which has a huge influence on the environment (Kasim, 2007). Larger international hotels due to their extensive facilities utilise more resources and generate larger amounts of waste (Kasim, 2007). According to researchers (Neto et al., 2020), green marketing techniques represent a novel addition that promotes environmentally and ecologically sustainable growth. Previous research (Widyastuti et al., 2019; Gao et al., 2019) has revealed that green marketing strategies have a considerable influence on customers' green purchasing behaviour. Moreover, studies (Sharma et al., 2021) have demonstrated that green marketing serves as a pathway to achieving a competitive advantage. Recognising the benefits of green marketing, numerous enterprises in the hotel sector have embraced this approach to enhance profits and reduce environmental impact.

Green marketing is closely associated with the concept of green hotels often referred to as a "eco-friendly" or "sustainable" hotel. As early as the 2000s, green hotels were already introduced as an emerging concept. Previous studies have indicated that many visitors favour ecologically friendly products and services when making purchases (Mercade et al., 2020; Proi et al., 2023). Therefore, by indirectly conveying the benefits through the green concept, environmental protection can be achieved. The business landscape for hotels is also shifting as a result of the rising market of green consumers. Hotels are primarily implementing sustainable marketing methods and pushing themselves toward accountability to fulfil the needs of the environmentally conscious clientele (Oxenswärdh, 2022). Consumer tastes and preferences have evolved as the environment has changed, and this development is very strongly represented even in the hotel business. Hotels showcase their green products and services on their websites, highlighting green features in guest rooms, the use of organic food in their outlets, and green awards. As stated above, many hotels employ the term "green hotel" as a
marketing strategy to attract visitors. Given that individuals are increasingly willing to pay extra for ecologically friendly services (Preziosi et al., 2022), cultivating a green image is seen to have a crucial influence on customers' decision-making processes. Similarly, some researchers (Lee, Hsu, Han, and Kim, 2010) believe that overall perception of a green hotel is positively impacted by cognitive image and emotional images, ultimately contributing to more favourable behavioural intentions. Previous studies in the hotel industry have primarily focused on examining the impact of a hotel's green image on customer behavioural intentions. However, the examination of how hotel guests and managers assess green marketing strategies remains largely unexplored.

2.3. Green marketing and consumer trust

Given the fundamental role of trust in any relationship, its involvement in social exchange connections cannot be overstated. Earlier studies have indicated that market trust is "existent when one party has faith in an exchange partner's dependability and honesty" (Hunt et al., 1994, p. 23), and "a desire to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Deshpau'de et al., 1992, p. 82). Subsequently, Liang et al. (2008) view trust as a multidimensional construct that represents the level at which each party in a commercial relationship perceives it. According to Wu et al., (2010), trust is a crucial aspect of building a successful marketing connection, serving as a prerequisite for services and a foundation for relationship stability, particularly in marketing. However, Jones (2009) suggests trust as a methodology for assessing overall performance, combining all strategic marketing decisions and key value initiatives aimed at enhancing relationships, trust, and profitability. Similarly, Agus et al. (2021) state the essential role of trust and commitment in ensuring long-term partnerships, highlighting that trust is the vital base of all interpersonal interactions. Notably, most consumers examine whether or not a firm can be trusted before establishing a connection with it (Junarsin et al., 2022). Extending trust is a valuable way to assess the veracity of views about competence and integrity (Wilkins, 2018). Other researchers state that trust is formed on three beliefs: honesty, compassion, and ability (Junarsin et al., 2022). The concept of "green trust" refers to a perception or expectation regarding the environmental benefit of a brand (Sh et al., 2020). A single brand preference can be used to determine customer loyalty (Muller, 2008; Gangwani et al., 2020). Ha (2021) describes green brand preference as the proclivity to select a certain green brand when alternative, similarly priced, equally performing options are available. Moreover, the latest study (Junarsin et al., 2022) demonstrates that trust is a significant factor influencing customers' online purchase behaviour. (Wu et al., 2010). These conceptualisations highlight its critical role in shaping and maintaining market interactions within organisations.

Hotels often are under much scepticism regarding greenwashing due to guests' limited ability to ascertain the sustainability credentials of a hotel. This is where brand loyalty is a modest aspect that can help to alleviate the green energy brand's trust issue. The trust serves as a link between contentment with service recovery, cumulative satisfaction, and the relationship between pleasant feelings and loyalty. Kim and Sullivan (2019) state that customers rely on emotive cues from organisations as a reference point to judge quality, therefore, emotional components of trust are important. Evidently, recent studies advocate for hotels to adopt a
proactive approach to sustainability, recognising that sustainability is no longer an optional pursuit but rather a necessity.

2.4. Discourse analysis within the realm of green marketing

Essentially, discourse analysis is a valuable technique employed by scholars across various disciplines, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, linguistics, communication studies, and more (Yazdannik et al., 2017). Moreover, it has been used to examine how language is used to build social reality and construct meaning in marketing (Yazdannik et al., 2017). It has been proposed that discourse analysis cannot be categorised as a single technique, but rather as an approach to exploring the usage of language (Fairclough, 2001). Discourse analysis may be used in the context of green marketing to investigate how language is used to encourage environmental ideals and sustainability, as well as how green marketing can be used to reinforce dominant ideologies and power structures. Within this framework, the examination of greenwashing emerges as a crucial area of study in green marketing discourse (Jones, 2019). Greenwashing is making misleading or false statements about a product's or service's environmental advantages (Jones, 2019). To discover methods employed to generate a sense of environmental responsibility or sustainability, discourse analysis was used by scholars to investigate the language used in green marketing (Jones, 2019).

The study of consumption and sustainability discourses is another area of investigation within green marketing discourse analysis. Researchers in this field are curious to understand how language is employed to shape and develop specific beliefs about what it means to be a responsible consumer (Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Kronrod, 2022). Helm et al., (2019) have investigated how the rhetoric of "green consumerism" promotes the notion that individual consumers can affect change by purchasing environmentally friendly items while neglecting systemic factors that contribute to environmental concerns. They have also explored the language used to advocate the concept that consuming more sustainably can be considered a form of "ethical consumption" that promotes social and environmental justice (Helm et al., 2019). Furthermore, researchers have investigated how language may be used to foster environmental education and awareness, as well as to build networks of support and action addressing environmental concerns (Fang et al., 2022). By investigating how language is used to construct meaning and promote certain beliefs about sustainability and consumption, researchers can find opportunities for social change in society. However, it is important to note that research on green marketing through discourse analysis remains limited, therefore, there is a need for this study to contribute to the existing literature gap.
3. Methodology Approaches

3.1. Theory of Science

Science theory has crucial implications for the design and interpretation of qualitative research studies in green marketing. Qualitative research methods are especially effective for delving into the complex and context-specific social and cultural elements (Hammarberg et al., 2016) that impact attitudes toward sustainability and environmental responsibility. However, employing qualitative approaches necessitates paying close attention to the underlying assumptions and concepts that underlie scientific study. The degree to which scientific study is devoid of prejudice or personal influence is referred to as objectivity.

Given the various social and cultural aspects that impact consumer attitudes toward sustainability, impartiality in qualitative research on green marketing can be especially difficult to accomplish. To solve these issues, qualitative researchers must carefully assess how they do their study. This may entail formulating a specific research topic and theoretical framework to guide the research, as well as taking a methodical approach to data collecting and analysis. Researchers must also be mindful of their own biases and preconceptions and take efforts to minimise their influence on the research. The topic of generalisation is another significant part of scientific theory that is relevant to qualitative research on green marketing. The extent to which study findings may be transferred to various contexts or people is referred to as generalizability (Ngenye & Kreps, 2020). Because qualitative research is generally focused on understanding the unique experiences and viewpoints of a certain group or community, generalizability is often less of a concern than quantitative research.

Despite the utilisation of qualitative research, researchers must be aware of their results' limits and the amount to which they may be applied to other situations (Ngenye & Kreps, 2020). This necessitates a thoughtful consideration of the sampling approach employed in the research as well as the evaluation of research findings. The scientific theory provides a valuable framework for comprehending the underlying assumptions that govern qualitative research on green marketing. Through qualitative research, scholars can delve in depth understanding of the social and cultural factors that influence consumer attitudes toward sustainability, thus contributing to the development of more effectively responsible marketing strategies.

There are many different approaches to discourse analysis (henceforth DA), including critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and linguistic anthropology. These approaches may differ in their theoretical foundations, research methods, and analytic techniques, but they all share a commitment to understanding the complex and multifaceted nature of language use in social life. Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary study field that examines how language is used in social interaction, communication, and expression of meaning (Fairclough, 1995). It involves analysing spoken, written, or visual communication to understand how people create
and convey meaning through language. Discourse analysis seeks to uncover the underlying structures and social processes that shape language use, such as power relations, social norms, cultural values, and identities. It can involve examining the use of language in various contexts, such as politics, media, education, healthcare, and everyday conversations. Overall, discourse analysis provides a powerful tool for understanding how language reflects and shapes social reality, and for identifying opportunities for social change and transformation. By examining how language is used to construct power relations, identities, and social systems, researchers can identify opportunities for social change and transformation. Discourse analysis is a versatile approach that can be used in a wide range of situations and research problems, making it an invaluable resource for scholars across many disciplines. However, according to Taylor (2023), the biggest challenge of DA is time. Goodman (2017, p. 146) states “While a large amount of data may sound impressive, discourse analysis is also very time-consuming so it is important not to become 'swamped' with too much data. Instead, the analyst should aim for an appropriate amount of data that is determined by the scope of the project, the type of data being used and the amount of available data”. It is a labour-intensive, and time-consuming analysis which requires proper text analysis alongside other stages leading to the analysis.

3.2. Data Collection Method and Procedure

According to Flick (2020), the choice of research problem in a qualitative study may be because participants would be difficult to reach using quantitative methods; in this case, the goal is to gain a deeper understanding and thoughts about hotel managers' perceptions of green tourism within their hotels. A qualitative study must investigate the views of the participants, which is the centre of the study, whereas a quantitative inquiry controls the queries and interest in a poll (Kandel, 2020). Nonetheless, perceptions, beliefs, ideas, and opinions are difficult to quantify quantitatively, hence, a qualitative method will be more appropriate to fulfil the goal of this study. Moreover, discourse analysis researcher Fairclough (2001) has proposed that DA scholars can also perform a detailed language investigation by analysing limited-size data. The main data is gathered through open-ended, semi-structured qualitative interviews with ten hotel managers. To carry out more accurate research it has been decided to conduct interviews with hotel managers in Sweden. Participants are all from different cities in Sweden, ethnicities, and speak different languages, however, the interviews were conducted in the English language. The data is supplemented by content, such as pictures and text, found on official hotel websites in the category of Sustainability and/or Corporate Social Responsibility.

The participants of this study were chosen by a convenient sample, that is, the participants were found by the author using online search tools, such as public websites and Linkedin. Thereafter, it was requested that information about this research be passed on to coworkers of respondents, therefore, the snowball method was used. Given the labour and time-consuming nature of DA, for proper analysis, ten individuals were interviewed. The process of asking questions can be very fluid, with the researcher free to consider and develop questions as they arise about the problem under investigation (Hancock et al., 2007). The following are common characteristics of conversations (Mason, 2002):

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• One-on-one meetings, bigger group interviews, or focus groups are all part of an interview, which can take place in person, via the phone or the Internet.
• Rather than a formal query, the interview is conducted in a casual manner, similar to a conversation.
• The interview is topic-centred meaning that the author has a list of issues they would like to talk about or set as a starting point for discussion.
• Meanings and understanding are created in an interaction that is essentially a co-production between the researcher and the interviewee.

Interviews were conducted via face-to-face meetings, Google Meet and Teams. The reason for online-based interviews is that not all interviewees are based in the same area as the author. To answer research questions, interviewees were chosen from different places in Sweden and different hotels. The author used the recording device to record interviews, which later got transcribed. Interviews lasted on average 45 minutes, and it was divided into 2 parts - the first part of the interview covered the general understanding of the concept by the respondents, to narrow the interaction of the interview down, and the second part was about interviewee hotels’ green initiatives specifically. The interview aimed to get a deeper understanding of manager persuasion of green marketing in Swedish hotels. The interview guide can be found in Appendix A.

3.3. Data Analysis Method

In the social sciences, the most common qualitative methods are content analysis, theme analysis, discourse analysis, and grounded theory analysis. To successfully answer the research questions, discourse analysis is the most appropriate in this study. Moreover, discourse analysis understands that language use profoundly affects how a person perceives the world and reality rather than being an impartial means through which various facts are reflected (Yazdannik et al., 2017). The main focus of this study is to examine how hotels in Sweden use spoken, visual and text language in the context of green marketing. Specifically, Fairclough's three-dimensional Discourse Analysis Framework is used as a framework for both spoken and text analysis for this study. Fairclough’s Framework consists of three so-called layers/dimensions - text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1995, p. 9). The study focuses on covering two dimensions of the framework - text analysis and discourse practice. Moreover, for analysing speech patterns, Fairclough’s DA Framework is used only on a textual analysis level. “Such analysis requires attention to textual form, structure and organisation at all levels; phonological, grammatical, lexical (vocabulary) and higher levels of textual organisation in terms of exchange systems, structures of argumentation, and generic structures” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 7). Due to the very in-depth nature of DA and the limited time and scope of this study, the focus is on two dimensions instead of three. According to Fairclough (1995), every dimension requires analysis. The first dimension is the text itself (object of analysis), which requires textual analysis covering context, description and a theory of language (Fairclough, 1995). The second dimension of this framework is discourse practice which implies the interpretation of the text requiring processing analysis. Fairclough (1995) states that all three
dimensions are interrelated, therefore, the discourse practice (second dimension) level is tightly connected to the first layer - text. Going beyond the broad explanation of the framework, while interpreting the written text, the author employs and bases the interpretation framework on Fairclough’s levels of interpretation (Fairclough, 2001).

Moreover, to make an in-depth analysis of visuals, the Fairclough framework is complemented by Kress and Leeuwn’s Visual Grammar Theory. Image, according to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), is a cohesive semiotic system that implies representational meaning, interactive meaning, and compositional meaning. According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), research on ways enterprises use promotional discourse to encourage customers must pay special attention to the use of visuals. The Visual Grammar Theory structures might be narrative, portraying unfolding actions and events, or conceptual, describing participants in terms of structure, or meaning. Moreover, the interactive meaning unfolds the relationships between the represented participants (things displayed in images) and the viewers, and the interactive participants (the image maker) are frequently involved (Kress and Leeuwen, 2006). In this particular study, Kress and Leewen’s explanation of angle, distance and size is looked at. Furthermore, the spoken text was correctly recorded and transcribed. The author divided the material into understandable text, such as sentences and paragraphs. Then, based on Fairclough's framework, which is covered in the following chapters, the author analysed the data by studying the patterns and themes that emerged from the coding. Relevant data such as recurring patterns, differences in language use, and other characteristics of communication were investigated.

3.4. Ethical Considerations and Validity

While interviewing people, ethical considerations must be brought up. According to Fleming and Zegwaard (2018), "existing relationships or prior activities by the researcher can potentially create a conflict of interest" (p.211). Therefore, the participants of this study were not previously acquainted with the author prior to the interviews. The general data of the interviewees are processed, that is, no sensitive data was mentioned. The consent form according to European General Data Protection Regulation (known as GDPR) compliance was sent to all interviewees before the meeting. Moreover, it has been stated in the consent form that all the interviews are anonymised. Besides, the author made sure that it was repeated during the interview.

One of the fundamental problems in qualitative research, according to Bryman and Bell (2007), is its validity. The significance and perception of a scale are central to validity, state McDowell and Newell (1996). According to McDowell and Newell (1996), there are several methods for determining validity, and it has been proposed that rather than relying on a single validation procedure, any indicator should be evaluated using a variety of approaches. However, validation is just as essential as the study itself (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The validity, honesty, and accuracy of the information given by hotel managers are the limitations of the qualitative study on hotels' green marketing strategies. In general, the statistics linked to some hotels' previous green initiatives are quite open and reliable. The reasons why the business is adopting green strategies may be more private and known only to staff members, rather than public
representatives. Besides, one should consider the fact that every company is interested in spreading the "good light" and positive brand image to the business, even though the interviewees and hotels are anonymous.
4. Data analysis

The goal of this research is to examine how hotels utilise spoken and written language to portray themselves as being environmentally responsible businesses on their corporate websites. The goal of this chapter is to give a thorough examination of how businesses convey corporate environmental responsibility using text and images. The nature of this analysis is textual, and the findings concentrate on the emerging themes. Assessing openly accessible sustainability data from various sorts of corporate web pages enables a consistent depiction of how businesses utilise language online. The analysis includes four distinct hotel groups and chains in Sweden - Scandic Hotels, Nordic Choice Hotels, Ligula Hospitality Group, and Radisson Hotel Group. Furthermore, the analysis is based on a framework provided by Fairclough's Discourse Analysis model, which aids in the textual analysis (descriptive), interpretation, and explanation of the data. Specifically, the webpage called “Sustainability” and/or CSR (known as Corporate Social Responsibility) page will be used for analysis; it describes the company’s responsibility to the environment, and its sustainable strategy and philosophy. The author chose Sustainability/CSR as the main webpage for analysis since one of the major methods for the company's environmental discourse is sustainability. Nonetheless, it highlights the company's core purpose, which is to be recognized as a responsible hotel. Moreover, Sustainability/CSR is the company's approach to openly displaying its green discourse. The Sustainability/CSR webpage is an essential advertising platform for displaying environmental initiatives, as well as a hub for green dialogue, and actions made by hotels.

4.1. Analysing Sustainability/CSR Web Pages

4.1.1. Green Advertising Discourse from Sustainability/CSR Web Pages

Corporate advertising is any discourse aimed at promoting a company's product/service or image (May & Cheney, 2007). The content from the company home page might be interpreted as promotional discourse and gathered as research data. All companies publicise and market their community participation on their Sustainability/CSR website, and their promotions go beyond driving service and product purchases. Furthermore, on their websites, they advocate environmental measures and seek contributions to conservation initiatives, as well as give chances for both local community engagement and industrial growth. There are frequent words on the Sustainability/CSR website that demonstrate a corporate viewpoint to meet the standards, create opportunities, and follow requirements. Therefore, companies are accountable or rather expected to offer to care for the environment. All four hotels analysed for this thesis had web pages named as Sustainability or/and CSR. The Webpage is designed to offer information about the hotel’s social responsibility or sustainability programs and practices which are done and have been achieved. As it was mentioned above, Nordic Hotel Group, Scandic Hotels Group, Ligula Hospitality Group, and Nordic Choice Hotels have Sustainability/CSR web pages which are open to the public. The information on the corporate Sustainability page is similar to that found in corporate social and environmental or sustainability annual reports, however, the discourse on the website is more incisive. Moreover, the Sustainability webpage attempts to welcome potential visitors with promotional language,
as opposed to the descriptive language found in the annual reports. The author of this study describes and explains the written text which is being analysed. The second part of the written text and visual analysis is an interpretation of text and pictures basing it on two dimensions of Fairclough's framework.

While analysing, it can be found that firms present their contributions to sustainability in an active voice and use positive adjectives and adverbs to indicate a high degree of objectives. As an example, “We have a long legacy of driving sustainability action in the hospitality industry” (Scandic Hotels, n.d.), “Radisson Hotel Group has a long history of being a responsible business, with our ambitious and award-winning program”, meanwhile another hotel group states: “We have high goals and a broad commitment [in sustainability]” (Nordic Choice Hotels). One can think of such wording as a representation of high certainty and perhaps authority. Hotel communication strategies can be seen to highlight their distinction and credentials as “green” leaders. In addition, the green leader position is supported by hotels focusing on showing their certificates awarded by a third party such as Nordic Swan Ecolabel. Although all studied hotels have a Sustainability webpage open to the public, only some have their green certificates such as “Eco-label” established on the webpage.

One could look at it as an implication that some hotels deem themselves as the authority on green credential recognition. However, to “balance it out”, hotels with no eco labelling open to the public, have open information about charity work. The language on the Sustainability/CSR pages speaks through the lens of being eco-, socio-, and economically efficient. Larger hotel chains tend to address all sustainability matters, while smaller local businesses do not demonstrate economic or cultural efficiency (Calisto et al., 2021). Nonetheless, all studied hotel chains express care for the environmental and sociocultural side of sustainability. More detailed, Nordic Choice Hotels and Radisson Hotel Group provide a more integrated approach to their sustainability plan. Both hotel groups emphasise the work which is done also towards the “communities” and “people’ which is the sociocultural side of sustainability. Nordic Choice Hotels specifically has a strategic relevance of being green, by having the so-called Green Stay category. This rather is an invitation for visitors to make conscious decisions. In comparison, Ligula Hospitality Group’s green speech is short and to the point, briefly mentioning the vision and following with the Sustainability report from 2018. The corporate green advertising on Sustainability/CSR web pages demonstrates that hotels are not only profit-driven but also stakeholder-driven - they care about the environment as well as the social side of sustainability. Such consciousness of environmental concerns specifically in Scandinavia, can be explained by its history. At the beginning of the 1960s (OECD, 2019) stricter regulations for corporations about the environment came into the picture. As a result, many companies were pushed to meet requirements to stay in the market.

4.1.2. Fairclough’s Interpretative Analysis Framework

This section examines the data's analytical framework before doing an interpretative analysis. The goal of this analysis is to discover the narrative themes of green marketing online. The
The interpretative analysis paradigm, according to Fairclough (2001), has three linked features that are employed to analyse data and decode the meaning in story formation. These are:

a) language content,

b) subjects,

c) the relationship between the subjects (Fairclough, 2001).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretative analysis features</th>
<th>Answers the question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language content</td>
<td>Answers the question: “What is going on?”; and includes verbs and purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Answer the question: “Who is involved?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relations</td>
<td>Answer the question: “What are the relationships between subjects?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The themes</td>
<td>Answer the question: “What is language’s role?” (Fairclough, 2001).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Fairclough’s Interpretative Analysis Framework by Elza Jakovele.

The following subsections will explain interpretive features as well as some examples demonstrating the value of Fairclough's DA at the interpretative analysis level. The language's contents are as follows: The "contents of language" refer to the response to the inquiry "What's going on?" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 122). A message's purpose is generated by both actions and subjects and particular activities serve specific topics. Verbs and modalities, which express these actions and subjects in language, aid analysts in their interpretations (Fairclough, 2001). Another part of the interpretive framework is the investigation of the message's subjects which is designed to answer the question, "Who is involved?" Fairclough (2001, p. 122). Another feature of the interpretive framework is relationships. Subject positions can help comprehend the power and social connections as they are represented and performed in speech. This study identifies two sorts of relationships between greener corporate marketing and customer: nurturing visitor trust and increasing visitor responsibility. These two relationships indicate two distinct types of intentions that are correlating. Connections: The third stage of the interpretive framework is to analyse connections, to answer the question "What role does language play?" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 148). Essentially, it can represent how texts appear in different situations and how they relate to wider genres. This implies that the corporation may have other goals outside environmental protection, and they are employing a multifunctional marketing technique to divert consumers' attention away from the fact. Therefore, the language used can contribute to the promotion of consumerism rather than education of environmental importance.
4.1.3. Analysing Text Language

The intent of communication may be examined by focusing on the language's contents (Fairclough, 2001). Verbs and voices are crucial components of linguistic content. Analyses of verbs and voices provide clues into the message producer's intent (Fairclough, 2001). The following section examines and provides instances of verb usage and its purpose.

Verbs

According to Fairclough (2001) and Janks (2005), Verbs are crucial in communicating the content of messages. Verbs can convey a sense of relational being and action. By carefully examining the data, the author has identified the most commonly used words between four hotel chains. Examples of such include “to have”, “need”, “make” and “care”. These verbs help to promote the company's capabilities derived from its commitment to sustainability. Moreover, through the use of such language, companies are capable of constructing themselves as being responsible and aware of their impact. Such commonly employed verbs contribute to the hotels’ positioning as a dominant player. The action verbs also aid in the implementation of the promotional feature by offering a variety of capabilities derived from corporate greenness. There are some examples: “We will create possibilities for people both in and out of our operations. We will run hotels so that they have the smallest environmental impact” (Nordic Choice Hotels), “..we have great power to drive transformation and inspire change at scale, for a better and more sustainable tomorrow. The planet does not need us – we need the planet” (Scandic Hotels). Such statements help to establish hotels as not only aware and accountable but also capable of making a difference in the environment. Moreover, such verb use gives impression that the hotels already have resources to implement more environmentally sustainable ways of running business.

Purpose

Hotels perhaps are seen as the providers of success via the lens of discourse analysis, gaining authority to control what is required/desired for sustainable consumption. All of the hotels analysed were discovered to convey sustainability in a “more-than-green” manner, and their services are sold beyond their eco-friendliness. As an example, “A thriving planet means a thriving business” (Radisson Hotel Group), and “[The hotel] aims to continue to show the Nordic hotel industry the way when it comes to sustainability” (Scandic Hotels). Interestingly, the discursive consequence of future tense words "will" and "be going to" employed in sentences can be seen as reaching the goal: of making visitors select greenness in the future. “We will run hotels so that they have the smallest environmental impact” (Nordic Choice Hotels). However, the question arises whether the company is delaying its sustainable initiatives, or perhaps, promises to care for the environment in the future. Such use of future tense might question the reader if the company is doing something now. On the other hand, it can be seen as shaping the future. Moreover, it can be seen that the importance of being sustainable and cautious is highlighted “The possibilities to live a good life are deteriorating every day. Climate change is already hitting hard, affecting some more than others” (Scandic Hotels). Perhaps, this way hotels relate to the current situation. Although, unlike hotel annual reports, neither company states the goal of showing CSR/Sustainability web material anywhere.
in the text on their websites. However, the communication objective for this genre is the same as it is in the case of CSR reports. All examined hotels, for example, have separate website links on their home sites for their CSR-related information that are called by their respective themes, namely “Sustainable hotel operations” and more (see Table 2). These links take the visitor to a wealth of information on Sustainability and/or CSR matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel chain</th>
<th>Links relevant to environmental sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scandic Hotels</td>
<td>More about our proud heritage, More about our Sustainability vision and strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ligula Hospitality Group</td>
<td>Download Ligula’s sustainability Report 2018, Environmental policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radisson Hotels</td>
<td>Planet, Hotel Sustainability Basics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordic Choice Hotels</td>
<td>Green Stay, Sustainable hotel operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Examined four hotel chains and additional relevant links on environmental sustainability.

The rest of the links and material cover all three pillars of sustainability, it can be seen that all four hotel chains are making a noticeable effort to assure website visitors that the companies are devoted to the sustainability cause. As a result, neither company has any hidden intentions in terms of the communicative purpose of its disclosures. However, the underlying purpose that has been discerned is all companies' desire and effort to assure and win the confidence of readers to their websites regarding their responsibility and commitment to their sustainability goals and visions.

4.1.4. Subjects

When we, as people, read text, we do it from a position that the text's maker constructed for us - this is known as the reader's subject position (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough (1995) prefers the word “subjects” instead of “participants”, since subjects are also the ones who create the discourse, equally as discourse creates subjects. The subject position is important as subjects might reveal text purpose (Fairclough, 2001), thus, this section covers the usage of a subject. In defining the subject, the analysed web page texts remind readers that they are interpreted as more than just customers. Being cautious about sustainability requires a role: readers are not just customers, but also "responsible consumers". The language displays and indicates to the audience that being a customer may also help to safeguard the environment if consumers pick the sustainably aware hotel services. In this particular case, a subject role of "responsible
consumer" is created, while the company can link their sustainability strategies to their brand. The word "responsible consumer" (also known as ethical and conscious) ought to be applied based on the much more common term "sustainable consumption" (Jastrzębska, 2017). In simpler words, a responsible consumer considers a sustainable approach when making purchasing decisions. The following statement “We would love to be evaluated on all three levels. Completely transparent. So, you can sleep with a clear conscience” (Nordic Choice Hotels) specifically opens such a subject. Words such as clear conscience can be valued as a guilt-free mind. Interestingly, this element is consistent with the research (Barbeta-Vinas, 2022) that links guilt to preferences for "green" consumption, and those that show a lack of guilt among individuals are less sensitive to environmental issues. In detail, one can interpret it as consumers being driven by guilt feeling when not choosing environmentally friendly and sustainable services. Moreover, researchers (Antonetti & Baines, 2015; Dahl et al., 2003) recognize the significance of using guilt in marketing techniques. Guilt is used predominantly by marketing specialists in the advertising and consumer behaviour sectors (Antonetti & Baines, 2015). Notably, consumer acts in certain consumption settings might result in consumer guilt (Dahl et al., 2003). Nevertheless, from a marketing standpoint, the concept that particular cognitions might produce guilt is both practically and theoretically significant, because it allows for the construction of various messages that create emotional responses in customers. However, it is important to note that guilt may also exist on an unconscious level. Though, it has been researched that guilt brings the feeling of responsibility (Berndsen & Manstead, 2007). One can explain the notion of a “responsible consumer” by looking at marketing strategies targeted towards readers' feelings.

4.1.5. Relations

Relational constructs in the advertising genre engage customers (Fairclough, 2001) in a relationship with hotels, their products and services. Furthermore, there is the use of multimodal language, that is, text and photos, therefore both visual and textual aspects must be examined in this discourse. This section will look at data in both visual and textual formats, as well as how relationships are represented in the data.

*Relationships in Visual Representation*

According to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), research that investigates how corporations utilise promotional speech to draw in and motivate customers must pay specific attention to the significance of imagery. Special consideration has been given to the factors of "angle," "distance," and "size" based on Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) analytical methodology for interpreting pictures. The angle of a topic might show the subject's relationship with the picture viewer. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), the height of an angle in an image might imply power issues. In other words, a low perspective encourages the spectator to gaze up at the topic. Images formed in this manner confer symbolic power on the presented actors/subjects over the viewer (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). In comparison, if a picture is exhibited from a high angle, the viewer is granted authority over the portrayed topics, and an equal connection may be proven if the subject is shown at the same level (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). The picture size, in addition to the distance in photos, might disclose the goal of the image maker.
According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), huge visuals that take up a third or more of an image indicate the producer's aim to direct the viewer's attention to the picture. Using Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) visual grammar theory on reading advertising images from angles, distance, and size, it is seen that only a couple of analysed hotels depict the relationship between green practices and viewers.

In Photo 1 it can be seen that the picture of choice is taken from above, which leads a viewer to see water and forest from a different perspective - unusual to a viewer. The choice of the picture is relevant to the content on this particular webpage. Since it covers environmental sustainability and its practices, the picture goes alongside the text. The angle of the picture might make a viewer more engaged with it, perhaps acknowledging that a viewer can make a change. As Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) discussed, different angles of photography might open a different sense of power. In this case, it represents the subject “responsible consumer” discussed earlier in this study. Meaning, that a reader is as responsible for an environmental change as enterprises.

Looking at the second picture on this webpage also represents nature and a person. This time, the angle is at eye level, slightly above, showing a comparison between the sizes of nature and a human. The text next to the picture represents the passion the hotel group has for caring for “others” which, according to the hotel group, implies People, The Planet and Community. The chosen photograph represents the relationships between humans (people) and nature (our planet) quite accurately. However, according to Kress and Leeuwen (2006), eye-level photography indicates “equality” with no power difference. One can think of this as nature
being as important and equal as a consumer. Perhaps, a notion for not forgetting that a consumer is also responsible. With that being said, it all wraps in 3 photos which accurately represent the written text - people, community and planet. All pictures have the same theme, and colour pattern, making it aesthetically pleasing for the eye, and a sense of being professional. Moreover, all photography presented has been made with professional devices, making it easy to engage a reader.

Similarly, to Radisson Hotel Group, Nordic Choice Hotels present quite a few contents. The pictures are divided into six areas of the sustainability movement WeCare which includes not only environmental sustainability but also all three pillars of it.

The photography is indeed accurately matching the content of provided links, making it easier for the reader to dive into each section/division. This approach can be seen as a way of establishing a connection with the reader and effectively communicating the intended message.
By comparison, Nordic Choice Hotels has presented three pillars of sustainability - sociocultural, environmental and economic (Nordic Choice, n.d.). Interestingly, the pillar Profit has an illustration of bread, which is represented as money or profit. According to Negro (2019), in the idiom “bread and butter”, bread is seen as a job or an activity that brings a steady income. It can be seen that direct and metaphorical ways of communication are displayed on hotels’ web pages to bring attention to the importance and have an engagement with the reader. Both Radisson Hotels and Nordic Choice Hotel Group use high-quality pictures which might affect not only brand awareness but also brand image (Muller, 2008). On the contrary, the Scandic Hotel chain has been differentiated by adding more value with a video:

![Video from Scandic Hotels](https://www.scandichotelsgroup.com/sustainability/)

According to existing research on consumer behaviour and intention (Gao et al., 2019), businesses using short video marketing enhance consumers' cognition and emotion of the brand in a relaxed and pleasant manner. Moreover, scene-based experience influences the perception of consumers on brand image. Videos provide consumers with emotions through elaborately designed life scenes and consumption scenes. That allows enterprises to display brand image.
comprehensively and diversely as well as spread brand culture, gaining more consumer recognition. Following the house shape framework, the Scandic Hotel Group presents its strategies divided into different sections. Readers are welcome to click on any of the areas of the house and they will be redirected to another webpage. Overall, the Scandic Hotel Group presents a decent amount of material on their work in sustainability matters.

The sustainability webpage ends with more links with information such as reports and eco-labelling certifications.

Interestingly, Ligula Hospitality Group does not have pictures presented on a general Sustainability webpage, unlike its competitors. Nonetheless, all studied hotels presented their participation in sustainability pillars to some extent.

**Relationships in Textual Representation**

The use of personal pronouns such as "you" and "we" can aid in the construction and formation of literary representations of relationships. For example, "we" is typically used when individuals support and other parties agree with the conduct of the primary players (Askehave, 2007). One of the most prevalent reasons for the exclusive “we” is to convey authority by connection with a team or a power group. Some examples include: “…we have great power to drive transformation and inspire change at scale, for a better and more sustainable tomorrow”, “We have then defined a few main areas where we will put extra focus in our sustainability efforts” (Scandic Hotels), “We are passionate about caring for others” (Radisson Hotel Group).

As strategic thinkers and green leaders, the businesses clearly use the words "people" and "we" in their publications. The green advertising discourse associates hotels with new responsibilities such as market leader. Words like "but", "however", can be used as discourse markers. These words, as linguistic techniques, can serve two objectives - to express the existence of two threads of speech (Feng, 2010), and to favour one line of thought over another. Such promotion is evident in the researched green advertising language, and its objective is to offer and develop an updated and subjective vision of company greenness. “This means that we cannot be profitable without caring about people and the environment. But we also know that we cannot care about people and the environment without creating profitability”.

![Photo 7. Taken from Scandic Hotels Group website](https://www.scandichotelsgroup.com/sustainability/)
sentences provide a room for the company to align with the audience’s interest. In detail, it gives the company a favour of the place to lead in the right direction and “know it all”.

4.2. Spoken Language Analysis

The following chapter will be analysing the spoken language used by interviewees of this study. In particular, the words which were used while talking about green marketing and its interpretation from the author's point of view. The interviews were collected from ten participants - hotel managers. The spoken discourse analysis consists of coding transcribed interviews by dividing them into themes, looking at the used language and interpreting the data. The transcription is analysed based on Fairclough's Discourse Analysis Framework methods, specifically, on a textual analysis level by organising it in themes. According to Fairclough (2003, p.6), “textual analysis can focus on just a selected few features of texts, or many features simultaneously”. After transcribing, carefully examining and mapping the themes of the interviews, three main themes have arisen - consumer education, greenwashing as a challenge, and trust as a core. All participants had talked about green marketing vision in the same manner, however, a couple of opinions have stood out. Following chapters will discuss the themes and the language used by interviewees.

4.2.1. Consumer Education

The first interviewee uses the following words to describe green marketing: “Green marketing can be described as environmentally friendly practices into a company's operations and then communicating these to the guests in a way that resonates with them”. The word resonates in a given context is important, according to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), it means “to continue to have a powerful effect or value”. The key words are environmentally friendly, putting both together, one can perceive it as making meaning out of “doing good”. Each customer is a distinct individual with their own set of values and views on sustainability. As a consequence, such a prism determines customer perceived value and acts as a junction for value-based marketing. It is vital to highlight that these value types represent understanding, respect, tolerance, protection, and promotion of people and nature's welfare (Schwartz, 2012) - demonstrating that humankind's social and environmental concerns are at the centre of their value system. Furthermore, values are influenced by social and personal factors (Schwartz, 2012). Although value types are multicultural recognized and may be systemized, ethics are based on cultural perspectives and tend to be locally precise, which is significant not just for marketing goals, but also for developing ethical corporate practices (Hunt & Vitell, 2006). Furthermore, it is argued that the value system influences the decision process (Hunt & Vitell, 2006). As a consequence, stimulation value may be tied to continual changes in consumer preferences, whereas traditional value may be related to cultural characteristics known to impact values and perceptions. Finally, values and ethics can impact behaviour through the attitude function and the ethical decision-making process, while perception is determined by the prism of personal values and ethics. Furthermore, to manage value-based strategies, value-based marketing must conduct a thorough assessment of demand. Consumers are considered
to be increasingly concerned about corporate practices these days. One of the interviewee's states:

“Green marketing can be more effective than regular marketing techniques as it appeals to customers' values and desires for a better world. Today, guests are more concerned about the environment and expect companies to be environmentally responsible. By promoting sustainable practices, hotels can differentiate themselves from competitors and attract guests who prioritise sustainability”.

The interviewee talks about customer values which include being concerned about sustainability and its practices. Due to ethical considerations, the employment of social causes in marketing operations has become a difficult practice, particularly among the riskiest - strong altruistic values possessing sector, which tends to analyse company intentions more sceptically (Hunt & Vitell, 2006). Customers respect honesty and openness (Naeun et al., 2020), hence, public-serving goals and firm-serving advantages must be properly conveyed to safeguard customer attitudes from the negative influence of corporate motives. Interviewees share the following:

“Yeah, we are open, and we intend to put all the small things that, if we change from one product, let's say, that we use a chemical that we change and use a more environmentally better product and then we can add that on the page so that people looking for a sustainable hotel they can see that these people are working towards something new”.

Words such as open are used to indicate that companies are eager to show their customers that hotels are implementing measures when it comes to sustainability. On such a topic, another respondent agrees: “And do I think that this is something you would pursue maybe in the future as a way of being more open and being a good cause”. One can think of hotels showcasing their practices as a way of educating customers and other hotel businesses. As it was discussed above in the chapter on website analysis, for example, Scandic Hotels were introducing themselves as leaders while leading sustainability practices for other hotel chains. Consumers have high expectations when it comes to ethical and legal concerns (Danz et al., 2022). It can be explained by the greenwashing concept, and how it disrupts consumer trust. More significantly, ethical behaviour is increasingly influencing consumer audience decisions to choose or reject a company (Effendi, 2020). Overall, ethical considerations about corporate social responsibility drive purchasing behaviour. As a result, businesses are compelled to behave themselves openly:

“It is sort of a balance because you also want to show what you're doing so that people notice and learn about it without telling you more than you should. So what we have also focused on in our company, the last years, is to try to show in practice what we are doing and not only write posters or information on the web page or the wall in the hotels telling that we are doing so and so. And we are also trying to nudge the guests
In the discussion with interviewees, all participants share that their hotels measure different things such as food waste and carbon footprints. It is known as corporate environmental performance and has a major impact on purchasing behaviour. This, according to Quan et al. (2018), implies that such performance can encourage the purchase of both ecologically and socially responsible items. As a result, customers who are more concerned with corporate performance tend to be more concerned with their purchasing behaviour (Quan et al., 2018). Nonetheless, corporate environmental performance may not only be a means of raising awareness about purchasing behaviour but also of educating society and inspiring values of social and environmental responsibility in a world that still lacks sustainable and transparent practices.

4.2.2. Greenwashing as a challenge

According to Greenpeace (n.d.), greenwashing can be defined as “the act of misleading consumers regarding the environmental practices of a company or the environmental benefits of a product or a service”. The term has been gaining special attention when consumers realised the difference between the claims of being “green” and the actual behaviour of companies. Nonetheless, in the hotel industry greenwashing affects not only green hotels but also regular hotel chains which do not claim to be fully green. In the discussion of greenwashing, this study’s interviewees shared their opinion on such a broad topic:

“I don't [as a manager] want to be perceived as a company doing greenwashing and I think it's a fine line there”; “Yes, we do care, so you would say that's also a way of doing the business that it's not necessarily the marketing, just to sell for the sake of selling, right? I believe so many hotels now are kind of scared of greenwashing or being labelled as a greenwashing hotel which wouldn't be a nice brand perspective, right, so it's a tricky situation”.

Words such as perceived and labelled are commonly used in the discussion by interviewees, they highlight the importance of not coming across as a greenwashing company. It can be seen that greenwashing is indeed a challenge for hotels while being open with their green and/or sustainable initiatives. The participant mentions “brand perspective”, which is a crucial part of the company. Some researchers (Guliyev, 2017; Mohanraj & Roy, 2015) have shown that brand image affects consumer decision-making. It is critical to recognize that greenwashing techniques can harm a company's reputation, diminishing its esteem among its related consumers. Companies should focus their marketing strategies on increasing the long-term viability of their products and services (Rahman et al., 2015). According to the late research done (Xiao et al., 2022), greenwashing indeed has an impact on a brand of any industry. Hence, consumers are more likely to avoid the greenwashing brand in the future. Once asked about the manager’s understanding of green marketing, greenwashing was the first topic of discussion:
“I can start by saying that we have focused a lot on not greenwashing. So that we won’t be caught with greenwashing communication, because we have seen a lot of companies that call themselves either sustainable or green. I know that a lot of internal people that are not so competent, maybe on sustainability, say that we have a sustainable hotel chain. And there we try to stop them because then they don’t understand what sustainability is really about because sustainability is not taking out more than you are giving back”.

Such a comment acknowledges the fact that hotels are indeed aware of greenwashing as a trendy issue nowadays while implementing sustainability practices. The notion of green marketing and greenwashing is another prominent issue addressed in environmental communication literature. In general, marketing is a necessary activity for any business to engage to promote their brand and sell products.

Given the present economic framework in the world, marketing is critical, as businesses must eventually produce money to be successful. One of the interviewees' shares and agrees with the statement: “And you also have stressed that if you are going to be sustainable, you need actually to make a profit as well because if you don't, well then you're not going to survive” which highlights the issue of sustainability sometimes be expensive. False advertising or, in this case, greenwashing, is also costly since it exposes corporations to repeated litigation and reduces customer trust in purchasing some of their products (Rahman et al., 2015). The most significant approach for businesses to execute a sustainable environmental marketing strategy is via the original design of products and services. As Corbett (2006) notes, “Ads are not the root cause of environmental evil, and advertisements are not alone in attempting to influence our thoughts and behaviours. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that advertising has a ‘special cultural power’ and sends particularly powerful messages about the natural world and our relationship with it” (Corbett, 2006, p. 148). Schmuck et al., (2018, p. 415) argue that green marketing highlights ads which “promote environmental sustainability or convey ecological or nature-friendly messages that target the needs of environmentally concerned customers, regulators, and other stakeholders”.

Schmuck et al., (2018) also discovered that promoting a brand as environmentally conscious not only enhances customers' perception of the practical benefits of the product but also creates a virtual nature experience that leads to a more favourable evaluation of the brand. As a result, customers are more likely to purchase the product. Another interviewee shares: “But then we try to find the actions that we do that we can make visible to the guests without bragging about it, but just showing that this is how we do these parts”. According to Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.), the word brag or bragging means “to speak with pride, often with too much pride, about something you have done or something you possess”. It is seen that consumer interpretation of companies showing their sustainability practices can be confused as “bragging” about it. Nonetheless, hotels continue to share their initiatives: “But we have now changed, at least in most of our hotels, we have changed from guests saying no to cleaning as we had it before. So the guests would hang out this hanger on the door saying, I don’t need my room clean. Now we have turned it around so that guests must ask for cleaning”. 

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4.2.3. Trust as a core

Moving from greenwashing as a challenge of green marketing, the word “trust” is something which has been coming up in discussions about green marketing with interviewees. In detail, one of the reasons why green marketing of bigger hotel chains in Sweden is not practised as much. Moreover, trust directly relates to the greenwashing discussion above, as greenwashing disrupts consumer trust (Rahman et al., 2015). It is easy to see why trust is crucial in green marketing communication because distrust is linked to consumer inactivity and a sense of powerlessness (Zavestoski et al., 2006). According to Zavestoski et al., (2006), market trust is established when one has faith in the reliability of the partner. According to studies (Taufique et al., 2017), eco-labels positively enhance the consumer's trust in the goods by eliciting favourable evaluation and portraying a peasant vision of nature. This demonstrates how trust is viewed in the context of market relationships, highlighting its significance in companies’ ability to establish and maintain these connections.

The studied hotels are not an exception in this game of trust. When one connects market trust with green marketing, one can see how environmental certifications may be used to promote trust. According to Hatanaka et al. (2005), third-party certifications have developed significant regulatory mechanisms on the market. These certificates are examples of self-regulation, which represents a broader shift from public to private authority. When writing on environmental norms and labels, Boström and Klintman (2011) posed a crucial question: "Should labels be trusted?". They claim that trust is required when using labels since they serve as a substitute for our first-hand knowledge, and that incorrect label information might lead to customer mistrust (Boström & Klintman 2011). Using environmental certifications, such as ISO 14001, which is recognized by a third independent party, is one strategy to maintain consumer confidence (Boström & Klintman, 2011). An eco-label is any label that appears on product packaging aimed at customers and indicates that the product is safer in some way and less destructive to the environment than specified by alternatives (Tang, Fryxell, & Chow, 2004). Eco-labels are regarded as a dominating and successful technique of marketing and conveying green credentials since they are systems used to assist customers in identifying environmental items and their requirements (Rex & Baumann, 2007). Eco-labels serve two purposes for consumers: first, they tell them about intangible product attributes such as product quality, and second, they provide a valuable function such as product image as eco-friendly (Proi et al., 2023). Companies desire eco-labels because they provide a favourable environment for green marketing. These eco-labels boost the company's brand image and profitability by possibly distinguishing it from rivals (Proi et al., 2023). However, understanding environmental concerns tends to raise brand awareness, and possibly positive attitudes toward green companies can boost trust in environmental labelling used on green products (D'Souza et al., 2006). To increase customer trust, manufacturers of eco-labelling systems are typically, but not always, licensed by an independent third party that also checks whether producers comply with the labelling scheme's guidelines.

A third party might be a private entity or, in some cases, a government body. In the discussion about eco-labels, interviewees answer: “I think in Sweden in general, we trust authorities much
more than what they do, maybe in the rest of the world. So as long as it's a label that is issued by an authority or at least approved by an authority, we don't think twice - we go for it”. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency has laws and regulations on Environmental Quality Standards and displays the most significant eco-labels seen on typical consumer products in Sweden (Naturvardsverket, n.d.). Interestingly, considering that it is a governmental body, therefore, integrated with Swedish society and culture, it is not a surprise that consumers would trust such an eco-label. Another interviewee states:

“They [consumers] believe that there is some formal control in the background and that you have to prove that you’re doing certain things to be able to reach up to the eco-labels, like for instance the Swan, there are so many of them. But yeah, if you're eco-labeled it also shows that you are doing something for the environment”.

In Sweden, the Swan label is well-known and “has been around longer than the EU-Ecolabel” (Leire & Thidell, 2005, p. 1064). The Swan is the Nordic nations' official eco-label of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Iceland. The Nordic Council of Ministers established it in 1989 with the goal of “providing consumers with a tool (Nordic Ecolabel logo) to help them choose among the best, from an environmental standpoint, products on the market” (Nordic Ecolabelling, 2011). The Swan eco-label is used to inform customers that a certified product or service is produced sustainably (Nordic Eco-labeling, 2011). They follow a thorough standardisation procedure based on product groupings, and there are already over two thousand goods certified with the Swan mark in sixty-three product groups. Eco-labels are more prevalent in Sweden than in other nations (Sønderskov & Daugbjerg, 2011). One can explain that it has to do with culture and nationality, which employs such a sustainability-focused mindset. Government involvement in ecolabelling is most significant when the government creates the standards and certifies things as a third party, and is minimum when these functions are transferred to private companies. The key disadvantages of eco-labels were found as environmental ambiguity, a failure to satisfy purchasers regarding the product's ecological impact, and a lack of information about producer compliance (Amstel et al., 2008). However, there is still debate over whether eco-labelling is a useful strategy for motivating customer reaction (Amstel et al., 2008). When consumers trust eco-labels and are prepared to switch to green products, they develop green marketing awareness (Suki, Suki, & Azman, 2015). Eco-labels aided perception by raising knowledge and directing people to purchase ecologically friendly items (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). However, the rising quantity of eco-labels on the market has left customers perplexed about labelling, certification, and varied green promotions (Tiwari et al., 2011). An interviewee shares such a dilemma:

“But if you for instance if you go to a trip advisor they have their labelling. If you go in there you can see that some hotels have a little leaf. You can see that this is a sustainable hotel. But to get that leaf you only have to fill out the form and you just need to say that, okay, we are measuring our water and waste and we are working to reduce and so on. And when you fill out that you get this little leaf on the webpage and nobody is checking if what you have said is the truth or if you are doing what you say”. 
Another barrier to consumer acceptance of eco-labels is "information overload" (Horne, 2009). According to Thogersen et al., (2009), customers embraced an eco-label if they actively, routinely, and consistently regarded the label while purchasing items. However, given the quantity of existing old eco-labels, new eco-labels must compete for customers' attention. The word “truth” used by an interviewee is important since this is what an eco-label should provide - valuable, truthful information. The process of communicating messages influences the understanding and perceptions of the eco-labels. Such poor eco-label control might disrupt the trust of customers, and customers are given the choice to 'adopt' or search for new label options. If customers are pleased with the labels, they will use them and consciously examine them for a longer period (Thogersen et al., 2009).
5. Conclusions

Sustainability is more important than ever before, prompting increased customer awareness of environmental challenges. The present thesis focuses specifically on word choices hotel managers’ and their four hotel chains’ Sustainability/ CSR web pages. The goal of this study is to investigate and understand how hotels in Sweden perceive green marketing. A qualitative method was employed to investigate this phenomenon and obtain in-depth insights into the research topic. Moreover, a total of ten participants were selected to obtain empirical data where participants were welcomed to share their attitudes, perceptions, and thoughts about green marketing in the hotel industry in Sweden. In this study, discourse analysis was selected as a suitable methodology to examine the linguistic constructs generated by hotels on their websites, as well as to analyse manager’s perspectives on green marketing. DA, from a methodological standpoint, can highlight representations inside language, providing researchers with methodological tools to explore the connection between social issues and text or visual materials. Furthermore, the empirical data collected were analysed using a conceptual framework developed by Fairclough. Within this framework, the words used by participants and their corresponding interpretation are regarded as essential foundational elements. Fairclough (2001) states that by closely studying language, one may not only describe and analyse interpretations, but also explain the creation of such interpretations, and how it affects society. The linguistic constructs employed by hotel managers were analysed with Fairclough’s first (textual analysis) level of three-dimensional framework. Whereas text presented on examined hotel chain Sustainability/CSR webpages was analysed based on two (textual analysis and interpretative) dimensions of Faircligh’s framework. In the case of visual interpretation, The Visual Grammar Theory by Kress and Leeuwen (2006) components were used, specifically looking at angle, distance, and size.

The examined hotel web pages can be perceived as being sustainably aware and exemplifying a commitment in sustainability, as well as assuming a leadership position in the hotel industry. Moreover, the content presented on Sustainability/CSR web pages extends an invitation to customers to participate as a responsible citizen. However, none of the hotels claimed to be “green” enterprises; instead, they positioned themselves as hotels that adopt sustainability strategies. In contrast, the perspectives of the interviewed managers on green marketing differentiate from the broader definition by scholars. Hotel managers perceive green marketing as an opportunity to educate customers and other fellow hotels. In line with Kress and Leewaun (2006, p. 140) statement, “Knowledge is power”, hotel managers in Sweden are more into being helpful with their initiatives and information. Put simply, green marketing is viewed as a vehicle for sustainability education rather than sales strategy. The findings indicate that studied hotels mostly embrace valued based marketing with sustainability at the core value of their hotels. Simply - their aim is to foster transparency with their customers. Moreover, the most commonly employed words in sustainability discussions inside of hotels, are oriented towards following the guidelines for operating in Sweden. Eco-labels, such as The Swan, are seen as a means of compliance with Swedish standards rather than as a driving desire to attract a larger customer base. The evolution of sustainability strategies and green marketing in the future is yet to be found.
Given the limited time and the in-depth nature of DA, the (third) sociocultural dimension of Fairclough’s Analysis Framework has been excluded. The sociocultural component of Fairclough’s framework investigates the broader social and cultural aspects that impact language usage and discourse. Nonetheless, despite the absence of a third dimension, it is evident that viewing green marketing as an educational opportunity can result in enhanced understanding of environmental challenges, sustainable practices, and the advantages of green efforts among customers and other hotels. This awareness can foster a sense of environmental consciousness, leading to establishment of a sustainable culture. Moreover, hotel managers who prioritise customer education can improve the image of their company. They might build a perception of being environmentally responsible and socially conscious. Customers and other stakeholders are likely to have a positive view if hotels are perceived as transparent, and devoted to sustainable goals. Lastly, viewing green marketing as a venue to educate fellow hotels may stimulate industry collaboration and knowledge sharing. To achieve more in-depth analysis, all three dimensions of the framework can be employed in future research.
6. References


Appendix A

Interview guide

1. Could you please describe your understanding about green marketing as a manager?
2. Why do you think hotels practise green marketing?
3. How, do you think, can green marketing be more effective than regular marketing?
4. What words do you think are the most common to be used in green marketing?
5. Does your hotel believe in the concept of green marketing, if so, why is it important?
6. How/which way do you practise green marketing in your hotel?
7. What are the main contents of messages that a company wants to convey to its customers about their green initiatives?
8. Which channels are you using to promote green products and services?
9. Do you think that visitors and tourists trust ecolabels, why?
10. In your opinion, what are the main challenges and issues for the hotel while practising green marketing?
Exhibits

Photographs from website:

Photo 1. Taken from Radisson Hotel Group website https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/responsible-business

Industry pioneer in sustainability

In 1969, we were a part of the first hotel group in the world to adopt an environmental policy. Afterward, we began to define clear Think Planet targets to reduce our environmental footprint and measure progress.

Radisson Hotel Group is committed to its corporate responsibility targets. The Science Based Target Initiative (SBTi) has approved Radisson Hotel Group’s near-term science-based emissions reduction targets. Radisson Hotel Group has also committed to set long-term emissions reduction targets in line with reaching a science-based net zero by 2050.

At Radisson Hotel Group, we have analyzed our Responsible Business commitment against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we are part of the Global Reporting Initiative and we have signed the UN Global Compact Compliance and the UN CEO Water Mandate.

Read more

Making a difference

Radisson Hotel Group has a long history of being a responsible business, with our ambitious and award-winning program.

We are passionate about caring for others, and that extends beyond the walls of our hotels. We believe in conducting business ethically in all we do and want to be a thriving, sustainable and responsible business for people, the community and our planet.

Our team members live Responsible Business every day—at home, together with their hotel colleagues and in their local communities where we work on creating building better futures and a better planet for all.

Read less

Photo 2. Taken from Radisson Hotel Group website https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/responsible-business

It's all about caring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Planet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We’re committed to giving opportunities to people all over the world, treating our customers, team members, suppliers, and partners with the respect that they deserve and helping them grow as people.</td>
<td>Our hotels are run with the aim of embodying our Every Moment Matters spirit, supporting our local communities, which are part of the Radisson Hotel Group family.</td>
<td>A thinking planet means a thinking business; sustaining the world’s beauty and diversity is an important part of our success, which is why we support initiatives to do just that.</td>
</tr>
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Photo 3. Taken from Radisson Hotel Group website https://www.radissonhotels.com/en-us/corporate/responsible-business
Photo 4. Taken from Nordic Choice Hotels website https://www.strawberryhotels.com/social-responsibility/.


Photo 6. Taken from Scandic Hotels Group website https://www.scandichotelsgroup.com/sustainability/.
Tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretative analysis features</th>
<th>Answers the question</th>
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<tr>
<td>Language content</td>
<td>Answers the question “What is going on?”, and includes verbs and purpose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Answer the question “Who is involved?”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The relations</td>
<td>Answer the question “What are the relationships between subjects?”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The themes</td>
<td>Answer the question “What is the language’s role?”.</td>
</tr>
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Table 1. Fairclough’s Interpretative Analysis Framework by Elza Jakovele.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotel chain</th>
<th>Links relevant to environmental sustainability</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scandic Hotels</td>
<td>More about our proud heritage,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More about our Sustainability vision and strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ligula Hospitality Group</td>
<td>Download Ligula’s sustainability Report 2018,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Environmental policy</td>
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<td>Radisson Hotels</td>
<td>Planet,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hotel Sustainability Basics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nordic Choice Hotels</td>
<td>Green Stay,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable hotel operations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Examined four hotel chains and additional relevant links on environmental sustainability.