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Title of the thesis Eco-labels as sustainability brands:
The role of visual design and co-branding in credibility of eco-labels

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Abstract

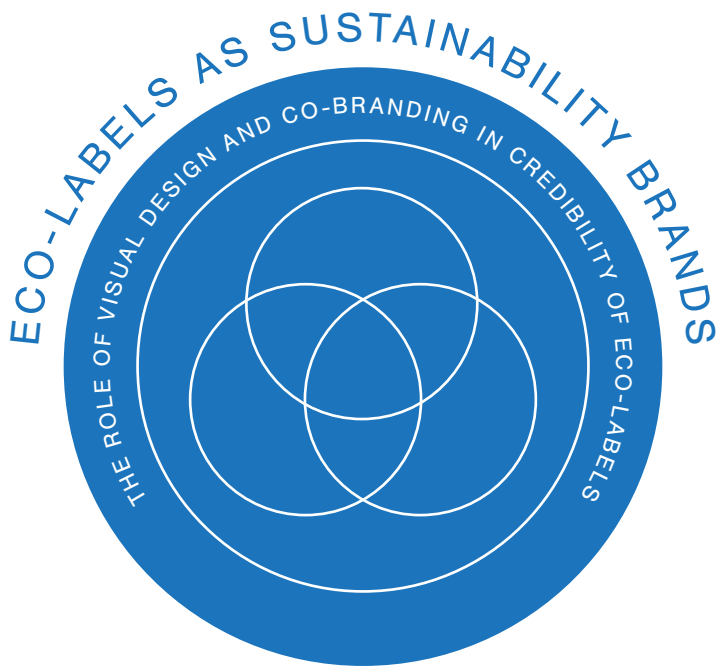
Eco-labels are designed as a communication tool in green marketing, but their design often fails to deliver environmental data to consumers. This master's thesis aims to explore the way that the visual design of eco-labels can improve their recognition and credibility, as well as their use in co-branding. This study argues that eco-labels can be independently perceived, researched and marketed as brands.

The literature review of this thesis covers the topics of green marketing (GM), branding and visual design in relation to the topic of eco-labels. The literature review has identified that most of the research on eco-labels in the field of marketing is focused on their instrumental value. Less research is conducted on marketing and the visual design of eco-labels. Even less research is conducted on evaluation of eco-labels' brand image and co-branding. The goal of this thesis is to close these research gaps.

The thesis makes active use of mixed research methods, where qualitative interviews helped to explore the topic and formed the basis of both the survey and the focus group discussion. Furthermore, this study applies a multidisciplinary approach and combines both research methods and expertise from the *school of design* and the *school of business*.

The study demonstrates that a multidisciplinary approach can open new research perspectives. The research results confirm that eco-labels can be perceived as brands, therefore branding methods and strategies should be applied to the development of an eco-label's brand image. Furthermore, the study reveals that the logo design of eco-labels should differ from both product brands and environmental signs. As a result, the thesis suggests a list of tips and methods to improve both the logo design of eco-labels and their performance in co-branding.

Keywords eco-labels, brand credibility, co-branding,
logo design, green marketing.



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This master's thesis was an attempt to combine both research methods and expertise from the school of design and the school of business. The main challenge during this long journey was to learn and understand the mindset of business students and at the same time not to abandon design thinking.

I would like to thank various people for their support with this multidisciplinary experiment. I am very grateful to my supervisor Angelina Korsunova for guiding me through the world of the business school. I believe it took her a lot of patience and skills to explain business school research methods to a designer.

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PART I:

INTRODUCTION

“Certification matters because we all want to be able to tell the difference between ‘good companies’ and just good marketing.”

Jay Coen Gilbert
Cofounder, B Corporation

1.1. Background & Motivation for Research

The challenges of sustainability are complex and usually cover entire systems, therefore a multidisciplinary approach (MA) is required to solve them. MA can be described as an approach where both knowledge and expertise from different professional disciplines are combined together in one way or another. A multidisciplinary approach can be achieved in two ways. It can be achieved either by assembling a team of experts from different disciplines, or by educating T-shaped professionals, who are able to see the consilience of various disciplines and, as a result, think out of the box. Also, both solutions require professional managers who are able to understand and interpret various specialist languages, as well as navigate others through various disciplines. To sum up, a multidisciplinary approach combines both knowledge and expertise from different professional disciplines to solve sustainability challenges.

“This thesis endeavours to combine research methods and expertise from the school of design and the school of business to find an alternative way of viewing and researching sustainability.”

The same logic can be applied to the research that deals with sustainability challenges. Research methods from different disciplines should be combined to develop innovative solutions and discover alternative views of the existing situation. Therefore, this thesis endeavours to combine research methods and expertise from the school of design and the school of business to find an alternative way of viewing and researching sustainability.

In addition, it is important to mention that during recent years the role of design in business has shifted from creating new shapes and visuals to a broader strategic approach. With the introduction of the new concept of ‘design thinking’, the designer’s role now includes wider tasks, such as finding “out of the box” solutions to new challenges, developing services and strategic visions, and coming up with new

“The role of design in business has shifted from creating new shapes and visuals to a broader strategic approach.”

approaches to innovation. This requires creative thinking and unconventional approaches. Therefore, one of the goals of this thesis is to implement a multidisciplinary approach, where both business and design knowledge is applied.

As a first step, it is necessary to define a common ground where methods and knowledge from both schools can be successfully implemented. As the author has experience in graphic design and marketing, these two fields of knowledge are selected to represent the school of arts and the school of business respectively. Sustainability is added as a third dimension due to the scope of studies (Figure 1.). As a result, eco-labels are chosen as the main topic of the thesis. Green marketing, branding and sustainable data visualisation are selected as containing topics. Though later, the topic of sustainable data visualisation was only briefly mentioned in literature review and was defined as irrelevant for this research.

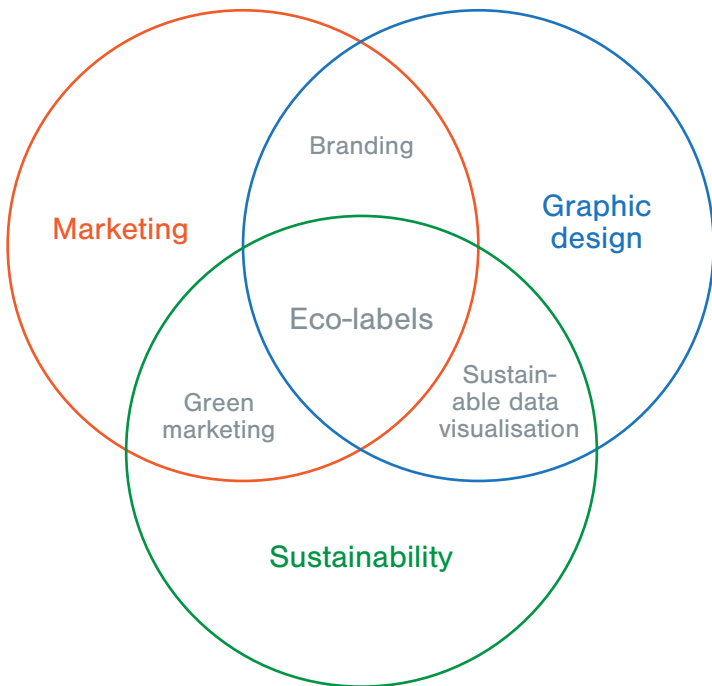


Figure 1.
The common research ground between marketing, graphic design and sustainability.

After the main fields of knowledge and topics are defined, it is important to narrow down the focus of the research and determine common sub-topics. The main requirement of these sub-topics is that they should have an implementation in all three fields of knowledge and be relevant to the main topic of the research – eco-labels. Altogether, three sub-topics are selected (Figure 2.):

1. **Logo design**, as a part of graphic design, is selected because both eco-labels and brands are recognised mostly by their logos. The quality and aesthetics of logo design can play an important role in an eco-label's recognition and credibility. Furthermore, an eco-label's logo design is important in co-branding, when used on the package alongside a logo of the product's brand.
2. **Co-branding**, as a part of marketing, is selected because the process where eco-labels are used to confirm environmental performance of products and services can be viewed as co-branding. In co-branding

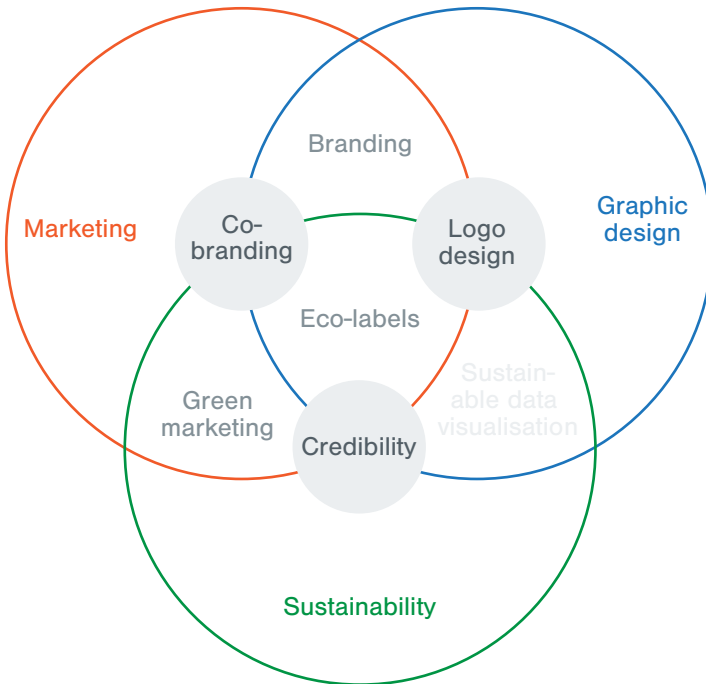


Figure 2. Common research topics in marketing, graphic design and sustainability.

both the product's brand and the eco-label can mutually influence each other's credibility in both positive and negative ways. And, as was mentioned before, the logo design is also an important part of co-branding.

3. **Credibility**, as a part of sustainability, is selected because it is one of the most important aspects of green marketing. The success of an eco-label depends a lot on credibility of the message it communicates. Furthermore, eco-labels are used in co-branding mostly to support the credibility of the product's or service's brand image. And again, the eco-label's logo design can influence its credibility.

To sum up, this thesis is focused on exploring the role of logo design on the credibility of eco-labels in green marketing and co-branding.

This research endeavours to shift the focus of studies on eco-labels from being a marketing tool towards becoming a marketed object. The value of this research is to describe eco-labels as a certain type of brand and define the differences and similarities of eco-labels and brands.

“This thesis is focused on exploring the role of logo design on the credibility of eco-labels in green marketing and co-branding.”

Furthermore, this research is specially relevant to eco-label managers whose goal is to start developing the brand image of an eco-label and learn more about current state of eco-labels from the perspective of branding. The studies are also relevant to both graphic designers and brand developers whose task is to design or redesign an effective logo for an eco-label.

Larger setting

The development of a trustworthy method to inform consumers about the environmental performance of products has been one of the main challenges in green marketing since its dawn in the early 1970s. It was caused by several problems that emerged during the first decades of green marketing. Firstly, “environmental claims in advertisements were often met with criticism by competitor producers and consumer organisations” (Rex & Baumann, 2006). Secondly, numerous reports showed that consumers were expressing distrust towards environmentally focused advertisements and claims (Rex & Baumann, 2006). Thirdly, “overly complex and divergent rules applied towards green marketing and advertising” (Davis, 1993). As a result the market share of green products was not growing and enthusiasm for environmentally-friendly products declined.

Nevertheless, the situation changed in the late 1980s and early '90s. It became clear that “the way to overcome distrust and multiple rules was in seeking more consistent and appropriate regulations and standards” (Rex & Baumann, 2006). This resulted in the development of environmental labelling schemes alongside with many other environmental regulations (Rex & Baumann, 2006).

The first world-wide environmental label “Blue Angel” was introduced in Germany in 1978. Other European countries followed and established their national eco-labels, for instance, the Nordic countries introduced “Nordic Swan” in 1989. As a culmination of this trend, the European Commission introduced a common “EU Eco-label” in 1992.

The Global Eco-labelling Network was developed in 1994. Since then eco-labels have been viewed by researchers mostly as a certification emblem. Most of the research was dedicated to the development of better rules and regulations for product assessment. There were only few attempts to conduct a research about eco-labels from the perspective of visual communication (Tang et al., 2004; Fischhoff, 2013; Heinzle & Wüstenhagen, 2012) and even less from the perspective of branding (Peri et al. 2014). Another example of comparing eco-labels with brands can be found in research by Rahbar and Wahid (2011). Rahbar and Wahid used the same methodology to evaluate the relationship of eco-labels and eco-brands to customer's actual purchasing behavior, though they never directly referred to eco-labels as brands. But Martin and Schouten (2012) have directly referred to eco-labels as *certification brand* in their “Sustainable Marketing” textbook.

“This study will argue that eco-labels can be independently perceived as brands.”

Furthermore, Belz and Peattie (2009) accentuate the main eco-labels' ability to positively influence sustainable consumption: they “communicate on the packaging and in store, where many final purchase decisions are made”. Hence, the research about the influence of eco-labels in co-branding is of high importance and must cover a variety of disciplines, including marketing and visual communication.

This study would try to fill that gap and argue that eco-labels can be independently perceived as brands and that there is a demand for more research about eco-labels from the perspective of branding.

Detailed description of eco-labels' history is available in Appendix #1.

1.2. Research Gap, Main Goals & Questions

This study endeavours to demonstrate that eco-labels and brands have much in common and thus eco-labels can be analysed and researched as brands.

The research scope of the current study is defined by the common ground of marketing, graphic design and sustainability. This common ground can be described as the visual design of green marketing tools and includes such topics as eco-labels, logo design, brand image, co-branding and credibility. Consequently, the main focus of the research is eco-labels from the point of view of logo design and branding. This thesis is not studying eco-labels' certification programs and their environmental criteria. Neither does it study the influence of eco-labels on consumer behavior. The research also excludes the evaluation of the role of eco-labels in sustainable consumption and suggests no alternatives to eco-labels.

Much of research about eco-labels focuses on their main goal, which is to inform consumers that labelled products meet certain environmental criteria. But it is rarely mentioned that eco-labels are also a mean of advertising of their system of certification, as well as a way for companies to win the green market share. Both cases belong to the domain of branding. Certification programs should develop a strong and credible brand out of each eco-label to win the support of both companies and consumers. And producers should direct their brand extensions and co-branding towards eco-labels to win a share of the green market and promote their corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies. Unfortunately, the evaluation of these aspects of eco-labelling has received little academic attention.

To sum up, the research about eco-labels as green marketing *tools* has received plenty of academic attention, but there is a lack of data and analysis where eco-labels would be viewed as brands. Thus it is suggested that instead of researching eco-labels as a tool of green marketing, it is possible to analyse them as a brand. This provides the possibility to evaluate both eco-labels' brand identity and brand image. Due to the research scope this thesis focuses only on visual brand identity, which in the case of eco-labels is logo design and placement on the package.

Furthermore, if in conventional marketing the brand is seen as a tool to communicate a product's message to a consumer, then it is possible to state that the addition of an eco-label could strengthen this message. In this case the synergy between the brand and eco-label can be defined as co-branding, which opens the possibility to research eco-labels from the perspective of co-branding. This image illustrates both research gaps (Figure 3.):

1. The lack of research about brand image and brand identity of eco-labels.
2. The lack of research about co-branding of eco-labels.

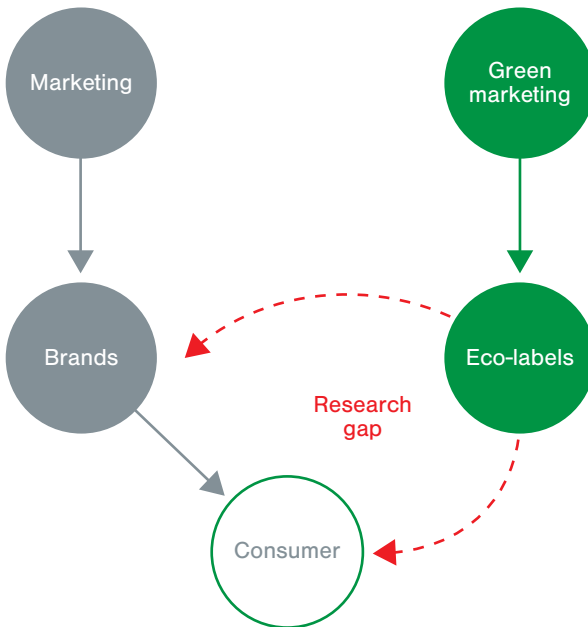


Figure 3.
Research gap visualisation:
the lack of research about
eco-labels' branding and
co-branding.

The main objective of the thesis is to explore the potential of eco-labels for more effective communication by demonstrating that eco-labels can and should be viewed as brands. This would mean that eco-labels could function as brands, be evaluated as brands, and therefore could make use of marketing strategies to be more successful in the market.

Closing these research gaps will help eco-label managers to improve both marketing and branding strategies of eco-labels. And it also will help graphic designers and brand developers to improve the visual communication of eco-labels.

So, this thesis aims to close the research gaps by answering the following research questions:

RQ: What can graphic designers and eco-label managers learn about the way logo design and co-branding influence the credibility of eco-labels?

SQ: To what extent can branding methods and strategies of conventional marketing be applied to the marketing of eco-labels?

SQ: What is the current perception of the logo design of eco-labels among consumers?

SQ: How is the brand credibility of the eco-label and of the consumer product mutually influenced by means of co-branding?

An extensive literature review created the framework for the most suitable approach to these questions. Based on joint analysis of conventional marketing theory and green marketing, current branding and marketing strategies are defined and compared. Then via the practical component of conducted interviews the actual eco-label marketing activities are described. Based on comparison eco-labeling is put into the framework of branding. The next stage of the research explores the way consumers perceive the visual design of eco-labels and their role in co-branding. The final stage of the study involves experts to conclude the results of the research.

1.3.

Research Approach & Data Analysis Methods

Approach

According to David Ing (2013) there are three ways (types of knowledge) through which that science can be approached: *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. Episteme is what is usually considered to be science in laboratories. It is research-oriented, analytic scientific knowledge, which aims to uncover universal truth. Episteme tries to answer the question, *why?* Most universities tend to excel at this approach to science, so most of their research is epistemological. (Ing, 2013).

“Phronesis is action-oriented, and it is very much based on values in practice based on judgement and experience.”

The second category is *techne*, which is practical or technical knowledge. Techne is production-oriented knowledge and can be described as instrumental rationality towards a conscious goal. Techne answers the question, *how?* Technical universities teach according to techne. (Ing, 2013)

The third category is *phronesis*, which is about practical ethics and prudence (Ing, 2013). Phronesis can be translated from Greek as ‘knowledge of practical wisdom’. Phronesis is action-oriented, and it is very much based on values in practice based on judgement and experience. This type of knowledge approaches questions like *when?*, *where?* and *whom?* (Ing, 2013).

David Ing (2013) adds that when there is a need to change the system, the main questions are not *why?* or *how?*, but the things that impact the most – *when?*, *where?* and *whom?*. When Aristotle talks about these three types of knowledge, he says that the most important thing to study is phronesis, because it is about practical knowledge it is not about scientific knowledge or technique (Ing, 2013).

“This thesis is a combination of research approaches of the field of marketing and the field of design.”

This thesis is from the field of marketing and thus is mostly using a traditional epistemological approach to research. But the knowledge used by designers is *phronesis* – the wisdom of practical knowledge, which is based on experience and professional intuition. Therefore, as this thesis is written by a designer, despite its traditional methods, elements of the *phronetic* approach will be used in some parts of the research, e.g. in the expert workshop (focus group discussion) and in the analysis of the online survey results. This thesis is a combination of research approaches of the field of marketing and the field of design.

Two main research approaches used in most research papers and theses are *quantitative* and *qualitative* research. The quantitative research method involves “explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)” (Muijs, 2011). It is used in both natural sciences and social sciences (Given, 2008). The data is collected from or in *units* or *cases* (e.g. people, students), and the data that we collect from these units are known as *variables* (e.g. gender, age).

Quantitative research has two main research designs: *experimental designs* and *non-experimental designs*. In the experimental design the environment is controlled as much as possible. A quasi-experimental design is used when random allocation is not possible due to lack of control over the environment. In the non-experimental design the environments and extraneous influences cannot be controlled. Non-experimental methods include survey research, observations and analysis of existing data sets (Muijs, 2011). Survey research is the most commonly used method in non-experimental design and it usually based on a convenient sample. A combination of qualitative research methods and the survey can help to improve the results of a study (Muijs, 2011).

Qualitative research is a method used in various academic disciplines, traditionally in the social sciences, but also in marketing (Denzin et al., 2005). This method is mostly focused on studying human behavior and the reasons behind it. This type of research usually uses smaller and more focused samples. Interviews are the most commonly used method in qualitative research. Other widely used methods of qualitative research are case studies, ethnographic research, discourse analysis (Muijs, 2011), but also group discussions, observation, various texts and pictures (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The qualitative data can be analysed by using interpretative techniques, such as observer impression, thematic analysis and coding (Saladana, 2012).

Appropriate methods of study were defined by literature dedicated to philosophy and scientific tradition. Many methodological studies disagree about the differences and effectiveness of qualitative and quantitative research methods. According to Holliday (2002) those two approaches represent completely different paradigms and life perceptions. Though there is no significant reason to be on one of sides, it is essential to understand both of them.

Summing up, both quantitative and qualitative research methods are used in this thesis.

Methods

Before beginning to gather data, the main focus was placed on the overall ecosystem of eco-labelling in Finland, as well as on the general role of eco-labels in green marketing.

Due to the nature of the study it was clear that neither qualitative nor quantitative approaches alone would be sufficient to answer the research questions. Therefore, as the research process evolved, it became clear that the only suitable method for the current study would be mixed (Figure 4.). Mixed methods offer the possibility to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in both data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, mixed methods provide

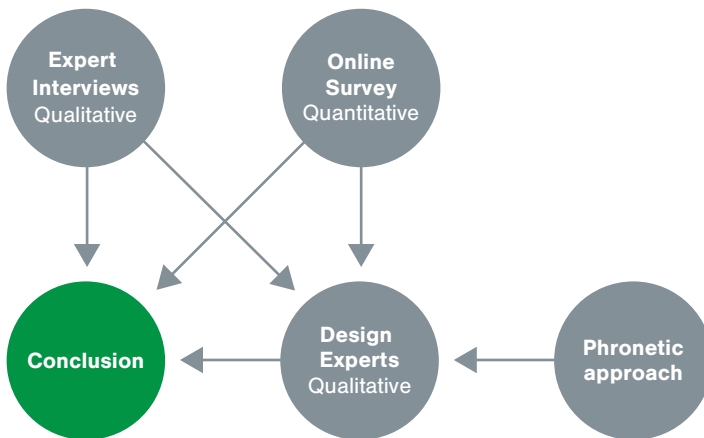


Figure 4.
Mixed methods visualisation: qualitative and quantitative methods are combined with a phonetic approach.

opportunities to achieve a greater overall strength of a research than usage of each of approaches separately (Creswell, 2009).

The research plan was originally designed in two main stages. The first stage was initially a qualitative analysis with **expert interviewing** as the main tool. This stage was seen as gaining general knowledge and insights about marketing of eco-labels, as well as setting the scene for the following stage. The second stage was planned to be a quantitative analysis with the online **student survey** as a main tool. The online survey took into consideration the results of expert interviews and it was launched in order to answer the second research sub-question. The survey received 91 responses. But both results of the expert interviews and the student survey lacked the input and opinions of professional graphic designers. Consequently, the topic of visual design has received little professional attention. As a result, the third stage was added to fill this study gap. This stage focused on discussion and evaluation of the qualitative interpretations of results of both the expert interviews and the online survey. The **focus group discussion** (a combination of expert design survey and workshop) was used as a main tool for the third research stage.

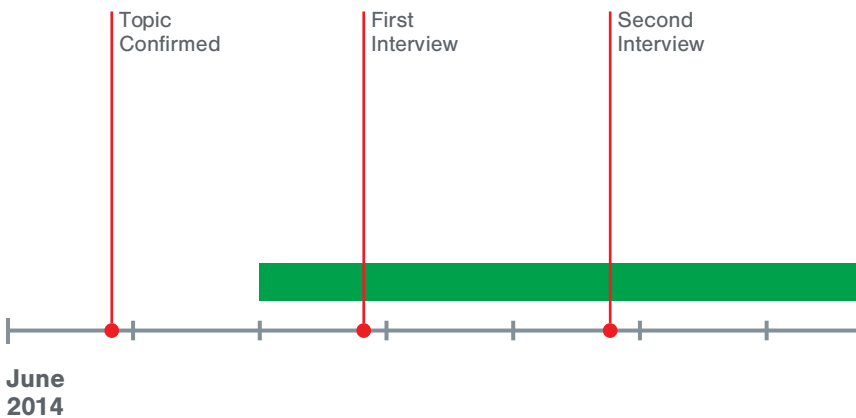
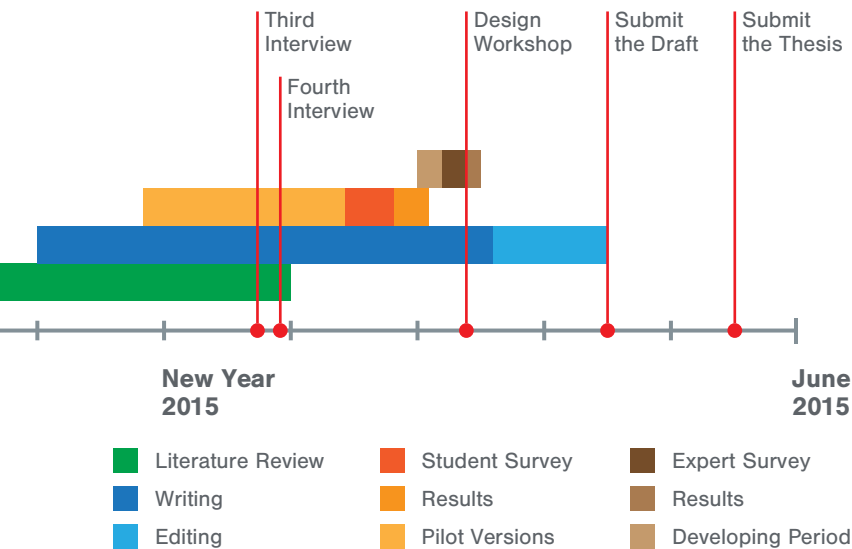


Figure 5.
The timespan and main
events of the research.

The timespan of the research stretched from August 2014 till March 2015 (Figure 5.). The first two stages of the study were mainly conducted during January and February 2015, and the third stage was organised in March 2015. The last quarter of 2014 was mainly used for the literature review and preparations for the expert interviews. The time limit necessitated the conclusion of the research process at the certain point, despite the possibility of discovering more focused and practical research topics.

Most of the research was conducted in Finland. According to Rahbar and Wahid (2011), the findings of research in consumers' green purchasing behavior may only be relevant in certain cultural, historical and geographical contexts. Therefore both the interviews and the survey were conducted in Finland only, with a small exception for Tallinn. One expert interview was arranged in Tallinn. The focus group discussion was also conducted in Finland.

In addition, some methods from design approach, such as probe walks and the design workshop, were used to support main studies.



1.3.1. Expert Interviews

Interviewing as a tool is an interesting way of getting insights for the study. Although, the interviews might seem too simple a way of gathering data, their significance is slightly underestimated. (Kvale, 2012). Any interview process requires careful planning and understanding the nature of the study along with the ethical norms of the interviewing process. The main advantage of interviews conducted in the study is seen in the fact that all participants were experts from the industry with valuable knowledge and experience about eco-labels and their ecosystem.

According to Littig (2013) an “expert has special *expert knowledge* which is related to a special professional field. Expert knowledge includes expertise as well as implicit /tacit knowledge about maxims of action, rules of decision-making, collective orientations and social patterns of interpretation. Expert knowledge has at least partially the chance to be realised in practice”.

“Altogether, four expert interviews were conducted and had exploratory nature.”

It is hard to evaluate the necessary number of cases for the interviews. Literature about research methods highlights that in order to gather good qualitative data number of interviews and subjects can be as many as possible to answer the relevant question. (Kvale, 2012, Kindle 1173). Furthermore, Koskinen et.al. (2003) speculate that in order to understand the phenomenon in full depth the number of samples should be considerably small.

The number of cases for interviews was determined, firstly by relevance of the case to the researched topic, and, secondly, by accessibility of professionals.

Altogether, four expert interviews were conducted and had exploratory nature. Three interviews were held in Helsinki and one in Tallinn. Due to the close geographical location and socio-political situation (both countries were part of European Union), the interview from Tallinn was considered to be valid.

The first two interviews were conducted with an eco-label manager at Motiva Services Oy and a fair trade manager at Mondo MTÜ at the end of August and in October 2014 respectively. Motiva Services Oy is a managing organisation for both Nordic Swan and EU Eco-label in Finland. Mondo MTU is an independent Estonian organisation

which specialises in development cooperation, global education and humanitarian aid. Mondo MTÜ also promotes ideas of fair trade, and thus often deals with a Fairtrade label.

The first two interviews were conducted to explore the overall situation in the field of marketing of eco-labels, especially Nordic Swan, EU Eco-label and Fairtrade. The interviews were held as an open discussion with some general questions only. The qualitative data was gathered in order to develop the main focus and the research question of the thesis, and prepare more specific questions for two other expert interviews.

The two other expert interviews were conducted in January 2015 with another eco-label manager at Motiva Services Oy and with a communication officer at Reilu kauppa Ry. Reilu kauppa Ry is a managing organisation for the Fairtrade eco-label in Finland. These interviews were held in more specific question-answer style, and were covering topics, such as branding of eco-labels, marketing campaigns and the use of research literature. The qualitative data was gathered in order to develop the online student survey. For example, during the expert interviews, the topic of co-branding was mentioned as very important. As a result, co-branding was added to the online survey.

Thematic analysis is used to analyse expert interviews. According to Harvard University web page (2008) thematic analysis “is a categorising strategy for qualitative data”. The researcher categorises data to find patterns and develop themes. The data from expert interviews were collected from both audio recordings and written notes taken by the interviewer during the interviews. All four interviews were transcribed into text. The text of the first two interviews was analysed to find out themes raised by interviewees. These themes were then used to establish the main focus of the research.

The text of the two other interviews was used to answer first research sub-question. It was also used in designing both the student survey and the expert workshop (focus group discussion). Furthermore, some themes and ideas mentioned in the interviews were discussed during the expert workshop.

The list of interviews is shown in Appendix #2.

1.3.2. Student Survey

A: Methods

During the work on the questionnaire, several master's theses and research papers on branding were reviewed to examine existing ways of designing an appropriate survey to fit this research into the thesis.

Most of the research papers used a Likert scale questionnaire or some analog, where respondents had to evaluate the statement on a scale from 1 to 5 or 1 to 10 (Bearden & Etzel, 1982; Liu, 2012; Liu, 2002; Dahlgren, 2011; Rätty, 2009). Two research papers used a visual approach for the questionnaire (Ross and Harradine, 2004; Tang et al. 2004). Ross and Harradine (2004) used chocolate bars to determine children's understanding of manufacturer versus retailer brands. And for another part of the research, they used sportswear logos to determine children's level of unaided brand recognition and recall. In the research paper by Tang et al. (2004) the shopping catalogue was designed with both eco-labelled and non-eco-labelled products. Students were asked to purchase those products with a limited amount of virtual money that they were given.

According to this review, one popular method used for questionnaires about branding is the Likert scale. Also, the use of visuals is common method for evaluation of brands and their logos.

The survey is designed as *non-experimental quantitative research*, where environment is not controlled and uses a *convenience sample* (Mujis, 2011). Furthermore, the other goal of this research is to collect *qualitative* data, thus on each page there is a text-box where respondents can write their overall thoughts and opinions.

As a result, this thesis's survey includes mixed types of questions, such as Likert scale, yes-no questions, visual evaluation based on images, open answers and a list of given answers.

B: The selection of eco-labels

For the sake of feasibility, it is suggested that the most appealing method would be based on evaluation of pictures of both the popular

eco-labels in Finland and real products from Finnish grocery stores. Therefore, a certain number of eco-labels should be selected for the survey.

According to the Eco-label Index there are currently 38 eco-labels represented in Finland. Eleven eco-labels are chosen for this research based on the following criterias:

- **Type 1 Eco-label**, which is a voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party program that awards a license that authorises the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations (GEN, 2004).
- **Represented by national managing organisation or be created in Finland.** Eco-labels, with national managing organisation in Finland, where it is possible to apply for certification, have a priority over those without national managing organisation.
- **Recognition among consumers.** Based on data gathered from multiple sources, such as the interviews with eco-label managers in Finland, the official web page of the Finnish Environmental Administration (2014) and other web pages, research articles and books (Sairinen, 2003; The Nordic Council of Ministers, 2001; Motiva Oy, 2011).
- **Representation in supermarkets.** Data gathered from two probe walks (Table 1.)

“According to the Eco-label Index there are currently 38 eco-labels represented in Finland.”

The first selection criteria is the existence of a local managing organisation. Nordic Swan, EU Eco-label and Fairtrade eco-labels are managed in Finland by Motiva Services Oy and Reilu kauppa ry respectively, and there are direct contact with managers of these eco-labels in Helsinki. The managers from the expert interviews are representing these organisations and eco-labels.

After the *probe walks* (Table 2.) at two grocery stores in Helsinki, S-market and Siwa, it became obvious that the most common eco-labels in supermarkets are Euroleaf and Nordic Swan, followed by Rainforest Alliance, Fairtrade, Luomu Sun, MSC and KRAV. As a result all these eco-labels are added to the survey, except of KRAV, which is a Swedish analog of Luomu Sun. It is decided that Luomu Sun is enough for the survey. The next step is to add eco-labels with different environmental criterias and from different industries, such as FSC and PEFC from sustainable forestry, UTZ Certified from sustainable agriculture, and Demeter for biodynamic produce.

Eco-label	Siwa (Kalasatama)	S-market (Sörnäinen)	Result
Nordic Swan	11	58+	69+
EU Eco-label	0	6+	6+
Fairtrade	3	45+	48+
Demeter*	0	0	0
Euroleaf	1	76++	78++
Luomu	2	31+	32+
Rainforest Alliance	10	38+	48+
FSC	1	3	4
MSC	3	28+	31+
PEFC	3	0	3
KRAV	2	12+	14+
Ø-label	0	10+	10+
Bio-siegel	0	1	1
EKOenergy	0	1	1

Table 1. The results of probe walks in supermarkets.

*Demeter eco-labelled products are not sold at supermarkets

+ more than

++ a lot more than

As a result, three main eco-labels to be used for the research are Nordic Swan, the most recognised eco-label in the country (Sairinen, 2003; Lehmuskoski, 2014), EU Eco-label and Fairtrade. The rest eight eco-labels to be used in the survey are Demeter, Euroleaf, Luomu, Rainforest Alliance, Forest Stewardship Council, Marine Stewardship Council, PEFC and UTZ Certified.

C: Pilot versions

Before the final survey was created, three pilot versions were designed and tested to find the best solution.

The main focus of the first pilot survey was to measure eco-labels' visual recognition by students and evaluate the level of their influence on students' purchasing decisions in comparison with other factors, such as price, product's brand, and package design. But during the pilot testing a major problem occurred. Both the attempt to avoid ethical bias and the addition of other purchasing factors resulted in loss of connection with both the main topic and the research question. As a consequence, the survey evaluated all factors of students' purchasing decision instead of focusing on the role of eco-labels' logo design and brand image.

Two new pilot surveys were designed. One pilot was based on the initial idea of the thesis and, thus, focused on the evaluation of the eco-labels' logo design and its credibility. The other pilot version was about the role of eco-labels in co-branding. The idea was derived from one of the expert interviews, where one eco-label manager had raised the topic of co-branding and its increasing relevance in the research about eco-labels. After the pilot testing it was decided to combine both surveys into one and cover the question of eco-labels' credibility from both perspectives – logo design and co-branding.

“The idea was derived from one of the expert interviews, where one eco-label manager had raised the topic of co-branding and its increasing relevance in the research about eco-labels.”

D: Main objectives

The main objective of the final survey is to evaluate visual design, credibility and co-branding of eco-labels, as well as their mutual influence. Each eco-label is evaluated according to its logo and use on the package of the main product.

The objective of the logo evaluation is to find relationships between:

- the recognition of the eco-label and its credibility,
- the visual appeal of the logo design and the credibility of an eco-label,
- the recognition of the eco-labels and its visual appeal to the students.

The objective of the co-branding part is to evaluate the mutual influence between an eco-label logo and a product's brand.

E: Main survey

The main survey is designed as a form in Google Drive. From data collecting prospective survey consists of three main sections: (1) introduction and questions about the respondent, (2) main questions, and (3) follow-up questions.

The first section includes introductory text, which explains both the goal and the topic of the research and formal questions for research accuracy which provide information about the respondent, such as educational background, age and gender. The second section consisted of eleven pages, one for each eco-label. Each page has ten questions and is divided into two parts: visual design and co-branding. The third section includes follow-up questions. The goal of the follow-up questions is to collect general data about the eco-labels' logo design and co-branding.

The survey was launched in February 2015 and distributed among students in Finland by using the internal mailing lists of various master programmes of Aalto and Facebook pages. The link with the survey was also sent to the mailing lists of the University of Helsinki and the Haaga Helia.

The design of the student survey is shown in Appendix #4.

F: Research sample

“All products used for co-branding evaluation are purchased at local supermarkets and, first of all, are familiar to people living in Finland.”

The most common sampling method in educational studies is a convenience sampling. It is done where researches has easy access to particular sites. In this case the convenience sampling is used and it is applied to students at Aalto University and other universities in Finland. This method can suffer from bias, because it does not represent the whole population. (Muijs, 2011)

The sample of the online survey is students living and studying in Finland. Both international and local students are included to the study. Furthermore, students from all degrees are accepted, as well as recent graduates. Exchange students are also accepted, even if their study period in Finland has ended by the time of the online survey was launched. The main requirement is that both exchange students and recent graduates were studying in Finland one year before the survey.

Students in one country are selected to enhance homogeneity among sample and, as a result, strengthen internal validity (Tang et al., 2004). Tang et al. (2004) refers to Cadler et al. (1982;1983) who “asserted that internal validity has to be given higher priority over external validity in testing theory”. The goal is to achieve high internal validity first and then extend the external validity by recommending further studies in Europe.

Furthermore, the selection of eco-labels is based on their popularity in Finland. Also, all products used for co-branding evaluation are purchased at local supermarkets and, first of all, are familiar to people living in Finland. Thus the use of students living in Finland as a sample will ensure higher accuracy of the results.

Being green is a trend among the younger population. Thus it can be suggested that students, most of whom can be described as young adults, are an appropriate sample for this research, because they are most probably following the trend and are one of the social groups that are most familiar with eco-labels and environmental issues.

G: Challenges

The combination of different topics, such as eco-labels, visual design and branding in one survey can lead to several challenges and result in certain limitations and inaccuracies of the final results. Therefore these challenges should be discussed beforehand.

1. Eco-labels are from different industries

Most eco-labels are used in different industries, and usually each industry has one or two widely used and recognised eco-labels. Therefore, if the objective of the research is to evaluate the overall phenomenon of eco-labels and not just one particular eco-label or industry, then many various eco-labels should be used. In most of the reviewed research papers about branding the evaluation was conducted for one particular brand or industry. But in the case of this study the main focus is the overall phenomenon of eco-labels. Thus, the suggested solution is to select a certain number of eco-labels and develop an evaluation method based on those eco-labels.

“The goal of this research is to minimise the ethical bias by limiting the choice only to eco-labels and eco-labelled products.”

2. Ethical bias

The ethical bias is one of the major differences between developing a questionnaire for conventional brands and a questionnaire for eco-labels (Tang et al. 2004). According to most of the reviewed research on green marketing and eco-labels, respondents tend to answer that they prefer green or eco-labelled products due to their environmental concerns. However, when in real life they have to make a purchasing decision, respondents choose according to other concerns, such as price, performance, availability, random choice, etc. Therefore, the goal of this research is to minimise the ethical bias by limiting the choice only to eco-labels and eco-labelled products.

3. Eco-labels as brands

The trend to refer to eco-labels as brands is still very speculative. In some recent research papers the term brand is used in the context of an eco-label, but no research was found with an eco-label being evaluated as a brand. Moreover, in most of the reviewed research papers eco-labels are defined as green marketing tools (Rex and Baumann, 2006), promotion utilities (D'Souza et al., 2006) or symbols that communicate product's environmental performance (Tang et al. 2004). Therefore, no previous attempt to evaluate eco-labels from the perspective of branding were found, which may lead to a certain misuse of methods in this research.

4. Brands with different brand image

As mentioned before, eco-labels represent different industries and thus are used by different brands. All eco-labels are evaluated with different brands in the co-branding part of the survey. Moreover, all those brands have different credibility and image. Hence, the co-branding cases cannot be compared with each other.

H: Data analysis

All the data from the online survey were collected into a Google Drive spreadsheet and were visualised by an in-built function "Summary of responses". From there, all the data were transferred into a separate spreadsheet file, where it was clustered and grouped by topics, questions and eco-labels. Simultaneously, all answers were checked for their validity.

The statistical analysis was applied for all numerical data. Three main variables were defined in the online survey: visual appeal, recognition and credibility. The visual appeal variable stood for both the number of respondents who liked the logo design and the rating of the logo design. The recognition variable stood for the number of respondents who recognised the logo of an eco-label. The credibility variable stood for the number of respondents who agreed that the logo design added credibility to the eco-label.

All yes/no questions were calculated into percentages and then compared between all eleven eco-labels. The results of the Likert scale questions were calculated into average statistics and compared between all eco-labels. Then these results (variables) were visualised in linear charts to improve and simplify the process of comparison.

All the comments were transferred into a separate document and divided according to each eco-label. The comments were analysed by using color-coding. Firstly, the comments were analysed according to an emotional tone to find out overall attitude of the respondents towards an eco-label. Secondly, repeated topics in the comments were selected and analysed.

Afterwards, interpretations were made based on the collected data and comments. These interpretations were then used in focus group discussion.

1.3.3. Focus Group Discussion

In the focus group discussion professional graphic designers evaluate both the visual quality and practicability of eco-labels' logo design.

The main objective of the focus group discussion is to help advance existing knowledge in graphic design and support the work of designers by prototyping a tool to evaluate logo design of eco-labels. This discussion is a first attempt to examine and structure specific qualities of the logo design for eco-labels, by taking into account the need to communicate both credibility and environmental criteria, as well as practical usage on the packages and in co-branding.

“The main objective of the focus group discussion is to help advance existing knowledge in graphic design.”

In a research paper by Lee et al. (2012) two professional graphic designers evaluated logo designs by using principles of gestalt. The graphic designers rated the extent to which six principles of gestalt – similarity, proximity, continuity, figure-ground, closure, assimilation – were present in those logos. They used the Likert scale where “1” means low and “5” means high.

In this thesis a similar approach is used. The design of the logos of the eco-labels is evaluated by professional graphic designers using five principles of gestalt – similarity, proximity, continuity, figure-ground, closure – based on a tutorial from the Spokane Falls Community College (2014) web page. Assimilation is left out, because this principle is failed to be identified. The Likert scale is used to evaluate these principles the same way, as it was done in the paper by Lee et al. (2012).

In addition to five principles of gestalt, graphic designers are asked to

evaluate the logos by specific qualities, which are important for practical use of eco-labels in co-branding. These five qualities are derived from the results of the online survey conducted among students living in Finland.

1. Visual credibility

The credibility of the eco-label for the consumer depends a lot on first eye contact with its logo, especially if the consumer is not familiar with the eco-label. Therefore, the logo of an eco-label must look credible to support the positive image of the label. Furthermore, the result of the online survey demonstrates that most of the students see an eco-label's logo as the most critical element to make it easily recognisable to the wider public. Thus, the professional graphic designers are asked to evaluate the extent to which the design of the logo gives an impression of credibility to the eco-label.

2. Communication of eco-criteria

After first eye contact with the eco-label's logo, it is highly important for consumer to understand what it stands for and its environmental criteria. The online survey showed that people tend to trust eco-labels more if they know or understand what they stand for. Thus, the professional graphic designers are asked to evaluate the eco-labels' logo ability to communicate what the eco-label stands for and its environmental criteria.

3. Use on the package

Another important quality is the convenience of using eco-label on the package. This quality is more designer-oriented than the two previous ones. The same eco-label can be applied on many different packages and it is important that it can be used on different shapes and surfaces without losing its readability and still be both noticed and visually appealing. Thus, the graphic designers are asked to evaluate the extent to which the logo design is suitable and convenient to be used on many different packages and still look credible and visually appealing.

4. Visibility on the package

The fourth quality is closely related to the third. The logo can look strong when standing alone, but it can easily disappear on the package. Eco-labels are always used on the package of some other brand and therefore designers often have to integrate two very different designs. Therefore, the eco-label logo should still be graphically strong and be able to communicate its message on any possible package. Thus, the graphic designers are asked to evaluate the extent to which the logo is

still readable, visible and noticeable when used on a random package.

5. Use in co-branding

The fifth quality is the most challenging. Eco-labels are always placed on the package together with the logo of the product brand, thus it is important that consumer is able to identify the eco-label. The online survey demonstrated that in some cases consumer can confuse eco-label with brand logo, or identify eco-label as some other label or misread it in any other way. Thus, the graphic designers are asked to evaluate how well an eco-label can be identified when placed together with the product brand.

The focus group discussion consists of two parts. The first part is an online survey, where the graphic designers are asked to evaluate five eco-label logos. Nordic Swan, EU Eco-label and Fairtrade are chosen for evaluation, because the expert interviews were conducted with the managers of these eco-labels. In addition, Demeter and UTZ Certified are evaluated, as a contrast to well designed Nordic Swan and Fairtrade. The Demeter eco-label has the lowest results in both visual design and credibility and has received plenty of comments about not being associated with an eco-label logo. The UTZ Certified eco-label has received relatively low results in visual design and controversial comments about looking differently than conventional eco-label logos. The design of the expert survey is shown in Appendix #5.

The second part of the focus group discussion is a small workshop, where the graphic designers discuss both the results of the first part and various interpretations derived from the previous research. The discussion is based on ten interpretations about both logo design and co-branding of eco-labels. The researcher (host) asks the graphic designers for their opinions about those interpretations, but also facilitates the discussion between designers. The goal of this workshop is to provide both graphic-designers and marketers of eco-labels with ideas and frameworks for improving both recognition and credibility of eco-labels through logo design and co-branding. The frameworks and ideas should be based on the results of the thesis research. The focus group discussion is described in detail in Appendix #6.

The data from the expert survey was collected and analysed in the similar way as it was done for the student survey. The answers were transferred to a separate spreadsheet and then analysed. All questions used the Likert scale, so that answers could be calculated into statistical averages.

“The goal of this workshop is to provide both graphic-designers and marketers of eco-labels with ideas and frameworks for improving both recognition and credibility of eco-labels through logo design and co-branding.”

The workshop discussion was audio recorded and notes were written on paper by the host. The audio recording was analysed and the main answers and ideas about interpretation were selected.

It is important to mention that the focus group discussion is both an additional and experimental method, thus the sample is small and results are only qualitative.

1.4. Research Limitations

Due to the nature of a master's thesis, certain limitations automatically apply to the work.

Firstly, current research was conducted in Helsinki while based at Aalto University. Most of respondents are residents of Finland or students studying at Aalto. Because of limited time frame it was impossible to widen the study to other countries or communities. Therefore, this study is seen as a pioneer attempt to cover a new qualitative definition of an eco-label.

Secondly, the scope of the study did not allow the research to take into consideration all of the existing eco-labels. In terms of narrowing the focus of the thesis only eleven of eco-labels present in the Finnish market were analysed and tested during the practical part. The clarification of the selection of eco-labels for the study is given in the following chapters.

Thirdly, Fairtrade is often referred to as an ethical mark rather than an eco-label due to its social impact rather than environmental impact. But because it is included into the Eco-label Index in this thesis "Fairtrade" will be referred as an eco-label.

PART II:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Green Marketing

2.1.1. Marketing vs Green Marketing

According to Kotler et al. (2009) the marketing process includes a broad range of activities, ranging from strategic to tactical ones. In a best case scenario, the marketing activity of any company concentrates on forming an understanding of a product's demand and possibilities for new market segments as well as overall brand performance and price elasticity. So, it is clear nowadays that branding and marketing are mutually beneficial activities and form a joint system for a product's evaluation.

“Green marketing is a way of marketing for products that are presumed to represent the environmental responsibility of the producer.”

Green marketing is believed to have become a new concept about three decades ago after the “discovery of the environment by marketing practitioners and academics” (Peattie et. al., 2005, p.357). Generally speaking, green marketing is a way of marketing for products that are presumed to represent the environmental responsibility of the producer. Thus, green marketing incorporates a broad range of activities, including product modification, changes to the production process, sustainable packaging, as well as modifying advertising.

Polonsky (1994) emphasises that no definition of green marketing has been universally accepted. He provides his definition of green marketing as “marketing that consists of all activities designed to generate and facilitate any exchanges intended to satisfy human needs or wants, such that the satisfaction of these needs and wants occurs, with minimal detrimental impact on the natural environment” (Polonsky, 1994). Polonsky also argues that “green marketing should look at minimizing environmental harm, not necessarily eliminate it”.

As any scientific discipline, green marketing has been studied extensively since its first introduction. There are a number of different opinions and developments of thought related to green marketing. Various scientific papers have explored whether green marketing has different applications to conventional ways of marketing and as a following trend how green became clearly an added value to classical methods of product promotion. Rahbar and Wahid (2011), for instance, call this development process “three stages for green marketing” separating each stage with a ten-year period.

Rahbar and Wahid (2011) reason that the first stage of green marketing evolved from the early 1980s to 1990s when advanced marketing communities started to use the term and apply it to various marketing activities. After the 1990s, the whole concept transformed into the more or less obvious belief that consumers have a “positive attitude towards environment and green products”. However, that did not reflect in the purchasing behavior. The third stage has started since 2000 and has been reflected with certain technological advancement and governmental interest in controlling the whole process (which is always a sign of popular trend). With the historical perspective divided by ten-year periods, the research unfortunately does not really state when the new stage of green marketing began.

“The new era of green marketing can be characterised by an increasing co-operation between eco-label managers and product manufacturers or service producers.”

It is possible to think that we are still somewhere in the so-called third stage of the era of green marketing. However, it seems that we may have passed by that state of mind some years ago. Based on the example of the Nordic Swan eco-label, it can be suggested that tightening of governmental environmental regulations leads to weakening of governmental control over government-initiated certification systems. As a result the latter gain more independence and possibility to co-operate with manufacturers/service providers in developing more applicable volunteer rules and regulations. To sum up, the new era of green marketing can be characterised by an increasing co-operation between eco-label managers and product manufacturers or service producers.

In the context of conventional marketing, however, green marketing is normally seen as a way to promote certain environmentally friendly products to a well-prepared audience that makes choices towards environmentally-friendly consumption. According to Hartmann and Ibanez (2006) “green marketing generally focuses on the efficiency of cognitive persuasion strategies, and believes that the consumer’s high involvement concerning environmental issues is an effect of growing environmental knowledge”. Stanton and Futrell (1987) define “green

or environmental marketing as actions intended to replace current needs and wants with minimal harmful impact on our environment". This evokes one of the most interesting paradigms in the whole idea of green marketing. Though the whole idea of green products lies within sustainable consumption, green marketing is still an activity towards increasing number of sales overall. As Peattie et. al. (2005) brilliantly point out:

"The paradoxical proposition is that the way through the environmental crisis created by excessive and unsustainable consumption, is yet more consumption". p.368

The article of Peattie et. al. (2005) is an outstanding example of a scientific community that endures all the sorrows of green marketing strategies which in fact were just hypocritical attempts to win another market share. They conclude that due to the nature of green campaigns and, moreover, the nature of human beings, many of the goodwill attempts resulted only in the "cynicism being displayed by consumers" (p.359). Gradually, Peattie et. al. (2005) unfold "five routes to failure" in green marketing strategies. The core of this failure is seen, on the one hand, around the lack of true understanding inside the companies of conservative industries. Used as a promotional tool so-called "green" products lacked real promise as companies with their suppliers lacked independent authentication. On the other hand, short-sighted small-scale start-ups were, firstly, just too small as market share to make any difference and, secondly, overoptimistic about their "green" performance. Moreover, small companies "were always destined to have problems establishing a significant market presence in the long-term because they failed to successfully research, understand or educate their customers" (p.363).

Not without emotional exclamation, the article addresses the question about green marketing towards scientific circle: "Is it a tragic story of failure, or of a prophecy concerning the long-term future of marketing whose time has not yet come?" (p.358)

Though it is challenging to answer this question, the absolute message and concern are quite clear. In order to expand into the green market a great number of different companies launched their brand extensions using eco-labels. This outshadowed the companies with original sustainable intentions and resulted in the tough competition where smaller goodwill enterprises simply lost. Due to the nature of corporations, their real performance is rather difficult to measure. And

even with the eco-labelled products they remain huge establishments that are not necessary eco-friendly when taken as a whole. So, unless producers take more responsibility and educate both themselves and their target audience, their green marketing activity will remain just an obstacle towards sustainability. Eco-labels are seen as one of the ways when the third party can observe and approve the actual performance of any producer.

2.1.2.

The Role of Eco-labels in Green Marketing

According to Global Eco-labelling Network (GEN) (n.d.) *eco-labelling* is a voluntary method of environmental performance certification and labelling that is practised around the world. An *eco-label* is a label which identifies overall, proven environmental preference of a product or service within a specific product/service category. There are different classifications of labels, as listed below (Table 2.). In contrast to *green* symbols, or claim statements developed by manufacturers and service providers, the most credible labels are based on life cycle considerations; they are awarded by an impartial third party in relation to certain products or services that are independently determined to meet transparent environmental leadership criteria. Eco-label is a mean of marketing communication with the consumer (Rex and Baumann, 2006). And it can be defined as “any symbol appearing on product packaging that seeks to inform consumers that a particular product is in some significant way less harmful to the environment than purchase alternatives” (Tang et al. 2004). This research focuses only on eco-labels with an environmental performance certification by a third-party.

Type 1

a voluntary, multiple-criteria based, third party program that awards a license authorising the use of environmental labels on products indicating overall environmental preferability of a product within a particular product category based on life cycle considerations

Type 2

informative environmental self-declaration claims

Type 3

voluntary programs that provide quantified environmental data of a product, under pre-set categories of parameters set by a qualified third party and based on life cycle assessment, and verified by that or another qualified third party

Table 2.
Voluntary Environmental
Performance Labelling –
ISO Definitions
(GEN, 2014)

Eco-labels are usually defined as a tool or a utility in green marketing to promote “the identification of green products” (D’Souza et al., 2006) and “allocate information between sellers and buyers” (Sammer and Wüstenhagen, 2006). The main functions of eco-labels in green marketing are identified as the mean to inform consumers about product environmental impact and both the quality and value of the product itself. Rex and Baumann (2006) add the function of facilitating consumers’ purchasing decisions to select environmentally-friendly products.

The official three types classification of eco-labels (GEN, 2014) can be confusing for consumers. In contrast to the official version, Belz and Peattie (2009) provide clear and simple differentiation of eco-labelling schemes. According to Belz and Peattie “labelling schemes include national schemes such as German “Blue Angel”; international labels like the European Union Eco-label; schemes that relate to particular industries or products (*author’s note* e.g. Marine Stewardship Council); or to particular methods of production (e.g. organic farming);... or to business conduct (e.g. Fair Trade)”. Furthermore, eco-labels can be differentiated according to the diversity of product groups: eco-labelling schemes covering a wide range of products and services (e.g. Nordic Swan includes food products, detergents, as well as various services), and schemes covering product groups from one particular industry (e.g. Marine Stewardship Council can be applied only to fish products). The latter differentiation can be argued to be the most understandable for consumers.

Plenty of quantitative surveys have been conducted to identify overall awareness and recognition of eco-labels among wider groups of the population (Motiva Services Oy, 2014; Turu-uuringute AS, 2012; Turu-uuringute AS, 2013). Though these surveys may provide reliable overviews of consumer awareness, they fail to measure eco-labels’ influence on actual consumers’ purchasing behavior. Whereas, most research papers about the influence of eco-labels on consumer purchasing decisions exclude important criteria, such as packaging design, availability in stores or consumers’ purchasing habits. They focus on whether eco-labels as something separate from the product influence the decision-making or not (Thøgersen et al., 2000, p. 287; Rahbar and Wahid, 2011). As a result, most of the research papers provide incomplete data, which may corrupt their analysis of the development of green marketing strategy. Moreover, few researchers endeavour to avoid ethical bias by hiding environmental criterias behind the others or replicate actual purchasing experience (Tang et al., 2004). Still,

most research papers tend to ask direct questions about environmental awareness and eco-labels (Thøgersen et al., 2000; Diekmann et al., 2003; Rahbar and Wahid, 2011; Borin and Cerf, 2011; Daugbjerg et al., 2014). However, some researchers attempt to widen the scope of criteria. For example, Borin and Cerf (2011) measured the influence of products' quality and value alongside respondents' environmental awareness. Fitzgerald and Russo (2001) investigated the influence of packaging graphics on consumers' beliefs regarding green products characteristics.

To sum up, most of research about the role of eco-labels in green marketing is based on reductionism and tends to narrow down the focus to too few aspects instead of exploring a "bigger picture". As a consequence, the results of the research fail to cover all aspects of consumers' purchasing behavior and, hence, may lack the connection with real-life situations.

In addition, Peattie et al. (2005) mention one of the green marketing failures as lack of attention to consumers' actual expectations. Rex and Baumann (2006) add that instead of only developing complex and divergent rules for environmental labelling and regulations, companies should pay more attention to consumers' actual needs and behavior. Unfortunately "this problem received very little academic attention" (Rex & Baumann, 2006). However, researches in psychology and sociology have endeavoured to widen the scope and explain consumer's purchasing decision through analysis of behavioral costs (Diekmann et al., 2003), attention towards environmental labels (Thøgersen et al., 2000;) and Ajzen's theory of planned behavior (Kalafatis et al., 1999).

Furthermore, Rex and Baumann (2006) question "whether it is at all relevant to talk about green consumers" and argue that "green is not fixed character of the consumer". Researchers emphasise the importance of the context in which purchases are made. "The same consumer may well make green purchase decision in one situation but not another" (Rex & Baumann, 2006). Therefore, it is important to avoid environmental bias and include green purchasing behavior into overall purchasing behavior.

Rex and Baumann (2006) argue that green marketing is not separated from conventional marketing, therefore the same rules and methods can be applied. For example, they find that green marketing could learn from conventional marketing in discovering other means than labelling to promote green products. The same idea could be applied to rules

“Green marketing could learn from conventional marketing in discovering other means than labelling to promote green products.”

of branding of eco-labels which, in fact, is not much different from conventional branding. And this separation of everything ‘green’ from everything ‘conventional’ is false, unless this is a totally new model, which eco-labels are not.

In contrast to Rex and Baumann (2006), Schaefer and Crane (2005) argue that current prevalent academic research approach in green marketing has been adopted from conventional marketing literature. This research approach, firstly, conceptualises consumption as information-processing and choice. Secondly, it is based on “the quantitative research tradition with its emphasis on measurability and reliability” (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). Thirdly, it attempts to “establish green marketing and green consumption within conventional marketing literature” and supports “ostensibly sustainable marketing practises”, such as incremental greening, marketing of green products and stimulus-response model of consumer behavior (Schaefer & Crane, 2005). As a result, this approach is criticised as not genuinely both green and sustainable marketing and is labelled a “green wash” by supporters of more radical and fundamental changes in current economical system (Schaefer & Crane, 2005).

Eco-labels as a means of green marketing communication fall into the domain of information-processing and choice. Furthermore, eco-labels are not tools of radical change in green marketing, but rather incremental greening of mainstream marketing. Therefore, marketing and branding methods for eco-labels can be adopted from conventional marketing. To sum up, the criticism of information-processing and choice by Schaefer and Crane (2005) justifies Rex and Baumann’s (2006) argument about applying the same rules and methods as in conventional marketing to the marketing of eco-labels.

Eco-labels are mentioned in literature about sustainable marketing. Belz and Peattie (2009) provide overall definition of eco-labels as a “mean of communicating with consumers about sustainable consumption”. Interestingly, Martin and Schouten (2012) describe eco-labels as a form of co-branding, and emphasise eco-labels as an “important part of packaging”. The following chapter provides an overview of sustainable marketing, where the concept of eco-label plays an important role.

“And this separation of everything ‘green’ from everything ‘conventional’ is false, unless this is a totally new model, which eco-labels are not.”

2.1.3. Sustainable & Sustainability Marketing

During recent years, research on marketing in the context of sustainability has gained its own momentum. In some articles authors use the term *sustainable marketing* (Martin & Schouten, 2012), while Belz and Peattie (2009) chose to use the term *sustainability marketing*. Belz and Peattie explain that adjective *sustainable* means just durable or long-lasting. As a result, sustainable marketing can be interpreted as marketing that builds long-lasting customer relationships without any consideration of sustainability issues. While “sustainability marketing more explicitly relates to sustainable development agenda” and sustainability (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

Martin and Schouten (2012) define sustainable marketing as “the process of creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers in such a way that both natural and human capital are preserved or enhanced throughout” (p.10). Furthermore, Martin and Schouten (2012) emphasize the use of terms natural and human *capital* instead of *resources*. Researchers explain the difference between “resources as something to be used” and “capital as something in which to invest”. Hence, sustainable marketing can be described as a shift of business people’s mindset from exploiting nature and society towards investing into and preserving them.

“Sustainable marketing can be described as a shift of business people’s mindset from exploiting nature and society towards investing into and preserving them.”

Belz and Peattie (2009) define sustainability marketing “as building and maintaining sustainable relationships with customers, the social environment and the natural environment” (p.31). Sustainability marketing covers the triple bottom line of ecological, social and economic issues, in contrast to green marketing, which tends to focus only on environmental issues. Also, sustainability marketing requires a change in behavior of both producers and consumers (Belz & Peattie, 2009).

Sustainable or sustainability marketing can be seen as logical continuation of green marketing, which adds social and economical aspects of sustainability to environmental aspects. Also, sustainability marketing requires development of totally new marketing strategies and innovative business models, while green marketing is still strongly bound with both the mindset and methodologies of conventional marketing. Green marketing focus mainly on environmental issues and poverty in developing countries (Belz & Peattie, 2009) and so do the majority of eco-label certification programmes (e.g. Nordic Swan and EU Eco-label focus on environmental issues, and Fairtrade attempts to solve injustice in developing countries). Hence, eco-labels are seen more as tools of

green marketing rather than sustainability marketing. Though, both Martin and Schouten (2012) and Belz and Peattie (2009) mention eco-labels as an example of sustainability labelling, they avoid the term eco-labels and use either term sustainability label (Belz & Peattie, 2009) or just label (Martin & Schouten, 2012).

2.1.4. Credibility in Green Marketing

Credibility in green marketing is considered to be one of the most important communication issues between companies and consumers (Alsmadi, 2007). Consumers are aware of greenwash and often distrust the environmental claims of product or service producers. This distrust in environmental claims caused a major backlash against green marketing at the beginning of the 1990s (Rex & Baumann, 2006).

Alsmadi (2007) emphasises that, on the one hand, credible advertising and communication of environmental friendliness can become a competitive advantage for the company and transform into business opportunity. On the other hand, lack of credibility in advertising can be “devastating and costly in a long run”, and be seen as greenwashing (Alsmadi, 2007). The researcher points out that lack of credibility in environmental claims and adverts is one of the major “barriers that keep consumers from turning their good intentions into action” and this barrier must be “removed to create green consumerism” (Alsmadi, 2007).

Rahbar and Wahid (2011) suggest the following reasons for low-perceived credibility of environmental claims in green advertising: “The vague arguments to substantiate the environmental claim, the source country of the advertised product does not bear an eco-friendly image, the manufacturer (advertiser) of the advertised product does not bear an eco-friendly image and the alleged eco-friendliness of the advertised product does not match with the respondent’s previous consumption experience”.

Eco-labels play a significant role in supporting the credibility of environmental claims for products and services. But the credibility of eco-labels can also be negatively influenced by products “associated with significant environmental impacts, such as cars and lawn mowers” (Horne, 2009). Consequently, these ‘black’ products are “often avoided by voluntary eco-labelling programs for fear of harming the label’s credibility as a ‘green clean’ brand” (Horne, 2009).

2.2. Branding

Historically, the term “brand” comes from labeling cattle in terms of distinguishing them from one owner to another. Since then marketing theory took the term as a means of communication from producer to customer. Moreover, brand theory has evolved into a totally separate science underpinning customers’ purchasing behavior starting from the clear definition of the “big five” model of J. Aaker and ending up with the critical research of B. Sharp. So, currently branding is viewed as a certain activity by the producer that aims to reach its customer group by the visual identity and message created for the product.

According to American Marketing Association Dictionary (n.d.) a brand is the “name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller’s product distinct from those of other sellers. Kotler et al. (2009) provide a very similar definition of brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one company or group of companies and to differentiate them from those of competitors”. Furthermore, Kotler defines brand as “any label that carries meaning and associations” (MaRS, 2009).

Kotler et al. (2009) define branding as “endowing products and services with the power of a brand”. Branding is a mean to “distinguish the products or services of the company from those of another” (Kotler et al. 2009). Functional branding relates to the performance of the product or service, while emotional branding appeals to brand’s symbolic meaning to consumer. Nowadays in most European countries branding theory is shifting from a functional towards an emotional approach (Kotler et al., 2009).

Emotional branding could be defined as “engaging the consumer on the level of senses and emotions; forging a deep, lasting, intimate emotional connection to the brand that transcends material satisfaction; it involves creating a holistic experience that delivers an emotional fulfillment so that the customer develops a special bond with and unique trust in brand” (Kotler et al., 2009).

Branding can be applied “anywhere a consumer has a choice”. It can be used for “a physical good, a service, a shop, a person, a place, an organisation, a group, or an idea” (Kotler et al., 2009). The term branding can also be applied to describe people’s aspiration to express themselves through their brand choice. This phenomenon is usually called “personal branding”. (Kotler et al., 2009). According to Wheeler (2013) “brands have three primary functions: navigation, reassurance, engagement”. In addition: “branding is a disciplined process used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty” (Wheeler, 2013).

2.2.1. Brand Image, Identity & Equity

Kotler et al. (2009) distinguishes brand identity as “the way a company aims to identify or position itself or its product or service” with brand image as “the visual or verbal expression of a brand which leads to the psychological or emotional associations that the brand aspires to maintain in the minds of consumer”. A company must diffuse its brand identity in all of its activities, including working culture, visual design and business operations. This increases the chances that a brand image perceived by consumer is the closest possible to the brand identity. (Kotler et al., 2009)

Wheeler (2013) explains that the role of brand identity is to “take disparate elements and unify them into the systems”. Furthermore, it “fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible” (Wheeler, 2013). Kotler et al. (2009) define brand image as “the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers, as reflected in the associations held in consumer memory”.

Brand equity is defined as “the added value endowed to products and services” (Kotler et al., 2009). It is “reflected in how consumers think, feel and act in respect to the brand, as well as the prices, a market share and profitability” (Kotler et al., 2009). Researchers use different per-

spectives to study brand equity. Consumer-based brand equity views the brand from the perspective of the consumer and measures its power in “what consumer has seen, read, heard, learned, thought and felt about the brand over time” (Kotler et al., 2009).

2.2.2. Brand Loyalty

In branding strategy there is commonly a belief that most sales come from a loyal group of customers. Therefore, most branding activity focuses on the ways to connect, firstly, with the specific customer segment (loyals) and, secondly, with the potential buyers in another segment (prospective loyals). However, in recent years this trend has received criticism for being based on trivial assumptions. So, the branding process is slightly shifting towards a scientific quantitative approach that focuses on empirically grounded guidance.

One example of such an approach is covered by professor Byron Sharp. Sharp (2010) strongly criticizes most contemporary methodological approaches to branding and marketing. He compares those with the medieval doctors who tried to cure patients with bloodletting and assumed it was the only healing method. Only in the middle of 20th century did scientific proof show that it had been totally useless. Many patients died just because there was no scientific proof and doctors just simply believed traditional historical assumptions. According to Sharp (2010) the same situation occurred within marketers:

“Marketing managers operate a bit like Medieval doctors -- working on impressions and myth-based explanations. It would be arrogant to think that the current marketing ‘best practice’ does not contain many mistakes and erroneous assumptions.” (p.8)

Sharp (2010) suggests that in addition to classical theoretical approach to marketing and specifically branding, companies should use quantitative marketing laws. He describes two main laws -- double jeopardy law and natural monopoly law -- that in the long run influence the majority of marketing practice. These two laws are particularly interesting in terms of eco-focused companies.

Double jeopardy law, generally speaking, can be described as twice more increasing risks from small presence on market. According to

Sharp (2010) it is not enough to win the target audience, rather any small enterprise should aim to win occasional buyers, or “switchers”. This does not guarantee success to any company, but it does give a more likely chance of survival. Small brands, therefore, are much more vulnerable as they “...get ‘hit twice’: their sales are lower because they have fewer buyers who buy the brand less often” (p.19). This law is proved mostly with statistical data that unveils sales numbers of small market players. Loyal buyers are not the source for majority of the sales. Thus, it is possible to talk about “...very typical double jeopardy pattern: loyalty declines with market share” (p.36).

The only way for small players to succeed is to win as many “random” buyers as possible, It can be theoretically achieved with the means of mass marketing, mass social media or other campaigns. But even in the case of fortunate marketing activity, there is never a guarantee of long-term market survival. Interestingly, this applies to most of small startups who aim to secure a loyal customer base and in prior conventional marketing research underestimate human nature. In terms of customer segmentation Sharp (2010) argues that there is almost no such thing as a *theoretically proven* loyal customer. During any qualitative research the gathered data is so unreliable due to changeable mood of respondents. Moreover, “prior usage of the brand makes a person slightly more favourable towards it. This is one of the psychological factors underpinning brand loyalty” (p.92).

Natural monopoly law, on the contrary to double jeopardy law, describes the complex patterns of bigger market players. If most of sales occur because of switchers, then, obviously, bigger brands that are much more present on market physically (in stores) and mentally (through advertising) win the competition. It happens for many reasons, but the most important ones are direct outcomes from human nature. Living busy lifestyles most of us are forced to make fast decisions related to consuming. From a branding point of view, it is essential to be present in most of stores, in visible positions, as well as to be visually communicated with the help of advertising sources. Then there is much more chance for a brand to be recognised and bought in any “one-minute decision” situation. Sharp (2010) puts it this way:

“Larger brands tend to have proportionately more light buyers in their user bases. Light, occasional buyers favour the bigger brands.” (p.97)

Interestingly, founder of PayPal – Peter Thiel – describes almost the same mechanism of marketing in his latest book, *From Zero to One*

(2014). The best strategy is aiming to become a monopoly in the market, rather than trying to win market shares. For any new player entering the market, there is statistically no chance to grow huge, unless, there is the ambition and means to offer something totally unique. In terms of eco-labels this is an essential question that tackles one of the main contemporary argument of “choice editing”: should environmentally-friendly products become dominant in the market or should they remain as an alternative choice to non-eco products. In latter case, natural monopoly law will act against eco-friendly small and medium initiatives.

The Sustainable Development Commission (2006) defined "choice editing" as "shifting the field of choice for mainstream consumers: cutting out unnecessarily damaging products and getting real sustainable choices on the shelves." The main principle of choice editing is to sell only sustainable products and leaving no opportunity for consumers to purchase unsustainable products.

The main lesson from both Sharp (2010) and Thiel (2014) is that any marketing research should ideally be based on quantitative data. New market players should form strategies that aim towards a monopoly situation rather than simply creating new competition. If an eco-labelled product is just a brand extension then the possibility of winning new customers narrows down only for those loyal green buyers, who in theory do not really exist. Then, being eco-labeled, the product acts just as any other on the store shelf. It is hard to estimate green performance in that scenario.

“Should eco-friendly products become dominant in the market or should they remain as an alternative choice to non-eco products?”

2.2.3. Brand Extension

According to Kotler et al. (2009) brand extension is “a company’s use of an established brand to introduce a new product or service”. The advantages of brand extension are avoiding expenses and difficulties of establishing a new brand name; allowing “many efficiencies across all the marketing mix variables”; lower production costs; better visibility if promoted together with existing brand extensions; and keeping consumers within the brand family (Kotler et al., 2009).

The disadvantages of brand extension are possible brand dilution; the loss of parent brand’s consumers; and marketing failure of extension by

being seen by consumers as inappropriate (Kotler et al., 2009).

One important aspect that influences the availability of a product is the parent company's market share. Brands with a bigger market share have much more presence in the market and possess bigger budgets to support that presence. (Sharp, 2010). However, the reputation of a brand is affected by various aspects. For instance, if a new product is under a strategic approach of brand extension, when entering the market it could affect parent brand in both ways: positively and negatively. (Aaker and Keller 1990; Keller and Aaker 1992; Richard, Daniel 2001).

2.2.4. Co-branding & Ingredient Branding

According to Kotler et al. (2009) co-branding can be defined when “two or more well-known brands are combined into a joint market offering or marketed together in some fashion” (p.431). Co-branding appears in various forms such as same-company co-branding, joint-venture co-branding, multiple-sponsor co-branding and retail-co-branding (Kotler et al., 2009). Kotler et al. (2009) provides an example of joint-venture co-branding as British Gas and Bosch Worcester gas boilers, where brands from two different companies are combined to market one product.

“Eco-labels has been referred as means of co-branding in several recent research works.”

The use of eco-labels on products or services of other brands, therefore, could be seen as joint-venture co-branding. Eco-labels has been referred as means of co-branding in several recent research works (Leslie, 2012, p.148; Martin & Schouten, 2012). No earlier evidence was found of using term co-branding in the context of eco-labels.

The advantages of co-branding are seen in: better positioning of product on market, possibility “to generate greater sales from the existing target market”, “opening additional opportunities for new consumers and channels” and chance to “reduce the cost of introducing a new market offer” (Kotler et al., 2009).

The disadvantages of co-branding are mostly concentrated in the risk and lack of control over the brand image, higher consumer expectations, unsatisfactory performance that can actually influence both brands, second brand entering other co-branding arrangements (Kotler et al., 2009).

Successful co-branding requires both brands to have separately “brand equity – adequate brand awareness and a positive brand image” (Kotler et al., 2009). Furthermore, combined brands must maximise the advantages of each while minimising disadvantages (Kotler et al., 2009).

According to Kotler et al. (2009) ingredient branding is “a special case of co-branding that involves creating brand equity for materials, components, or parts that are necessarily contained within other branded products” (p.433). Ingredient branding is becoming popular in “food products that have health benefit properties” (Kotler et al., 2009). A separate form of ingredient branding is self-branding, in which companies brand their own ingredients.

The main goal of ingredient branding is “to create enough awareness and preferences for their market offering so consumers will not buy a ‘host’ products” without brand label (Kotler et al., 2009). Successful ingredient branding requires the importance of the ingredient “to the performance and success of the end product” to be easily seen and experienced by the customer; a distinctive symbol or logo which communicates quality and confidence; marketing collaboration with all channel members, including manufacturers, to promote the advantages of brand ingredients (Kotler et al., 2009).

Besharat (2010) mentions that co-branding is sometimes referred as a special case of brand extension, because its main goal is to launch a new product.

2.2.5. Brand Credibility

Erdem and Swait (2004) define “the credibility of a brand as a signal has been conceptualized as the believability of the product position information contained in a brand”. Erdem and Swait (2004) explain that “when consumers are uncertain about brands”, “brands can serve as signals of product positions”. And in this case, credibility is the most important characteristic of a brand.

Credibility has two main components: trustworthiness and expertise. Trustworthiness can be described as “willingness to continuously deliver what has been promised” and expertise as actual “ability to

continuously deliver what has been promised” (Erdem & Swait, 2004). As a result, brand credibility can be defined as “the believability of the product information contained in a brand, which requires that consumers perceive that the brand have the ability (i.e., expertise) and willingness (i.e., trustworthiness) to continuously deliver what has been promised” (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

The definition of credibility made by Baek et al. (2010) is mainly based on Erdem and Swait’s definition as “the perceived believability of whether a brand has the ability and willingness to continuously deliver what has been promised”. Also, Baek et al. (2010) emphasise credibility as “a key determinant of a brand signal for conveying information effectively” to consumers. The authors explain by reference to Aaker (1991) that brand credibility is associated with “higher perceived quality, lower information costs and lower risks” and, therefore, developing brand credibility increases perceived quality and decreases both information costs and perceived risks (Baek et al., 2010). Consequently, brand credibility positively influences consumer purchasing decision.

Bigné-Alcañiz et al. (2009) suggest a similar definition of brand credibility “as the extent to which a consumer perceives that the brand expresses sincerity and goodwill (trustworthiness) and has the skill and experience necessary (expertise) to associate to the specified social cause”. The research on brand credibility covers such topics as its influence on consumer choice (Baek et al., 2010; Erdem & Swait, 2004; Erdem et al., 2002), consumer values (Bigné-Alcañiz et al., 2009), customer loyalty (Sweeney & Swait, 2008). Furthermore brand credibility is most commonly researched in the context of Signaling Theory (Baek et al., 2010; Erdem & Swait, 2004; Erdem et al., 2002, Sweeney & Swait, 2008).

“Credibility has two main components: trustworthiness and expertise.”

2.3. Visual Design

In this thesis, the term ‘visual design’ refers mainly to the logo design. It is important to mention that in some literature, the term ‘logotype’ is used to refer to words in a particular font and ‘brandmark’ is used to refer to a sign or illustration, and their combination is called ‘signature’ (Wheeler, 2013). This detailed use of terminology is not necessary in this thesis, thus the term logo will define both words and illustration (sign, icon) of the eco-label’s emblem.

2.3.1. Logo Design

According to Adams et al. (2006) a logo is a “distinctive symbol of a company, object, publication, person, idea”. It is a crucial part of identity, which is “the combination of logo, visual system (typeface, colors, imagery) and editorial tone to form a unique and cohesive message for a company, person, object or idea.” (Adams et al., 2006)

According to Pittard et al. (2007) the logo is “a key component of brand identity” and it “provides instant recognition of a brand”. Furthermore, logos “help transcend international boundaries and language barriers because they communicate visually” (Pittard et al., 2007).

To create strong identities, brands should evoke emotions, and logos play important role in this. Yet, little systematic research is done on the effect of logo on brand identity (Pittard et al., 2007). Pittard et al. (2007) endeavor to explain the way that the shape of logo can communicate values used in marketing across cultures. For example, angularity

is “associated with conflict, dynamism and masculinity. Roundness is associated with harmony, softness and femininity. Symmetry is most valued in collectivist societies” (Pittard et al., 2007).

Lee et al. (2012) explain that “people are generally exposed to logos only for brief periods of time” and, thus, “designing easily recognisable logos is critical because they should survive fast-exposure environments”. It is suggested that logo recognition happens in two levels. “First, audiences should recognize the logos correctly, then they should be able to recall and associate the logos with their referents” (Lee et al., 2012). Furthermore, brand identity recognition can be defined “as the degree to which people see the correspondence between the elements present in the logo design and the logo as a whole and the brand’s identity (originally *country’s identity*)” (Lee et al., 2012).

Much has been written about logo design. For example, David Airey (2009) in his book introduces seven rules for good logo design: keep it simple, make it relevant, incorporate tradition, aim for distinction, commit to memory, think small and focus on one thing.

Alina Wheeler (2013) in her book “Designing Brand Identity” describes good logo design by quoting famous graphic designers:

“Rand designed logos for endurance. ‘I think permanence is something you find out,’ he once said. ‘It isn’t something you design for. You design for durability, for function, for usefulness, for rightness, for beauty. But permanence is up to God and time.’”

— *(as excerpted from Paul Rand by Steven Heller)*

“Identity design is not about what one likes or dislikes. It’s about what works.”

— *Sagi Haviv*

“A logotype or a symbol should express the fundamental essence of an organisation or a product or a service – the visual manifestation of its nature, its aspirations, its culture, its reason for being.”

— *Bart Crosby*

2.3.2. The Principles of Gestalt in Design

“The whole is other than the sum of the parts.”
— *Kurt Koffka*

The word *gestalt* originates from the German language and can be translated as “shape” or “form”. “The term refers to how visual input is perceived by human beings” (Bradley, 2010). In psychology the term *gestalt* means ‘unified whole’ and “it refers to theories of visual perception” (Spokane Falls Community College, 2014). These theories were developed by German psychologists in the 1920s in order to “attempt to describe how people tend to organize visual elements into groups or *unified wholes* when certain principles are applied” (Spokane Falls Community College, 2014).

Tuck (2010) suggests a simplified explanation of the gestalt theory as theory that “describes how the mind organizes visual data”. Furthermore, he provides its application in design as “the stronger the clarity of form, the more effective the design” (Tuck, 2010).

Bradley (2014) provides a more detailed description. He explains that “when human beings see a group of objects, they perceive their entirety before they see the individual objects”. According to Bradley (2014) gestalt has several key ideas behind it:

- Emergence (the whole is identified before the parts)
- Reification (the human mind fills in the gaps)
- Multi-stability (the mind seeks to avoid uncertainty)
- Invariance (humans are good at recognizing similarities and differences)

Spokane Falls Community College (2014) suggests five main principles of gestalt to be used in the evaluation of logo design. These principles are:

- **Similarity:** objects that look similar are often perceived as a group or pattern.
- **Continuation:** “elements arranged on a line or curve are perceived to be more related than elements not on the line or curve” (Bradley, 2010).
- **Closure:** when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed, but enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

- **Proximity:** elements that are placed close together tend to be perceived as a group.
- **Figure and Ground:** the object is perceived as figure, while the surrounding area as ground.

Other principles of gestalt (that can be used in design) are symmetry and order, synchrony, parallelism, focal points, past experiences, common regions, uniform connectedness, simplicity. (Bradley, 2014)

2.3.3. Visual Design of Eco-labels

Based on cognitive psychology it is possible to state that human memory tends to remember picture better than word. (Tang et al., 2004, p.91). However, only limited research has been done about the visual design of eco-labels and its influence on purchasing decision (Tang et al., 2004, Heinzle & Wüstenhagen, 2012; Fischhoff, 2013). The existing research mainly concludes that though both visual and verbal communication of eco-labels can positively influence consumers' purchasing decisions, the effect of picture and word is still more additive rather than prime.

“Only limited research has been done about the visual design of eco-labels and its influence on purchasing decision.”

For instance, research conducted in Hong Kong by Tang et.al. (2004) investigated this matter. With 234 students who participated in the research they concluded that to succeed in the market eco-label design should include both visual and verbal cues. Tang points out: “...visual and verbal communication cues put together on consumer purchase is higher than each of their individual effects”. (p.97)

Tang et al. (2004) underlines the importance of future research on this topic. He discovered that “eco-labelling plays only a minor role in consumer buying decision making. However, the effects could be strengthened by “brand building” exercise for the eco-label if it was backed by a credible organization and an educational campaign”.

Fischhoff, in her article “How to Design Eco-Labels to Influence Consumers” (2013), discussed the importance of visual design for ‘efficiency measuring eco-labels’, such as energy efficiency or fuel consumption. She refers to an experiment held by Hille (nee Heinzle) and Wüstenhagen (2012). The experiment evaluated effectiveness of A-to-G scale versus A-plus scale for rating appliances energy efficiency.

The research revealed that A-to-G scale influence on consumer choice was much more effective than A-plus scale”. As a result, Fischhoff emphasised the importance of testing the way consumers process information displayed on eco-labels.

Although the findings of Heinzle and Wüstenhagen are highly important and have gained wide media attention (Fischhoff, 2013), their results can be applied only to infographics-based eco-labels. However, a large number of eco-labels use abstract logos for their visual communication. So far abstract logos have received very few academic attention regarding their visual design. Still, the success of Heinzle’ and Wüstenhagen’ experiment demonstrates the importance of research about the influence of eco-labels’ visual design on consumer purchasing decisions. Hopefully in the near future this motivates researchers to explore the way consumers perceive abstract logos.

It is important to mention that there is still lots of research on the overall role and influence of eco-labels on purchasing decision (Daugbjerg et al., 2014; Rahbar & Wahid, 2011; Borin & Cerf, 2011; Horne, 2009; Thøgersen, 2000; Sammer & Wüstenhagen, 2006; Fitzgerald & Russo, 2001; D’Souza, 2004). Furthermore, several research papers have covered the topic of eco-design in packaging (Holdway et al., 2002; Fitzgerald & Russo, 2001).

2.4. Synthesizing Literature Findings

2.4.1. Eco-labels & Green Marketing

Eco-labels are one of the most widely used green marketing tools. Their main goal is to inform consumers about environmental performance of certified products and services. Still, there is plenty of criticism of eco-labels' efficiency as agents of green marketing. Some researchers argue that eco-labels' influence on purchasing decisions is insignificant, while others state that eco-labels are not tools of radical change in green marketing, but rather represent the incremental greening of mainstream marketing.

“The majority of the research struggles with ethical bias and only few researchers endeavor to avoid it.”

Most of the research on eco-labels is focused on either the evaluation of environmental criteria of their certification program or the overall influence of eco-labels on green consumers' purchasing behavior. There is also plenty of research about developing alternatives to eco-labels or new meta-labelling schemes. The majority of the research struggles with ethical bias and only few researchers endeavor to avoid it. Very little research evaluates the eco-labels' logo design and its influence on consumers. Moreover, no research was found about evaluation of eco-labels as brands.

Eco-labels are also a popular topic in literature about sustainable or sustainability marketing under the topic of sustainability labelling. The terms 'sustainability label' or just 'label' are used to define eco-labels. As mentioned before, eco-labels function as communication tools in green marketing. If eco-labels are also meant to become communication tools in sustainability marketing, their certification programmes must include the triple bottom line of sustainability and cover social and

economical aspects alongside environmental issues. This will require either the development of new certification programmes or radical change of the existing ones. As a result the term ‘eco-label’ will most probably switch to the term ‘sustainability label’ or some shortened version, e.g. ‘su-label’.

2.4.2. Eco-label & Branding

The use of eco-labels in co-branding can positively influence brand image of the product or service, alongside the brand image of the whole company. As a result, eco-labels can increase brand equity and value, as well as brand credibility. At the same time, eco-labels, while acting as brands, also create a brand image of themselves. This is the reason why brand managers in the first place should develop the brand identity of eco-labels and manage their brand equity to keep a positive brand image.

“Brand managers in the first place should develop the brand identity of eco-labels and manage their brand equity to keep a positive brand image.”

Some eco-labels, that for example certify raw materials, can be used by companies as a tool for an ingredient branding. The Fairtrade or the UTZ Certified labels are examples of eco-labels that are often used for ingredient branding.

Also, companies can use eco-labels for their brand extension and introduce new eco-labelled products or services based on an existing brand. Paulig’s Mundo coffee is a good example of using Fairtrade label to develop a new product based on the Paulig brand.

Brand credibility is one of the main cornerstones of an eco-label’s brand image. However, eco-labels’ marketers should carefully choose products and companies for co-branding, because this process is mutual and can influence brand credibility of both the eco-label and the product’s brand. Still, marketers of eco-labels shouldn’t avoid products associated with significant environmental impacts, even if there is a risk to harm the credibility of an eco-label.

For example, one can easily find Rainforest Alliance (RA) eco-label placed on almost every Lipton tea package in supermarkets in Helsinki. In this case RA eco-label is co-branded with Lipton and supports its environmental claims (Image 1.)

2.4.3. Eco-label & Visual Design

The topic of the logo design of eco-labels has received very little academic attention, despite the fact that most eco-labels are recognised by their logos. Only a limited number of researchers have investigated the influence of the eco-labels' logo design on consumers' purchasing decision, as well as the credibility and recognition of eco-labels. Most of their research is focused on logos based on infographics, such as A-to-G scale or A plus used for energy efficiency labels, with very little attention to the abstract logos. The evaluation of infographics belongs to the domain of sustainable data visualisation, not the logo design in its traditional meaning. Therefore those research papers are mostly irrelevant to this thesis.

The research on abstract logo design has concluded that eco-labels' logo design plays a secondary role in consumer purchasing decisions. However, it is still important to investigate this topic, especially from the perspective of both branding and packaging design.

The principle of gestalt is one of the most widely used evaluation methods for logo design. It is based on the theory of visual perception in psychology. But unfortunately this method can only evaluate the aesthetic and visual appeal of the eco-labels' logo, leaving out the evaluation of logo's functionality as an eco-label. Thus one of the objectives of this thesis is to prototype a framework for evaluation of the eco-labels' logo design.

“The research on abstract logo design has concluded that eco-labels' logo design plays a secondary role in consumer purchasing decisions.”



Image 1.
Lipton Tea package
with Rainforest Alliance
eco-label.

PART III:

SETTING THE SCENE

3.1.

Review of Eco-Labels in Finland

Nordic Swan

Established by: The Nordic Council of Ministers

Year: 1989

Description:

Nordic Eco-label or “Swan” is an official eco-label of the Nordic Countries. The Swan was established with the purpose of providing an environmental labelling scheme that would contribute to sustainable consumption. The Swan is an ISO 14024 type 1 eco-labelling system and is a third-party control organ (Nordic Eco-labelling, n.d.).

Industry or product groups:

Recently it counts 63 (65) product groups and services, such as paper, detergents, hotels and etc.

Recognition in Finland:

86 % (Lehmuskoski, 2014)

Derived from various sources, Nordic Swan is recognised as an eco-label by around 90% of Finnish population (Nordic Eco-labelling, n.d.; Lehmuskoski, 2014).

Managing body in Finland:

Motiva Services Oy (Finnish Standards Association, n.d.).



EU Eco-label



Established by: The European Commission

Year: 1992

Description:

EU Eco-label or “Flower” is an official eco-label of the European Union. It was launched in 1992 by the European Commission, when the European Community decided to develop a Europe-wide voluntary environmental scheme that consumers could trust. The Flower is the same as The Swan: a type 1 eco-labelling system and is a third-party control organ (European Commission, n.d.).

Industry or product groups:

It counts around 30 product groups (Finnish Environmental Administration, n.d.).

Recognition in Finland:

20% (Motiva Services Oy, 2014)

Managing body in Finland:

Motiva Services Oy (Finnish Standards Association, n.d.).

Demeter



Established by: farmers cooperative in Germany

Year: 1928

Description:

Demeter, a certification program for biodynamically grown foods, was established in 1928. As such, Demeter was the first ecological label for organically produced foods (Diver, 1999). Demeter’s “biodynamic” certification requires biodiversity and ecosystem preservation, soil husbandry, livestock integration, prohibition of genetically engineered organisms and viewing the farm as a living “holistic organism” (Demeter U.S.A., n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Biodynamic farming

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland:

Biodynaaminen yhdistys ry

Fairtrade

Established by: The Fairtrade Labelling Organizations

Year: 2002

Description:

The Fairtrade mark is the globally recognized symbol of Fairtrade. Products bearing this mark meet the social, environmental and economic standards set by Fairtrade. The international Fairtrade mark and its distinctive blue and green roundel were created in 2002 to replace a variety of individual national marks used before (Fairtrade International, n.d.).

Fairtrade is an ethical trade system. Fairtrade offers farmers and workers in developing countries a better deal, and the opportunity to improve their lives and invest in their future. When a product carries the Fairtrade certification mark, it means the producers and traders have met Fairtrade standards. Fairtrade standards include social, environmental and economic criteria, as well as progress requirements and terms of trade. (Eco-label Index, n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Various product groups

Recognition in Finland:

93% (Reilu kauppa ry, 2012)

Managing body in Finland:

Reilu kauppa ry



EU Organic Label



Established by: The European Commission

Year: July 2010

Description:

The EU organic label or “Euro-leaf” was introduced in July 2010 by the European Commission (Gray, 2012). It is a part of EU organic farming policy which was first adopted in 1991 by the European Council of Agricultural Ministers. The Euro-leaf is a guarantee of the origin and quality of the products for the consumers. Foods may only be marked as “organic” if at least 95% of the agricultural ingredients are organic. Furthermore, organic production outlaws the use of genetically modified organisms and derived products (Organic farming – European Commission, n.d.). Since July 2012 placing the “Euroleaf” is mandatory on all pre-packaged organic foods manufactured in the EU. The logo may also be placed on other organic products and products exported outside the EU, but its use is voluntary (Finnish Environmental Administration, n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Organic farming

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland:

The Finnish Food Safety Authority (Evira) (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2010)

Luomu Sun Sign

Established by:

The Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Year: n/a

Description:

The “Luomu” sun sign denotes controlled organic production. All labelled products conform to organic criteria of EU regulations and are supervised by Finnish authorities. The products are manufactured, packaged and labelled in Finland. The certificate is granted by the Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira (Finnish Environmental Administration, 2014).

Industry or product groups: Organic farming

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland:

The Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira (Finnish Environmental Administration, n.d.).



Rainforest Alliance

Run by: The Rainforest Alliance

Year (established): 1987

Description:

The Rainforest Alliance Certified™ seal ensures that a product comes from a farm or forest operation that meets comprehensive standards that protect the environment and promote the rights and well-being of workers, their families and communities. Products that carry the green frog seal include coffee, tea, chocolate, fruit, ready to drink beverages and juices, flowers, paper and tissue products, furniture and more (Eco-label Index, n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Sustainable forestry

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland: n/a



Forest Stewardship Council



Run by: The Forest Stewardship Council

Year (established): 1993

Description:

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests. As forest managers or owners, FSC® Certification is a way of ensuring that careful and long-term forest management is recognized. Certification is voluntary. It involves an inspection of the forest management by an independent organization to check that it passes the internationally agreed FSC Principles and Criteria of good forest management (Eco-label Index, n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Sustainable forestry

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland: n/a

Marine Stewardship Council



Run by: Marine Stewardship Council

Year (established): 1997

Description:

The MSC fisheries standard has three overarching principles that every fishery must prove that it meets: sustainable fish stocks, minimising environmental impact, effective management. The MSC Chain of Custody Standard (CoC) for seafood traceability makes sure that the MSC label is only displayed on seafood from a MSC certified sustainable fishery (Eco-label Index, n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Sustainable fishery

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland: n/a

PEFC

Run by:

The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification

Year (established): 1999

Description:

PEFC is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) through independent third-party certification. It works throughout the entire forest supply chain to promote good practice in the forest and to ensure that timber and non-timber forest products are produced with respect for ecological, social and ethical standards (Eco-label Index, n.d.).

Industry or product groups: Sustainable forestry

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland: n/a



UTZ Certified

Established by: Utz Kapeh Foundation

Year: 2002

Description:

UTZ Certified is a program and label for sustainable farming. The UTZ Certified label is featured on more than 10,000 different product packages in over 116 countries. As of 2014, UTZ Certified is the largest program for sustainable farming of coffee and cocoa in the world. The UTZ Certified program covers good agricultural practices, farm management, social and living conditions, and the environment.

Industry or product groups:

Sustainable farming of coffee and cocoa

Recognition in Finland: n/a

Managing body in Finland: n/a



3.2.

Differences & Similarities of Eco-labels & Brands

Eco-labels and brands possess several similarities as well as differences. This chapter endeavours to describe these similarities and differences, as well as to explain the relevance of this discussion to the topic of green and sustainability marketing.

“The marketers of eco-labels should borrow methods of emotional appeal from the field of branding.”

One of the main difference between eco-labels and brands from the point of view of marketing is in their appeal. Eco-labels use mainly rational appeal, when brands are more often focused on emotional appeal. Thus, if eco-labels are planned to be as effective marketing tools as brands, the marketers of eco-labels should borrow methods of emotional appeal from the field of branding.

Both eco-labels and brands are marketing tools. Their main task is to communicate a certain message from manufacturer/service provider to consumer. But their messages are different. Eco-labels support and explain environmental claims and performance, while brands try to develop an emotional bond between product or service and consumer. This thesis suggests that eco-labels should also develop emotional bonds with consumers to become more effective marketing tools.

The next similarity is in their visual design. Both eco-labels and brands are recognised by their logos. The logo is their main communication tool with consumers. It is important to mention that this thesis researches only those eco-labels which have an abstract logo and no infographics.

Finally, they are both directly connected to consumers' lifestyle and represent social status. Therefore, if eco-labels can become as effective as brands, they can succeed in promotion of green and sustainable lifestyles.

Still, it is very hard to determine if eco-labels can be considered as brands due to ambiguous definition and use of the term 'brand'. Very few researchers use the word brand when referring to eco-labels. In research papers, eco-labels are usually described as marketing or communication tools.

It can be assumed that eco-labels start to act as brands when their certification program is marketed to product and service producers. Many producers (license holders) use eco-labels for their co-branding and brand-extension strategies. Therefore, license holders pick the certification program according to the strength of its brand image.

“Brand managers in the first place should develop the brand identity of eco-labels and manage their brand equity to keep a positive brand image.”

But for consumers eco-labels are still considered to be labels that provide information about products environmental performance. And it is hard to determine which of two – the rational appeal of an eco-label's environmental data or the emotional appeal of an eco-label's brand image – influences the purchasing decision of green consumer when s/he buys an eco-labelled product or service.

Another obstacle in defining eco-labels as brands is that eco-labels do not represent the product or service as a whole like brands do, but only describe some certain eco-friendly characteristic of the product or service. And in most cases eco-labels do not share the same brand story. Also, eco-label managers cannot influence those product characteristics that are not related to environmental issues. Neither can they influence a product's brand story or visual design. An interesting example of the connection between brands and eco-labels is Lidl's Fairglobe brand, which was designed entirely for Fairtrade products only.

To sum up, brands and eco-labels possess many overlaps and thus in certain cases eco-labels can both act as brands and be defined as brands. Hence, in those cases, methods and techniques from the branding literature can be applied to eco-labels to improve their marketing strategies and develop their brand identity and image. As a result, this can not only improve green consumption, but also successfully promote sustainable lifestyle.

“Methods and techniques from the branding literature can be applied to eco-labels to improve their marketing strategies and develop their brand identity and image.”

Interviews with eco-label managers were organised to examine this assumption. The results are described in following chapters.

PART IV:

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

4.1.

Expert Interviews

Based on the conducted interviews with eco-label managers both in Finland and Estonia, it is possible to conclude that at least four types of stakeholders are involved in the marketing of eco-labels. The first stakeholder is a **parent organisation**, which has developed the certification system and introduced the eco-label. It is responsible for the design of the eco-label, alongside the development of the certification system and the supervision of international campaigns. In some cases, such as the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO), certificates are sold and audited by the parent organisation. The second type is a **local organisation**, which can be either a local branch of a parent organisation or an independent NGO. The second type is responsible for advertising the eco-label among local consumers and companies and selling certifications. Responsibilities of the first and second type of organisation can often overlap. The third stakeholder is a **license holder** – a company with certified products, which it distributes to the consumers. The third type of stakeholder uses eco-labels as a brand extension or in co-branding, while the first and the second use eco-labels as a separate brand to market certification system. The fourth type of stakeholder is a **green consumer**, who promotes certified products in one way or another. A green consumer can be both a person or entire organisation/community.

“Marketing activities are also focusing on different communities and organisations, such as towns, parishes, schools, universities, NGOs and companies.”

The interviewees explained that it is common knowledge that eco-labels' managing organisations (EMO) market their certification programs to two main target-groups: product and service producers and private consumers. Product and service producers then become license holders and consumers become conscious or green consumers. But an EMO's marketing activities are also focusing on different communities and organisations, such as towns, parishes, schools, universities, NGOs

and companies. EMOs promote eco-labelled products among those communities and organisation, and motivate them to purchase only certified products for their internal use.

“Experts emphasised the importance of growing demand for certified products and services in the business-to-business sector.”

Furthermore, the experts emphasised the importance of growing demand for certified products and services in the business-to-business sector. For example, larger companies, such as Kesko, demand from their subcontractors and suppliers to apply for eco-label certificates. But also smaller companies demand from hotels and print houses to possess some environmental certification. These examples demonstrate that the map of stakeholders is more complicated than it seems and includes more actors. (Figure 6.)

The main marketing channel for both Fairtrade and Nordic Swan labels is social media, e.g. Facebook and Twitter. The other marketing channels are PR, articles for media, radio, their own websites, and also direct sales. Earlier, Motiva Services Oy has produced printed materials about

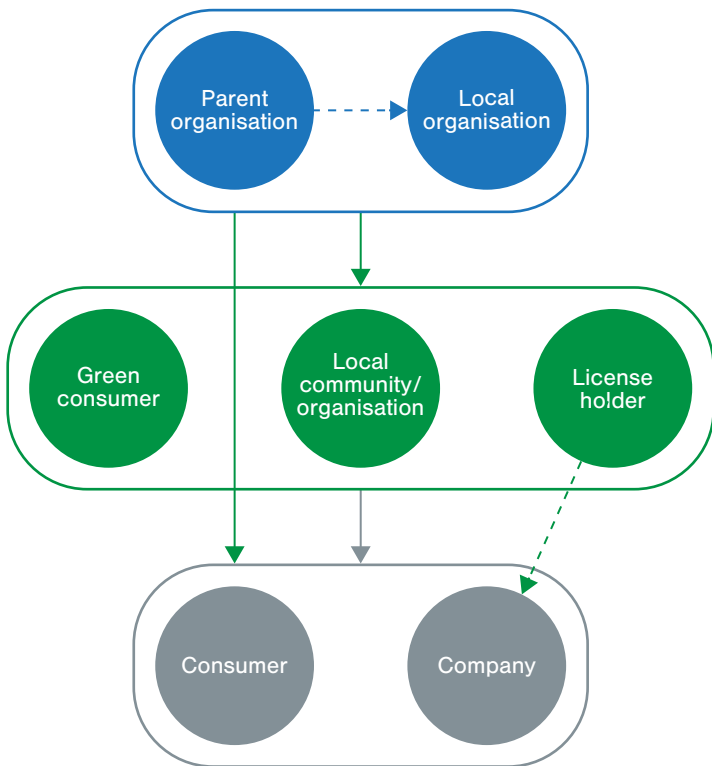


Figure 6. Stakeholders that are directly or indirectly involved in marketing of eco-labels.

Nordic Swan and EU Eco-label that were distributed in supermarkets, but later decided not to use this channel any more.

Local EMOs organise marketing campaigns only in social media, due to limited resources. Though EMOs encourage license holders to promote eco-labels together with their products and services. The Fairtrade organisation has a positive example of co-advertising strategy together with license holders. Fairtrade buy advertising spaces inside of the supermarkets, e. g. shopping carts, then contact license holders and ask them to pay for ads (Image 2). Interestingly, the Fairtrade marketers control visual communication and coordinate the concept, therefore all ads are based on Fairtrade's brand identity. The Fairtrade communication specialist confirmed that companies preferred communication close to point of sales, as it was considered to be the most effective.

“Experts have confirmed the increasing interest towards co-branding with eco-labels among product and service producers.”

Experts have confirmed the increasing interest towards co-branding with eco-labels among product and service producers. For example, a growing number of companies in Sweden are engaging in co-branding process with the Nordic Swan eco-label. Thus, managers from Motiva Services Oy see a great opportunity for Nordic Swan to be engaged in co-branding with local companies to gain more visibility. They also have confirmed their interest in conducting research about co-branding with eco-labels.

The Nordic Swan eco-label managers disagreed that co-branding with the low-cost private brands, such as Rainbow, Eldorado or Pirkka, could negatively influence credibility of the eco-label. On the contrary, co-branding with the low-cost brands demonstrates that eco-labelled products can be affordable to everyone. To sum up, experts view co-branding of eco-labels as a positive phenomenon.

Interestingly, Lidl has launched its own brand Fairglobe for all Fairtrade certified products which can be purchased in Lidl. This is an example of a brand being developed from an eco-label.

“Lidl has launched its own brand Fairglobe for all Fairtrade certified products which can be purchased in Lidl. This is an example of a brand being developed from an eco-label.”

During the expert interviews eco-label managers have agreed that eco-labels could be viewed as brands. But only one expert has used the term brand to describe an eco-label before being asked if eco-labels could be seen as brands. Other three experts used the term brand only when were asked the direct question. Another example of this trend is that Nordic Swan was added to the list of the most popular brands in Finland for the first time approximately eight years ago. This demonstrates that in recent years society started to view eco-labels as brands.

“Eco-label managers believe that emotional appeal can create a stronger bond between consumers and eco-labels.”

EMOs conduct annual consumer research about eco-labels and awareness among consumers. Marketing strategies and campaigns are planned based on marketers' own experience and the results of those annual reports. Eco-label managers follow general trends in sustainable consumption and green marketing. Furthermore, they follow both marketing trends and innovations from Sweden, Great Britain and the US. They also follow the research done by their parent organisations, such as The Nordic Council of Ministries and FLO. Unfortunately, eco-label managers do not refer that often to academic research about marketing or branding, but they agreed they would prefer to read more research papers on both of these topics.

An expert from Motiva Services Oy stated that rational appeal is used as the main marketing strategy for eco-labels. Rational appeal emphasises environmental criteria, performance, data and endeavor to convince consumers that eco-labelled products are healthier to both humans and nature. But rational appeal has its limits, thus managers from Motiva Services Oy are learning and piloting methods of emotional appeal to develop a stronger brand for Nordic Swan and EU Eco-label labels. The emotional appeal aims to highlight emotional factors, such as love, happiness, fear, guilt, and social status. Eco-label managers believe that emotional appeal can create a stronger bond between consumers and eco-labels.

Interviewees confirmed that they would like to learn more about co-branding and emotional appeal from literature on branding. The experts would like to learn the way to use those strategies without losing eco-labels' credibility and consumers' trust. They also agreed, that they would like to apply brand development techniques to eco-labels.



Image 2.
Examples of Fairtrade
co-advertising inside of the
supermarkets.



“The closer you are to the shopping experience the better.”



Copyright of the photos
© Fairtrade Finland

4.2. Student Survey

The online survey was conducted among students studying in Finland, including exchange students and PhD. The survey was online for five days from noon on Sunday 15th February to the night of Friday 20th February 2015.

Altogether, 91 students participated in the online questionnaire. Most of the students were from Aalto University (84%). Students from other universities in Finland constituted 10% of respondents. The remaining 6% of answers were received from exchange students, who in the survey had marked their home university instead of a host university (Table 5.1.2.1.). The actual number of exchange students was unclear, because the respondent could have been an exchange student but had not marked his/her degree. Furthermore, most of the respondents were studying their master's during the questionnaire (62%). More than a half of respondents were between 24 and 29 years old. And 83% of respondents were in the age group between 24 and 35. More than 2/3 of respondents were women and only 29% were men.

To sum up, all 91 respondents had been either students or recent graduates while they were filling up the questionnaire. Furthermore, all of them either were studying in Finland or had been studying as exchange students before. Hence, everyone had at least some shopping experience in supermarkets in Finland.

The student survey has measured three main variables: recognition, visual appeal and credibility.

4.2.1. Eco-labels

This chapter provides brief summaries about each evaluated eco-label. More detailed description of the survey results about each eco-label is available in Appendix #3.

Rainforest Alliance (RA)

Rainforest Alliance is a widely recognised eco-label among students in Finland, but its logo design can be confusing and, thus in rare cases have a negative influence on its credibility. Moreover, RA's credibility may suffer if co-branded with one of Unilever's brands, such as Lipton. Still, the Rainforest Alliance logo is considered to be one of the best eco-label logos and can have a positive influence on a product's brand image, even if brand belongs to multinational corporation.

"Regarding co-branding, the "lipton tea" is known for is medium quality, so eco-label might actually help it to get more appreciation from the user."

Fairtrade

Fairtrade is undoubtedly the most recognised eco-label among students in Finland. Though its logo design has received a mediocre rating, its still made the eco-label look credible. Fairtrade is a strong co-branding tool in sustainability marketing and in most cases the Fairtrade logo adds credibility to the product's brand. The Fairglobe is an interesting example of an eco-brand based on an eco-label, but it still needs either a better logo design or awareness campaign to look more trustworthy. Its cheap-looking logo decreases credibility of both Fairglobe and Fairtrade.

"I don't like how the label looks like but I know what it means and I appreciate it. The Fairglobe brand adds the feeling of a fair product."

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

The MSC logo is poorly recognised eco-label with a visually unappealing design, though the logo design looks quite credible. MSC is considered as rather credible eco-label, still many students doubt that mass production of seafood can be sustainable. As a result, the MSC label co-branding with frozen seafood products can decrease the eco-label's credibility.

“The logo seems a bit strange. They have an abbreviation that isn’t primarily explained. Especially the version on the pack has no value to me at all. There’s no clear mention of what this little white fish in the blue box stands for, or what MSC means.”

“I just don’t believe in sustainable seafood...”

Nordic Swan

The Nordic Swan logo is one of the most recognised and credible eco-labels in Finland. The logo design is visually appealing. Though some respondents say the logo looks outdated and the picture of the swan is confusing, they still like and trust the label. The Nordic Swan label adds credibility to the product brand, but its own image can slightly suffer from co-branding with discount brands, such as Eldorado.

“Somehow in my mind Nordic Swan has a good reputation and it is credible. I have no idea whether that is true, but the impression that I have is highly positive.”

“Eldorado does not appear very trustworthy”.

Demeter

The Demeter eco-label is poorly recognised among students in Finland. Low awareness can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, Demeter labelled products can be purchased only at special eco grocery stores. Secondly, the design of the Demeter logo looks more like a brand’s logo rather than an eco-label. Moreover, poor design of the Demeter logo fails to add credibility either to the product brand or the eco-label itself. Demeter labelled products, in contrast, may add credibility to the Demeter label due to their eco-looking packages.

“Usually eco-labels can easily be recognised due to the wording, colors, images etc. But this I would hardly recognise it being an eco-label at all.”

UTZ Certified

The UTZ Certified label is poorly recognised among students in Finland. The logo design barely communicates what the eco-label

stands for, unless the explanatory text is added. The UTZ Certified label's co-branding effect is quite neutral, though in some cases it can add credibility due to the word Certified in its logo. On the other hand, the strong and positive image of the Paulig brand can add credibility to the eco-label.

"The label in the product says better farming, but the label doesn't give any hints toward farming."

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

FSC is a well recognised eco-label with one of the best visual designs. Simple and concrete logo design makes the eco-label look credible. But FSC abbreviation can cause a confusion among consumers who are not familiar with this eco-label. The FSC brand image is strong enough to add credibility to a product brand, and in most cases it will not be affected by the product's brand image.

"The visual sign of the eco-label is simple and strong, but the abbreviation makes it impossible to understand what does it actually mean. The end user in the supermarket does not necessarily know that FSC stand for Forest Stewardship Council. Anyway, it gives some idea of the 'eco-friendliness' through its sign and adds the value to the product."

"Amazing design! I had not seen this logo before, but I understood right away what is this about. It doesn't need the text 'certification', the logo tells it visually. Brilliant!"

Euroleaf

The Euroleaf logo has a good design for an eco-label and is quite well recognised. The connection with the EU is clear, but the message that the label stands for an organic product is not always delivered to the consumer. Again, the visual connection with the EU positively affects its credibility, though for some consumers the same connection may have a negative effect. In the co-branding process the usage of word luomu on the package helps to understand that the Euroleaf label stands for an organic product. The eco-label itself adds credibility to the product's brand image due to resemblance with the EU flag.

"I don't remember what this label is, I'm guessing it's the EU level label for organic produce, and I do see it a lot. In Finland

we have our own organic produce label, and that is why I have not paid that much attention to this one. Strangely enough it still adds to a product's credibility in my mind, because I associate it with many of the products I buy."

"This has parts of the EU flag but is in the shape of a leaf. It is good that it has a strong connection to EU sign and EU sounds bureaucratic but credible."

EU Eco-label

The EU Eco-label logo is more or less recognisable, mostly due to the presence of its title on the logo. The logo design of this eco-label is very poor and negatively affects both its recognition and credibility. Moreover, the message of the label is unclear. Still, the connection with the EU makes its credible to some extent.

"It is written 'eco-label'. This is how I guess it really is. However, I have no idea what it stands for. Design is terrible in my opinion."

PEFC

The PEFC logo is poorly recognised, but its visual design is good. The logo clearly communicates what it stands for. The only disadvantage, again, is unclear abbreviation. Decent visual design creates credible impression of the PEFC logo, despite its low recognition.

"Really good logo. Again, its easy to see visually what is this certification about. Forest, sustainability... that is enough for me to know when shopping in hurry and tired."

"Quite neutral but credible eco-label. The sign has good features like bits of recycling spiral and two different trees inside of it. PEFC is too much abbreviation again, what is it, where does it come from?"

Luomu

The Luomu label has a strong brand image among Finns. It has credible visual design and the message is clear. The eco-label adds credibility to the organic products. But if person does not understand the meaning of the word luomu, the message becomes unclear.

“Luomu sign is something that Finns know by heart, it has good credibility and is something that Finns can truly trust, the product really is organic. Luomu comes from “luonnonmukainen” it is a brand itself not a certificate.”

4.2.2. Visual Design

Recognition list

According to the results of the online survey, Fairtrade is the most recognisable eco-label among respondents. The Fairtrade logo is recognised by 92% of students. The Rainforest Alliance logo is the second most recognisable eco-label, with 80% of positive responses. Nordic Swan is surprisingly only the third most recognisable eco-label. It is recognised by 75% of students, which is 11% less than the overall recognition in Finland – 86%. Lower recognition among students can be explained by the fact that international students living in Finland are less aware about local eco-labels than Finns.

The top three are followed by Euroleaf (71%), Luomu (69%) and FSC (59%). The other five eco-labels are recognised by less than a half of respondents (Table 3.). The Demeter logo is the least recognisable eco-label, with only 14% of positive responses. Demeter labelled products are not represented in main supermarket chains and can be bought only from special grocery stores, therefore this eco-label is less recognisable than the other ten.

At the end of the survey students were asked to name eco-labels with the most recognisable design, but this time no options were provided. The answers were written in a free style, as a result some answers were either impossible to define or wrongly interpreted. Consequently, minor statistical error could have occurred. There is also a chance, that some respondents were mentioning the labels they know best instead of the most recognisable designs. Moreover, students were shown eleven eco-labels during the main part of the survey, before they answered the follow-up question. This could have influenced students choice to a certain extent. However, this possible inaccuracy has a little effect on the results of the online survey, due to the following reasons. Firstly, the chosen eco-labels are already popular in Finland. Secondly, the survey is focused on these eleven eco-labels and has a little interest in other eco-labels.

According to the follow-up question Fairtrade has still the most recognisable design of eco-label with 33 mentions, far ahead the others. The second most recognisable eco-label is Luomu (20 references) ahead of Rainforest Alliance, which dropped to fourth place with twelve references. But as it was mentioned before, luomu means organic in Finnish and in some cases there is a possibility that respondents were referring to organic eco-labels in general. The Nordic Swan label is again the third most recognisable eco-label with seventeen mentions. PEFC and Demeter have the lowest recognition and were mentioned only once. Interestingly, all eleven eco-labels were mentioned at least once. Few respondents mentioned labels, which were not eco-labels, e.g. “Ruokka omasta maasta” (in Finnish “food from own country”).

Still, the top five of the most recognisable eco-labels by logo design are the same in both cases, the only difference is in their order. This match supports the reliability of the results.

#	Eco-label	Recognition	Responses	Follow-up
1	Fairtrade	92%	84	33
2	Rainforest Alliance	80%	73	12
3	Nordic Swan	75%	68	17
4	Euroleaf	71%	65	8*
5	Luomu	69%	63	20*
6	FSC	59%	54	6
7	EU Eco-label	40%	36	3
8	MSC	36%	33	1**
9	UTZ Certified	27%	25	2
10	PEFC	25%	23	1
11	Demeter	14%	13	1

Table 3.
Recognition of eco-labels
according to student survey

* In both follow-up questions Luomu might be in some answers confused with Euroleaf, because luomu means organic in Finnish. Thus some “Luomu” answers might actually mean the Euroleaf logo. Moreover, in Table3, one person answered “organic”, which can be related to both Euroleaf and Luomu. But this answer is not represented in the table.

** In both follow-up questions one answer was “Fish mark”, which most probably meant the MSC logo. In this case, MSC would have had two responses in both tables.

#	Eco-label	Like design	Responses	Avg rating	Follow-up
1	Nordic Swan	78%	71	3.63	19
2	Rainforest Alliance	76%	69	3.54	16
3	Luomu	75%	68	3.40	9*
4	FSC	74%	67	3.49	6
5	Euroleaf	70%	64	3.44	8*
6	Fairtrade	64%	58	3.31	10
7	PEFC	59%	54	3.11	2
8	MSC	33%	30	2.64	1**
9	UTZ Certified	32%	29	2.49	0
10	EU Eco-label	20%	18	2.25	0
11	Demeter	6%	5	1.81	1

Table 4.
Visual appeal of eco-labels
according to student survey

Visual appeal list

The number of positive responses to the visual design of an eco-label matches the average result of the eco-label's visual design rating. The only minor exception is that the FSC and Euroleaf logos score a bit higher in the design rating than the Luomu logo, while the latter is liked by a few more students. As a result the lines on the figures 8. and 9. are almost identical. This demonstrates the reliability of the collected data.

Most of the respondents like the design of the Nordic Swan logo. It has received the highest number of positive answers. The Nordic Swan logo has also received the highest design rating – 3.63. It received the highest possible rating, “5”, by fifteen students, which puts it in second place among all given eco-labels. The Rainforest Alliance logo is liked by 69 students with the design rating 3.54, and it has received “5” by twelve students. The Luomu logo is liked by 68 students, but has the lower design rating than the FSC and the Euroleaf logos, which received 67 and 64 positive answers respectively (Table 4.).

The Fairtrade logo is the only eco-label from the top five which, despite its recognition, has a significantly lower result in the evaluation of visual design. The Fairtrade logo is liked by 58 respondents with the design rating 3.31.

The PEFC logo, in contrast, has significantly higher result in visual design than in recognition. The other eco-label representing sustainable forestry, FSC, also has a noticeably higher score in visual design than in recognition. Interestingly, both eco-labels with trees in their logos have a higher visual design evaluation than recognition.

The Demeter eco-label has the worst logo design, which in many cases is not even recognised as an eco-label.

In follow-up questions Nordic Swan was mentioned the most times as the favourite eco-label logo. Rainforest Alliance was the second most frequently mentioned eco-label. Followed by Fairtrade and both organic eco-labels – Luomu and Euroleaf. Two eco-labels were not mentioned at all: these are UTZ Certified and EU Eco-label.

Credibility list

Two local eco-labels (Nordic Swan and Luomu) are at the top of the credibility list. This demonstrates that respondents trust local authorities the most. High credibility can be also explained by memorable and nicely executed logo designs. Interestingly, both logos are green in color and round in shape. The Rainforest Alliance logo is also green and round, but its credibility is relatively low. FSC has the third most

#	Eco-label	Credibility	Responses
1	Luomu	77%	70
2	Nordic Swan	70%	64
3	FSC	68%	62
4-5	Fairtrade	63%	57
4-5	Euroleaf	63%	57
6	PEFC	62%	56
7	Rainforest Alliance	55%	50
8	MSC	49%	45
9	EU Eco-label	33%	30
10	UTZ Certified	29%	26
11	Demeter	15%	14

Table 4.
Credibility of eco-labels'
visual design according to
student survey

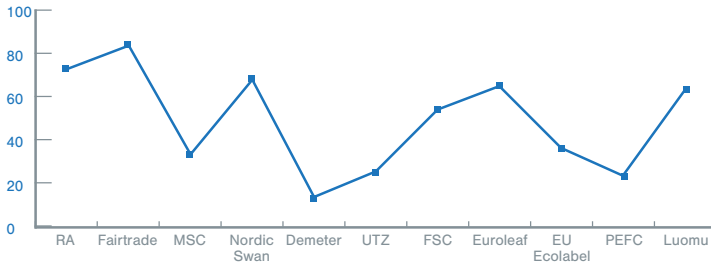


Figure 7.
Number of positive responses to the question: "Do you recognise this eco-label?" (Recognition variable)

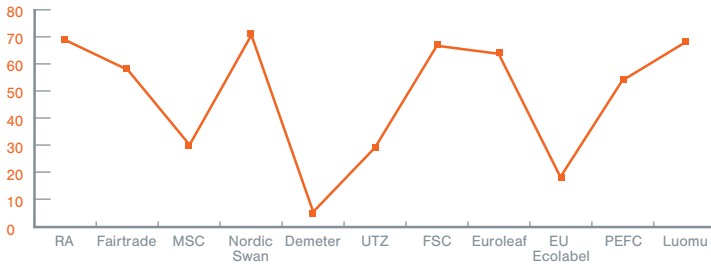


Figure 8.
Number of positive responses to the question: "Do you like the visual design of this label?" (Visual appeal variable)

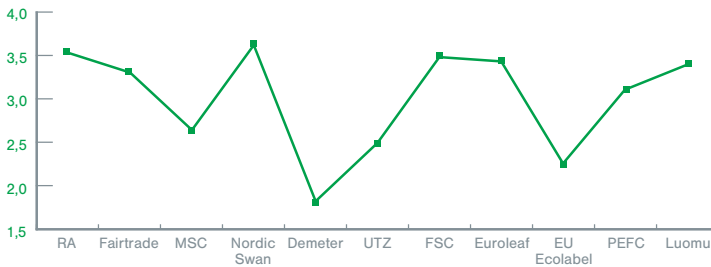


Figure 9.
Average rating of eco-labels' visual design (Visual appeal variable)

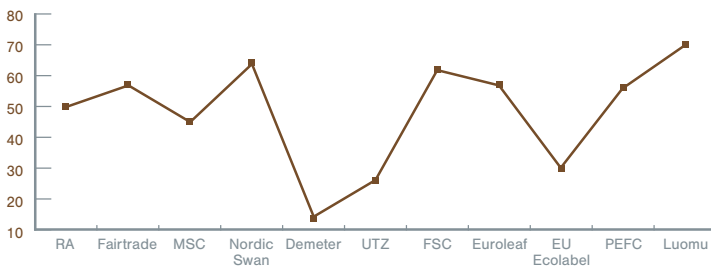


Figure 10.
Number of positive responses to the question: "Does the visual design of this label make it look more credible?" (Credibility variable)

credible logo design with its dark green color and minimalistic tree resembling one of the recycling icons (Image. 3). Two other eco-labels with green color (Euroleaf and PEFC) are also close to the top of the credibility list. Furthermore, as mentioned before, both eco-labels with trees in their logos (PEFC and FSC) are close to the top of the credibility list.

The MSC and the EU Eco-label logos are good examples of visually unappealing design being still quite credible. The MSC looks credible most probably due to the strict design, and the EU Eco-label due to the written title. The Demeter logo has the lowest credibility mostly because the logo does not look like an eco-label at all.



Image 3.
Comparison of FSC and
recycling icon

Comparisons

The visual design part of the student survey measured three variables:

- *Recognition* – “Do you recognise the logo of the eco-label?”
- *Visual appeal* – “Do you like visual design of the eco-label?”
- *Credibility* – “Do you agree that the logo design make the eco-label look credible?”

The comparison of these variables between different eco-labels can help to analyse if there is any relation between recognition, visual design and credibility of labels, and, if so, then what kind of relationships.

Figure 11. demonstrates that all three variables – credibility, recognition and visual appeal – are interrelated. The lines are almost identical with only few exceptions. Still, it is hard to say which variable influences others the most.

All three variables of Nordic Swan, Demeter, UTZ Certified, Euroleaf and Luomu closely match (Figure 12.). Both FSC and PEFC have low

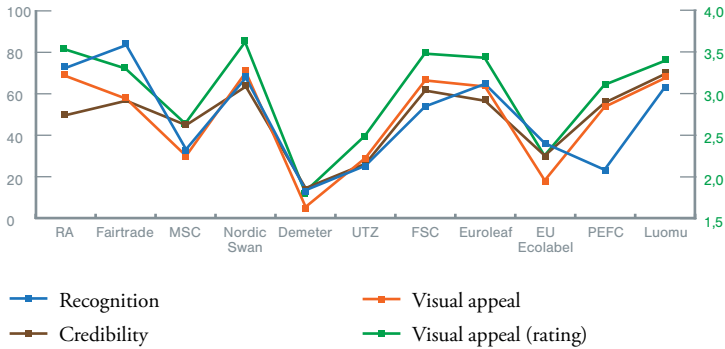


Figure 11.
Comparisons of all variables in one linear chart

recognition in comparison to their visual appeal and high credibility. The Rainforest Alliance has a low credibility but high recognition and visual appeal. The Fairtrade logo has high recognition, but its visual appeal and credibility are relatively low. The MSC logo looks credible, in spite of low recognition and visual appeal. The EU Eco-label has a gap between lower visual appeal and higher recognition and credibility. The analysis of the linear chart demonstrates that for five eco-labels all three variables are on the same level, regardless of the eco-label's popularity. The other six eco-labels have at least one variable which doesn't overlap with the rest. The results of both Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance demonstrate that a strong and well recognised brand image does not always support the credibility of the eco-label; on the contrary, shifting from purely rational towards emotional appeal can increase awareness about the eco-label, but at the same time decrease its credibility. The result of the EU Eco-label logo demonstrates that poor visual design can still look credible, if it has the name of the respected authority (EU) or the word 'eco-label' is added to the design. The MSC label shows that conservative design can also look credible. The results of both the FSC and the PEFC logos demonstrate that nicely composed combination of green color and trees on the label can add credibility even to the lesser recognised eco-label.

“It can be suggested the visual design plays a larger role in the credibility of an eco-label than an eco-label's recognition.”



Figure 12.
Correlation of eco-labels' recognition visual appeal and credibility

To sum up, both figures 11. and 12. demonstrate that the visual appeal line is of more similar shape to the credibility line than it is to the recognition line. The visual appeal line is close to the credibility line in eight cases, while the recognition line is close to the credibility line in five cases. Hence, it can be suggested the visual design plays a larger role in the credibility of an eco-label than an eco-label's recognition.

4.2.3.
Co-branding

In the co-branding part of the survey the eco-labels are tested in combination with brands that possess different brand images. The fact that all products from the survey possess different brand images makes it hard to compare eco-labels' credibility in co-branding. Still it is possible to explore all eleven cases of co-branding separately and derive general conclusions.

According to the results of the survey, eco-labels influence credibility of the product's brand image more often than vice versa. 57,6 is an average statistical number of respondents who agree that eco-labels add credibility to the brands. And 40,5 is an average statistical number

#	Co-branding	Credibility	"Yes" Resp.	Avg rating
1	Luomu — Vaasan	87%	79	3.88
2	Fairtrade — Fairglobe	85%	77	3.87
3	Euroleaf — Reformi	80%	73	3.75
4	FSC — Melitta	77%	70	3.63
5	Nordic Swan — Eldorado	71%	65	3.71
6	PEFC — Aromata	64%	58	3.26
7-8	Rainforest Alliance — Lipton	59%	54	3.46
7-8	MSC — Ocean Sea	59%	54	3.16
9	EU Eco-label — Floralys	56%	51	3.04
10	UTZ Certified — Paulig	43%	39	2.87
11	Demeter — Beutelsbacher	15%	14	2.33

Table 5.
Responses to the question:
"I feel this eco-label adds
credibility to the product's
brand"

of respondents who agree that brands influence credibility of the eco-labels. Furthermore, the influence of the brands to the eco-labels is positive in nine out of eleven co-branding cases.

The Demeter – Beutelsbacher is the only co-branding case where the product brand influences the credibility of the eco-label more than eco-label influences credibility of the product. Several reasons can be suggested for an explanation. Firstly, the Demeter eco-label is barely recognised and its logo is not associated with an eco-label. Secondly, the logo and the package design of the Beutelsbacher brand leaves an impression of an organic product. Thirdly, Demeter labelled products can be purchased only at special eco grocery stores in Helsinki. Therefore, both the package design of the Beutelsbacher juice and the product itself look more eco than the eco-label.

The Rainforest Alliance – Lipton is another exceptional example of the mutual credibility influence in co-branding. Lipton is a strong international brand with a negative image regarding environment and sustainability, thus it can have strong influence on the eco-label's credibility both positive (for consumers not concerned about environment) and negative (for consumers concerned about environment). Still, the Rainforest Alliance eco-label possess a strong enough image to add credibility to one of Unilever's brands.

#	Co-branding	Credibility	"Yes" R.	Pos.	Neg.
1	Luomu – Vaasan	59%	54	49%	51%
2	Fairtrade – Fairglobe	56%	51	80%	20%
3	Euroleaf – Reformi	55%	50	89%	11%
4	FSC – Melitta	54%	49	91%	9%
5	NS – Eldorado	49%	45	60%	40%
6-7	PEFC – Aromata	41%	37	89%	11%
6-7	RA – Lipton	41%	37	62%	38%
8	MSC – Ocean Sea	38%	35	38%	62%
9	EU Ecol. – Floralys	37%	34	67%	33%
10	UTZ – Paulig	33%	30	70%	30%
11	Demeter – Beutelsb.	26%	24	75%	25%

Table 6.

Responses to the question: "I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label and if yes in which way?"

The MSC – Ocean Sea is the only co-branding case when for the majority of respondents the brand negatively influences the image of the eco-label. But based on the comments, the negative influence is derived mostly from the product (frozen food) and the seafood industry in general and not the brand image itself. Many respondents don't believe in mass-produced sustainable seafood.

Both eco-labels for organic products (Luomu and Euroleaf) have demonstrated very positive results in adding credibility to the product brands and vice versa. Furthermore, in both cases the influence of the product brand is significantly more positive, in spite of both products being flour products. It can be suggested, that in the Luomu – Vaasan case the positive influence is partly achieved due to the good package design, and in Euroleaf – Reformi case due to the word *Luomu* in the product's title.

The Nordic Swan – Eldorado co-branding case received relatively low results in transferring credibility from the eco-label to the product's brand, despite the high credibility of the Nordic Swan label. Moreover, 40% of respondents think that Eldorado can negatively influence the credibility of the Nordic Swan eco-label. These results could be caused by the Eldorado brand possessing a negative brand image as a discount brand.

Details of each co-branding case are also described in Appendix 3.

4.2.4. Follow-up Questions

According to the survey results, most of the respondents think that the logo design (69%) is the most critical element of an eco-label to make it easily recognisable to the wide public. A bit more than a half of respondents agree that the eco-label's visibility on the package (54%), active public communication and marketing of the eco-label (53%) and explanatory text (52%) are critical elements of an eco-label's recognition. To sum up, the logo design is the most important element.

Interestingly, in-store advertising of eco-label side-by-side with the product (18%) is the least popular answer among the suggested options, though this marketing method is widely used in Finland by Fairtrade. Furthermore, the name of the logo option received 23% of responses.

92% of respondents agreed that in most cases eco-labels have a positive influence on a product's brand image. However, only 76% of respondents considered that an eco-label could improve the image of a brand with a negative image. In contrast, 85% agreed that an eco-label could improve brand image of a brand with a weak image.

84% agreed that brands with a negative brand image could have a negative influence on an eco-label's image. A slightly smaller number of respondents (78%) considered that brands with a strong brand image could have a positive influence on an eco-label's image.

Interestingly, more respondents agreed that a brand with a negative image could negatively influence credibility of the eco-label than vice versa – an eco-label could improve a negative brand image.

4.3.

Focus Group Discussion

The online survey was used as a warm up for the discussion, which was conducted later during the expert workshop. Five professional graphic designers participated in the special online survey. They evaluated five eco-label logos: Nordic Swan, EU Eco-label, Fairtrade, Demeter and UTZ Certified.

“It was challenging to design a logo with a clear message, when it had to cover 67 different product and service groups.”

The Nordic Swan logo received decent scores in principles of gestalt (3.72), visual credibility (3.80) and use on the packages (3.80), but failed in the communication of eco-criteria (2.20). The survey has demonstrated that Nordic Swan is a credible eco-label with visually appealing logo. But it was challenging to design a logo with a clear message, when it had to cover 67 different product and service groups.

In contrast to Nordic Swan, the EU Eco-label logo has received poor results in principles of gestalt (2.20), use on the package (2.33) and very poor in visual credibility (1.60), while scoring fair in communication of eco-criteria (2.80). The EU Eco-label logo is a decent example of the way poor design can negatively influence an eco-label's credibility. It also demonstrates that the overuse of both eco-symbols (flower, word eco-label) and credibility-symbols (EU abbreviation and stars) will not improve its visual communication if design is poorly executed.

The Fairtrade logo has received at least decent results in all evaluations. It had decent scores in communication of eco-criteria (3.20) and principles of gestalt (3.80) and high score in visual credibility (4.2). The Fairtrade logo has received very high result in use on the packages (4.67). Fairtrade is widely recognised certification program, thus it can be hard to evaluate if the logo looks credible and visually appealing due to its design or world-wide recognition. Still, the Fairtrade logo is

well designed for both brand image and the usage on various packages.

The Demeter logo has received decent score in use on the package (3.53) and, as anticipated, poor results in both visual credibility (2.40) and communication of eco-criteria (1.80). The Demeter logo has scored fairly well in principles of gestalt (2.76). These results demonstrate that the Demeter logo can be a decent logo for a company, but visually it can be hardly associated with eco-label.

“In the package the eco-label looks like a brand logo but that is because of its placement and the background colour of the whole bottle label.”

“I think it works well on package etc. also visually, but one needs to know it, otherwise the communication of the eco-criteria does not work by itself that well in my opinion.”

The UTZ Certified logo has received similar results to the Demeter logo. The UTZ Certified has received fair scores in principles of gestalt (2.88) and in visual credibility (2.8), while scoring relatively high in use on the package (3.33) and low in communication of eco-criteria (1.8). The UTZ Certified logo can hardly be associated with eco-labels, due to its distorted shape and “poisonous” color.

“I would rather think it’s for chemical cleaners or something. Not communicating anything! No link to agriculture, food etc. Poisonous coloring... The average consumer has no clue what UTZ means...”

“The overuse of both eco-symbols and credibility-symbols will not improve its visual communication if design is poorly executed.”

Only one graphic designer agreed that the five principles of gestalt is a proper way to evaluate logo design. However, all five designers agreed that five other qualities used in the expert survey could and should be used to evaluate the logo design of an eco-label.

It is important to mention that the results of the expert survey are not compared with the results of the main student survey due to the following reasons: firstly, only half of the selected eco-label logos are evaluated in the expert design survey; secondly, there is a significant difference in the size of samples; and thirdly, the questions were differently composed for both of the surveys.

After the survey was conducted, five professional graphic designers gathered for an expert workshop to discuss both the results of the

design survey and interpretations gathered from the rest of the research. The ten following interpretations were discussed during the expert design workshop:

1. The eco-label should have a certain shape and content to be associated with an eco-label. What are these shapes and content?
2. The use of dark green colour adds credibility to the eco-label.
3. The use of symbols that directly communicate what eco-label stands for (e.g. trees for forestry and fish for fishery) improves eco-labels recognition and add credibility to the label.
4. The use of symbols similar to widely renowned environmental symbols, such as recycling sign, adds credibility and visual appeal to the logo.
5. The use of unknown abbreviation decreases visual appeal of eco-labels. While the use of either the name or just a word like 'eco-label' adds credibility. What are the alternatives?
6. The emotional appeal in marketing of eco-labels can improve recognition but can decrease credibility.
7. The proper guidelines should be developed for the use of eco-labels on packages.
8. The guidelines should include recommendations for the package design.
9. Launching new brands based on eco-labels can become a successful trend.
10. The logos of eco-labels can be adjustable to the brand logo.

“Designers commented that circles are associated with stamps and certificates, and also look friendly.”

Logo design

During the discussion graphic designers argued that content is more important than the shape of an eco-label emblem. However, experts agreed that the shape should be simple and both circles and rectangles worked well for eco-labels. Furthermore, both of these shapes are easier to use on different packages. Designers commented that circles are associated with stamps and certificates, and also look friendly. The UTZ Certified logo which resembled a 'flag' was mentioned as a negative example. Designers described this shape as confusing and 'all-over-the-place'.

Graphic designers commented that both Nordic Swan and FSC were positive examples of logos that associate with eco-labels. Although, FSC was neither circle or rectangle. In case of FSC, the content worked perfectly well – a dark green tree. At the same time Nordic Swan's content, 'the swan', was not communicating that it was an eco-label,

rather a logo for an airline company or a birds protection organisation. It should be clear what eco-label stood for when consumer saw the logo for the first time.

Designers suggested that eco-label emblems should have both a brand-mark (sign, icon, illustration) and a logotype (text), in order to stand a better chance of being understood as eco-labels. Otherwise the eco-label looks more like a brand. The Demeter emblem, which had only a logotype, was brought as a negative example.

“Experts emphasised the importance of colors to look natural and cited green and blue as positive examples.”

Graphic designers agreed that colors played an important role in the design of the eco-label's logo. Experts emphasised the importance of colors to look natural and cited green and blue as positive examples. They also explained that the number of colors used is not important.

Graphic designers also agreed the use of symbols that directly communicated what an eco-label stood for could improve the eco-label's recognition and add credibility to the label. Simple and straightforward symbols, such as trees, fish or leaves, also improved the recognition. Trees and fish were good examples for eco-labels that represent a specific industry, such as forestry and fishery respectively. The leaf was a good solution for eco-labels with many different product groups covering various industries. While more specific and original symbols, such as frogs or birds, were less clear and associated with a company logo.

The EU Eco-label logo was considered as a negative example, because it had too many different symbols. Designers suggested that there should be one symbol instead of many in order for the eco-label to look credible. Euroleaf was considered as the best example. It was described as strong, understandable and simplistic.

The experts emphasised that smartly integrated well-known environmental symbols, such as recycling and lifecycle, significantly improve both recognition and credibility of eco-labels. The PEFC emblem was considered as positive example of such integration.

“Abbreviations were considered to be confusing, but at the same time their presence added another level of information.”

The use of abbreviation in an eco-label's logo had raised a tense discussion among designers. Abbreviations were considered to be confusing, but at the same time their presence added another level of information (consumer could later find eco-label on the web by typing in its abbreviation) and increased association with eco-labels. Designers agreed that a logo with some text is better than a logo without text at all, especially if the eco-label is not widely recognised. The eco-label

logo without description could be confused with an icon. At the same time, the use of words like ‘eco-label’, ‘organic’, ‘sustainable seafood’ (or any other industry) or the full name of certification program were considered to be better options than the use of abbreviations. However, if the eco-label was widely recognised, e.g. Fairtrade and Euroleaf, then it could be used without text at all.

“Eco-label logos should be as informative as possible, because there were almost no other communication channel or signaling of its credibility and what it stood for to the consumers.”

One graphic designer also emphasised that “eco-label logos should be as informative as possible, because there were almost no other communication channel or signaling of its credibility and what it stood for to the consumers”. Thus designers should fully utilize eco-label logos to communicate as much information about certification program as possible, but not at the expense of aesthetics and functionality. Graphic designers should try to find a perfect balance between the communication of an eco-label’s environmental criteria and preserving its visual appeal and aesthetics. The PEFC logo was considered to achieve the best balance between amount of information it communicates and visual appeal.

Graphic designers added that it was good for an eco-label’s logo to be strict and conservative. The use of straightforward and cliché symbols (tree, leaf, recycle) and colors (shades of green) could positively influence the recognition of eco-labels. Unlike company logo design, there was no need to avoid clichés, while designing the logo for an eco-label. Designers suggested that more original solutions, such as RA’s frog, could seem to be trendy and become confused with a company logo.

Designers also assumed that to design a sustainability label, which included triple bottom line of sustainability, would be even harder.

Co-branding

Graphic designers have highly praised the Fairtrade logo in the context of the usage on the other product’s package. The use of black background created a strong contrast with the rest of the package, and, as a result, consumers noticed Fairtrade emblem before the rest of the package. One expert commented that “the black background is very visible, like a stamp”. And another expert mentioned that she “had known about Fairtrade logo before she learned what it stood for”. Still, it was hard to decide the extent to which the logo influenced recognition of the brand or the brand image influenced recognition of the logo. Therefore, designers concluded that a poorly recognised eco-label should have a logo which clearly communicated its environmental criteria, whereas well-known eco-labels could allow more abstract logos.

“The use of straightforward and cliché symbols (tree, leaf, recycle) and colors (shades of green) could positively influence the recognition of eco-labels.”

Designers have emphasised that in most cases an eco-label logo should stand out on the package, because an eco-label's main purpose is to demonstrate a product's environmental performance. This could be achieved by a strong contrast. Experts were against integrating eco-label into the package design.

Graphic designers agreed that the design of an eco-label's logo should be adjustable to various needs and types of packages. They also suggested that an extra background frame would improve an eco-label's visibility on the package. And if an extra frame was not possible, an eco-label logo should have clear margins to differentiate itself from the rest of the package. However, designers disagreed as to whether eco-labels' logos need special guidelines about how they should be used on different packages.

During the discussion, the designers also raised the topic of correlation between widespread use of eco-labels and the strictness of their environmental criteria - rephrasing the famous quote by Mies van der Rohe "less is more strict". If consumers saw an eco-label on almost every product, would they question its credibility? In other words, would overuse of eco-labels negatively influence their credibility?

Experts have concluded that to create a perfect eco-label logo design, the designer should find a balance between the logo design of a corporate brand and pictograms, icons, and stamps. So the logo would look like neither of them, but still possess elements from both, and as a result could be easily recognised on the package as an eco-label.

To sum up, designers had agreed on following positive tips for the eco-label's logo design:

- use circle or rectangle shape to improve logo's association with an eco-label;
- use both icon and text on the logo to add more levels of communication;
- use direct and understandable symbols related to the environment and sustainability, e.g. recycling and lifecycle;
- use black or any other contrast background to improve visibility on the package;
- use colors that are associated with nature (e.g. green and blue) to increase logo's credibility;
- use extra frame or clear margins to separate an eco-label from the rest of the design;
- plan eco-label's logo design to be adaptable and fit different types of packages.

“A poorly recognised eco-label should have a logo which clearly communicated its environmental criteria, whereas well-known eco-labels could allow more abstract logos.”

“To create a perfect eco-label logo design, the designer should find a balance between the logo design of a corporate brand and pictograms, icons, and stamps.”

PART V:

Discussion

5.1.

Discussion of Finding & Implications for Eco-labels Managers & Graphic Designers

According to both the literature review and expert interviews, branding techniques and strategies from conventional marketing can be very helpful when applied to the marketing of eco-labels.

Today, eco-label managers refer to annual market research, personal experience, non-academic articles about recent marketing trends, as well as some academic research on marketing. Most of the marketing strategies applied by eco-label managers are based on techniques and methods from conventional marketing. But very few branding methods and strategies are applied to develop stronger and more credible brand images for eco-labels.

Fortunately, the use of eco-labels in both co-branding and brand extension is gaining popularity and thus the interest of eco-label managers in literature on branding increases as well. This study has demonstrated that in most co-branding cases eco-labels added credibility to the product's brand. Furthermore, eco-labels can strengthen a weak brand image and improve a negative brand image. But the study has also shown that brands can influence the credibility of eco-labels, and that this can be both positive and negative. However, the influence of brands' credibility on eco-labels is usually weaker than the other way around. Nonetheless, eco-label managers should be aware that there is a chance such co-branding may harm the credibility of eco-labels. To avoid this danger, eco-label managers can use different branding methods and the techniques of conventional marketing while planning their co-branding strategies. But it is also important to research different cases of co-branding in order to develop special branding methods for each of these cases.

“To eco-label managers can use different branding methods and the techniques of conventional marketing while planning their co-branding strategies.”

“The use of emotional appeal can also help to increase eco-labels’ recognition among consumers and therefore have a positive influence on sustainable consumption.”

In addition, brand development techniques can help to increase the emotional appeal of eco-labels and at the same time sustain their credibility. The use of emotional appeal can also help to increase eco-labels’ recognition among consumers and therefore have a positive influence on sustainable consumption. The emotional appeal in marketing can be developed by the use of brand components, such as brand story and brand logo.

The brand logo alone is not enough to develop a strong, widely recognised and credible brand image for the eco-label. Nevertheless, the logo is the main component of each brand identity and it is the main communication tool at the actual point of sale. Thus the logo design of eco-labels plays an important role in recognition and credibility.

The results of the online survey demonstrate that recognition, credibility and the visual design of eco-labels are interrelated and can influence each other. However, it is difficult to define which variable is the most influential and most probably it depends on the certain case. Most eco-labels from the student survey received homogeneous numbers of respondents for each variable. But there were some exceptions worth mentioning.

“The logo design of eco-labels plays an important role in recognition and credibility.”

For example, Demeter is a poorly recognised eco-label in Finland and as a result its logo design has the lowest score in both visual appeal and credibility. But during the expert workshop the Demeter eco-label’s logo has received better results than in the online survey. Furthermore, an expert from Germany has mentioned that in her country Demeter is a widely recognised and very credible eco-label. Hence, the poor result in Demeter’s logo visual appeal and credibility can be caused by its low recognition in Finland.

“The logo design that follows the most recent design trends can negatively influence the eco-label’s credibility.”

Another example is the PEFC eco-label. It was recognised by only quarter of respondents, but 60% of survey participants liked its logo design and agreed that it looked credible. The logo design of the PEFC eco-label was also highly praised by graphic designers during the expert workshop. Consequently, it can be stated that good logo design has positively influenced the credibility of PEFC, despite its low recognition.

Rainforest Alliance is another example worth mentioning. It was the second most recognised eco-label logo in the student survey and was visually appealing to three quarters of respondents. But only half of participants agreed that its logo looked credible. Moreover, professional

graphic designers also criticised RA logo for looking too trendy and over-designed for an eco-label. The Rainforest Alliance case demonstrated that trendy logo design could increase an eco-label's recognition but fail to add any credibility, because its logo design was associated with a brand instead of an eco-label.

These examples prove that logo design can influence the credibility of an eco-label. These cases also show that visually appealing logo design is not enough to communicate the credibility of an eco-label. On the contrary, the logo design that follows the most recent design trends can negatively influence the eco-label's credibility. The study suggests that the logo design of an eco-label should be conservative and straightforward, and it should clearly communicate what the eco-label stands for. Furthermore, graphic designers should not be afraid of using environmental clichés, such as the colour green or tree shapes, in the logo design, because this can facilitate consumers' understanding of the eco-label's message. The studies also suggest that the logo should create a contrast with the rest of the package. Graphic designers can find more detailed tips for eco-labels' logo design in chapter 4.3. Focus Group Discussion.

It is also important to mention that an eco-label logo can be designed in two different contexts. First, the logo can be designed for a new, as yet unrecognised, eco-label. Secondly, it can be redesigned for an existing well-known eco-label. Different rules and tips should be applied in these cases. But this topic is not covered by the research and requires further studies.

There are many ways of designing a recognisable and credible eco-label logo. Most of them, as graphic designers would say, are intuitive and based on graphic design skills. This thesis suggests only straightforward and clear ideas and methods to design logos, which must, above all, be associated with ecological values as well as be memorable, recognisable, and look credible. But they won't work if aesthetics is misused.

“Graphic designers should not be afraid of using environmental clichés, such as the colour green or tree shapes, in the logo design, because this can facilitate consumers' understanding of the eco-label's message.”

5.1. Proposal for Future Research

This thesis is a starting point for future research on eco-labels from the perspective of graphic design and branding. It has covered a number of different topics, which now require separate research individually. Therefore, the author proposes three directions for future research:

1. The role of logo design in the credibility of an eco-label's brand image.
2. The role of logo design in co-branding of eco-labels, and their use in package design.
3. Case studies on co-branding of eco-labels and companies' brands with different level of brand image credibility.

It is important to mention that during the last interview with the manager from Motiva Services Oy, the manager suggested that the research on eco-labels co-branding would be beneficial to improve marketing communication with potential license holders. The manager also agreed that the organisation would be interested in master's thesis research about this topic.

6.1. Conclusions

Eco-labels are one of the most widely used green marketing tools. Plenty of academic research is conducted about the instrumental values of eco-labels and their implementation in green marketing. But the topics of marketing and branding of eco-labels have received very little academic attention. The author argued that eco-labels could be viewed as brands and thus more studies should be conducted about eco-labels' brand image and their role in co-branding. This study endeavoured to close this research gap by answering the question: How do logo design and co-branding influence the credibility and brand image of eco-labels?

In addition to theoretical implications, this thesis has also focused on practical implications. The study explored which main topics eco-label managers could learn from the branding literature of conventional marketing to develop new marketing strategies for eco-labels. Furthermore, it has researched the way graphic designers and brand developers could improve the logo design and brand credibility of eco-labels, based on feedback from both consumers and experts.

The results of the study have confirmed that eco-label managers should use branding methods and strategies to develop a strong brand image and successfully use eco-labels in co-branding. Furthermore, the results have demonstrated that in most co-branding cases eco-labels positively influenced the credibility of a product's brand and in some cases this influence could be mutual. However, in rare cases, products with a negative brand image could also negatively influence the credibility of eco-labels.

This study has discovered that an eco-label's logo recognition could influence consumers' opinion about its visual appeal and credibility, and the other way around. Thus the most visually appealing logos are in most cases also the most recognised – Nordic Swan, Rainforest Alliance, Luomu. The studies have also demonstrated that consumers' perception of eco-label logos differs from their perception among professional graphic designers.

The findings have also provided tips and methods for both graphic designers and brand developers to design effective eco-label logos that would support the credibility of certification programs, and could be successfully used on packages in co-branding. The findings have implications for future research on the co-branding of eco-labels and their logo design.

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APPENDIX #1: History of Eco-labels

The first eco-label, named “Demeter”, was introduced in 1928 in Germany. This moment in history came about due to academic research. In 1924, Dr. Rudolf Steiner held series of lectures on agriculture. Steiner suggested that in contrast to the common industrialisation trend of mass production, farms should be rather thought of as living organisms not factories. He argued that there was a direct correlation between a healthy farm and healthy food. “In 1927, following Steiner’s lectures, a co-operative was formed to market Biodynamic production. During next year the “Demeter” symbol and first Standard was established to ensure that the farming methods were uniformly followed and monitored” (Demeter U.S.A., 2014). It was not only the first attempt in history to control the quality of organic farming by applying the simple idea of standardization, but also the first project to certify and standardize sustainable methods of food production.

However, developing this kind of system of standardization for industry was not entirely a new breakthrough. On the contrary, all major organisations of standardization were founded in the early 20th century, including Deutsches Institut für Normen (DIN) in 1917 and International Organisation of Standardisation (ISO) in 1926. Yet Demeter was the first standardization system to be applied to the idea of organic farming, wellbeing and sustainable production (or as it is defined now – sustainability).

Generally speaking, the German initiative was an innovative approach at that time when the shift from human labour into industrial world had just started to cause the first environmental issues. Founders of Demeter managed to capture a weak signal (Rossel, 2009) of a clear need to follow one system of precise control of both quality of product and conditions where it was produced.

Demeter eco-label possesses a major historical value as a pioneer of environmental certification and labelling. It had been introduced long before environmental problems caused by industrialization reached the everyday agenda (four decades before the publication of Limits to Growth and 60 years before the Brundtland report with its concept of sustainable development). More than half a century had passed before the concept of eco-labelling evolved into a complex world-wide system that now covers various industries and economic segments.

Simple standard of quality eco-labels evolved into the global trend of social responsibility and “green” lifestyle. During last decades western countries re-focused social awareness from consumerism towards sustainable consumption. Stable and strong economies enabled the middle classes to start making a choice between conventional industries and

environmentally friendly production. In addition, new generations of young entrepreneurs followed the wave and set the trend of a healthy, successful lifestyle.

Seen as a means to communicate the environmental performance of products to consumers, eco-labels can be applied to almost every existing industry and foster change towards more sustainable production methods. In other words, an eco-label can be applied to almost any existing product if it improves its environmental or ethical performance. While EU governments are tightening up environmental regulations, eco-labels function as forerunners or awards for the most eco-concerned companies and industries.

By 2014, the Eco-label Index lists 458 eco-labels in 197 countries and across 25 industries (Eco-label Index, n.d.). Currently, the Eco-label Index shows that there are 38 different eco-labels in Finland, including Nordic Swan, Euroleaf, Rainforest Alliance and others.

APPENDIX #2: List of Expert Interviews

Name	Position	Organisation	Place	Date	Length	Language
Antti Lehmuskoski	Marketing coordinator	Motiva Services Oy – Ympäristömerkintä	Helsinki	25.8.2014	1h 15min	English
Jaanus Välja	Fair Trade director	Mondo MTÜ	Tallinn	28.10.2014	45 min	English
Sanna Räsänen	Communications officer	Reilu kauppa ry	Helsinki	26.1.2015	45 min	English
Hanna Sauroja	Marketing director	Motiva Services Oy – Ympäristömerkintä	Helsinki	29.1.2015	45 min	English

APPENDIX #3: Detailed Results About Each Eco-label from the Online Student Survey

Rainforest Alliance (RA)

The Rainforest Alliance logo is recognised by 73 respondents (80%), which makes it the second most recognisable eco-label logo. The RA logo is liked by 69 respondents (76%), which is also the second best result among eco-labels evaluated in this thesis. This label also received the second best score in visual design – 3.54. Twelve students rated the RA logo as very good, “5”, and only one student evaluated its design as very poor, “1”.

“I think it's good that this label has precise field of greenness in it, the rainforests, it is then not so vague.”

“I don't like the design of the label, since it's not clear what it stands for. That's why it is difficult to see the connection between Lipton-tea and the label.”

Despite the high score in both logo recognition and visual design, only 55% of respondents think that the visual design of this logo makes it more credible.

“Aesthetically the zig-zag spiky edge makes it look a bit cheap maybe. The Rainforest brand needs to be clear, simple and more elegant to seem more trustworthy I think.”

The majority of respondents (54) think that RA stands for sustainable forestry, which is one of the correct answers. The second correct answer – sustainable agriculture – is mentioned by less than one third of respondents (27). This gap can be explained by the name of the eco-label, which has the word “forest” in it.

In the follow-up questions twelve respondents mentioned RA as the eco-label with the most recognisable design, which puts it in fourth place. And sixteen participants mentioned RA as their favourite eco-label logo design (second place).

In the co-branding section of the questionnaire, RA was evaluated in combination with Lipton. Lipton is one of the most famous tea brands with quite controversial brand image due to its Lipton Yellow's low quality and bad taste.

“I find it hard to trust Lipton for fulfilling the eco-standards due to the history of Unilever (owner of Lipton) being one of the largest buyer of the palm oil, which origins from exploitation of the rainforests.”

Despite the negative comments received about the Lipton brand, 59% of respondents think that this eco-label adds credibility to Lipton's brand image. Most of the students agree that the influence is positive (3.46).

"Thus the eco-label does not really help, though a Lipton product with the label is better than a Lipton product without it."

"I trust more the label than the brand, so if the label accepted to stand by the brand, the brand strongly gains on positive image."

The exact same number of respondents (59%) think that this influence is mutual, and the brand affects the credibility of the eco-label. Those answers are equally divided between students who think that the influence is positive, and those who think that it is negative.

"I recognize the label as a big company which makes me doubt the credibility of the eco-label and wonder who is giving the eco-certification to this brand. In general this kind of big companies seem somehow less trustworthy than smaller brands."

"Lipton is a widely known brand. If they decide to use this label in their packaging, I feel that the eco-label can be trusted."

Altogether, 26 respondents have shared their thoughts about the Rainforest Alliance label and its co-branding with the Lipton tea brand. Most of the comments are negative in tone, yet the survey results show positive attitudes towards this eco-label. Most of the criticisms were related to the logo design, some respondents had difficulties in understanding what the eco-label stood for and the frog image was considered to be misleading.

"I don't like the design of the label, since its not clear what it stands for."

"Visually, it is hard to link a frog image with tea"

"Design-wise, I think the image of the frog is misleading."

Seven respondents see the co-branding of the RA eco-label and a brand which belongs to a multinational corporation as a greenwashing attempt.

"The eco-labels help me distinguish easily products that are more 'responsible' but if they are associated with brands that are publicly know not to be sustainable it feels a bit like greenwashing."

"An unknown eco-label combined with a mass production brand just seems like green wash."

Three respondents don't trust the Rainforest Alliance eco-label.

"I don't trust this particular eco-label because of one documentary about sustainable chocolate, and the agricultural activities were not sustainable on a site (with this label) visited by one of the creators of that documentary".

Five respondents commented that RA has a positive influence on Lipton's brand image.

"Regarding co-branding, the "lipton tea" is known for its medium quality, so eco-label might actually help it to get more appreciation from the user".

To sum up, Rainforest Alliance is a widely recognised eco-label among students in Finland, but its logo design can be confusing and, thus, in rare cases have a negative influence on its credibility. Moreover, RA's credibility may suffer if co-branded with one of Unilever's brands, such as Lipton. Nonetheless, the Rainforest Alliance logo is considered to be one of the best eco-label logos and can have a positive influence on a product's brand image, even if the brand belongs to a multinational corporation.

Fairtrade

The Fairtrade logo is the most recognised eco-label among respondents of this survey. It is recognised by 84 participants (92%). Though only 64% of respondents like its visual design, which places it in sixth place. The Fairtrade logo visual design score is also relatively low – 3.31. Ten students rated the Fairtrade logo as very good, "5", and four students evaluated its design as very poor, "1".

"Label doesn't have the best visual appearance, but I totally don't care as long as I believe it makes some good".

"Design-wise, fairtrade sign is a success – it is very clear, it quickly conveys the message".

"I can't understand why the image of the logo has relationship with the words of the logo".

63% of respondents think that the visual design of the Fairtrade logo adds credibility to the eco-label. This is almost the same number of students who like the design of the logo.

"I think fair trade is widely used, easily seen and the simple yin-yang type form is very recognisable. It works well".

It is not a surprise that 90% of respondents think that the Fairtrade label stands for fair

trade, which is the correct answer. All other answers received less than 15% of responses.

“I also know about the issues of labor in cacao-plantations. Maybe the effect is positive, because I already recognize the label and it easy to understand that the label tells for paying fair trade for the workers”.

In the follow-up questions the Fairtrade logo is by far the most recognised eco-label logo. It was mentioned 33 times. While only ten students mentioned the Fairtrade logo as their favourite design (third place).

“Its easier to trust fair trade label for it has had more transparency or at least more conversation about what they actually do”.

In the co-branding part of the survey, Fairtrade was evaluated in combination with Fairglobe. Fairglobe is a brand introduced by Lidl, a German global discount supermarket chain, to represent their Fairtrade certified products. The Fairglobe brand represents a new trend in branding. According to this trend, brands can be based on eco-labels. Hence, the brand image of Fairglobe is strongly interlinked with the brand image of Fairtrade. Furthermore, the Fairglobe brand name and logo are extremely similar to the Fairtrade brand.

“It is funny to feel the need to have these two logos on the front of the packaging, makes it a bit suspicious”.

85% of respondents think that the Fairtrade label adds credibility to Fairglobe. Which is the highest result among eco-labels represented in this thesis. More than two thirds of students agree or strongly agree that Fairtrade positively influences Fairglobe's brand image. And only seven students disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. As a result Fairtrade has the highest co-branding credibility rate (3.87).

“The brand doesn't have a particularly affect the credibility of the eco-label. The eco-label makes the brand seem more trustworthy”.

56% of respondents think that the Fairglobe brand affects credibility of the eco-label. And 80% of these 56% think the influence is positive, while rest think it is negative.

“I don't like how the label looks like but I know what it means and I appreciate it. The Fairglobe brand adds the feeling of a fair product”.

Altogether, 28 respondents have commented about the Fairtrade label and its co-branding with the Fairglobe brand. The credibility of Fairtrade has received mainly a positive feedback.

“To me Fair Trade certificate is a more credible source of information, because their certification process is more strict and their procedures are open and more NGO-led”.

Interestingly, five respondents criticise the Fairglobe brand for its poor logo design. This has a negative influence on the Fairtrade label's credibility, even though the whole idea of the Fairglobe brand is to promote the positive image of Fairtrade certified products.

“Fairglobe looks like a cheap fair trade brand and therefore I question if the fair trade brand is really true here”.

“A cheap label seems to decrease the credibility of otherwise credible eco-label”.

“Logo of the brand looks horrible, so I have the feeling it is not an established trustable brand”.

To sum up, Fairtrade is undoubtedly the most recognised eco-label among students in Finland. Though its logo design has received a mediocre rating, it still made the eco-label look credible. Fairtrade is a strong co-branding tool in sustainability marketing and in most cases the Fairtrade logo adds credibility to the product's brand. The Fairglobe is an interesting example of an eco-brand based on an eco-label, but it still needs either a better logo design or an awareness campaign to appear more trustworthy. Its cheap-looking logo decreases credibility of both Fairglobe and Fairtrade.

Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)

Only 36% of respondents recognised the MSC logo. Moreover, only one third of the survey participants liked its visual design. In both cases MSC has received only eighth place out of eleven eco-labels. And its score in visual design evaluation is less than 3 points – 2.64. Only six students rated the logo as very good, “5” and more than twice of that (13) rated as very poor, “1”.

“The logo seems a bit strange. They have an abbreviation that isn't primarily explained. Especially the version on the pack has no value to me at all. There's no clear mention of what this little white fish in the blue box stands for, or what MSC means”.

In spite of low recognition and poor score in visual design, the design of the MSC logo looks credible for almost half of the respondents (49%).

“Even though I don't like the design of the logo itself, it does work quite nicely on product packaging of fishes etc.. And even though I don't think this is the best

visual design ever, I love this logo and get happy every time I spot it somewhere. When people don't know this logo I get a bit upset, almost angry...

98% of students think that MSC stands for sustainable fishery. Hence, the name and the logo of this eco-label communicate the message very well. This is the best result among all eleven eco-labels, especially considering MSC's low recognition.

"The label with the whole text in the first picture is clear to understand. There are a lot of questions about this kind of products and their environment friendliness. That's why i think it makes the brand more trustable."

In both follow-up questions the MSC logo is mentioned only once.

In the co-branding section of the survey, the MSC logo was evaluated in combination with Ocean Sea brand. Ocean Sea fish products are sold in Lidl. This product was chosen due to relatively large size of the MSC logo on its package. It had the largest eco-label logo among all other options.

*"I'm not familiar with the brand".
"I don't recognize this fish product brand".*

59% of the survey participants think that the MSC eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand. And it has received an average co-branding credibility rating (3.16).

"Looking old-fashioned and not graphic at all, I get the feeling it is some control structure directed and controlled by the state / public policies so I would tend to trust it plus; the serial number adds some credibility because of its traceability."

38% of respondents feel that the Ocean Sea brand affects credibility of the MSC eco-label. 62% think the influence is negative.

"I really don't trust processed food..."

Interestingly, in the given co-branding case the negative feedback is derived not from the product brand, but from the seafood industry more generally. Seven respondents consider frozen sustainable seafood impossible.

"I just don't believe in sustainable seafood..."

"I have not encountered any data showing that the fishing would happen in any other than harmful way. And there has been fuss about micro plastics that have entered the fish other animals, including humans eat".

"I don't think it's that eco to bring frozen food products (means massive use of energy and coal foot print) from possibly thousands of kilometers away. An eco-label doesn't make it eco if the big picture isn't thought of".

"A mass-produced article and a logo for sustainable fishery simply do not go hand in hand".

"Fast food breaded fish and eco-label just don't go together. Weird combination."

It is important to mention that MSC has several variations of the logo, some with explanatory text "certified sustainable seafood" and others without it.

"The first label image is different than the label on the package, the package label does not say what it stands for. Therefore I have no idea what it is and adds no credibility. The label need so be self-explanatory and/or widely known to add credibility."

The MSC logo with explanatory text was used for the evaluation of the logo design. As a result, almost everyone understood what it stood for. While the logo without explanatory text in was confusing in a co-branding context.

"Most uninformative eco-label ever".

"The eco-label on the package doesn't really say what it is and therefore it's hard to recognize as an eco-label. I have no idea what MSC stands for".

"If I saw that on packaging I would not understand what it was about at first glance. Very weak branding".

This contrast in responses demonstrates the importance of adding explanatory text to the logo of the MSC eco-label.

The MSC logo integration with packaging has divided students' opinions into two groups.

"But it was very nicely used on the package, nicely emphasised with the yellow color, and the explanation text makes it more or less clear".

"To me, this eco-label is confusing and does not stand out from the rest of the package".

To sum up, the MSC logo is a poorly recognised eco-label with a visually unappealing design, though the logo design looks quite credible. MSC is considered as rather credible

eco-label, still many students doubt that mass production of seafood can be sustainable. As a result, the MSC label co-branding with frozen seafood products can decrease the eco-label's credibility.

Nordic Swan

The Nordic Swan logo is surprisingly only the third most recognisable eco-label. It is recognised by 75% of respondents, which is 11% less than its overall recognition in Finland – 86%. Lower recognition among students can be explained by the fact that international students living in Finland are less aware about local eco-labels than Finns. The visual design of the Nordic Swan label is the most appreciated among the respondents (78%). It has also received the highest visual design rate – 3.63. Nordic Swan is the only eco-label to receive no very poor, “1”, visual design evaluation. Furthermore, fifteen respondents rated the design as very good, “5”, which is the second best result.

“Somehow in my mind Nordic Swan has a good reputation and it is credible. I have no idea whether that is true, but the impression that I have is highly positive.”

70% of respondents agree that the visual design of this eco-label makes it look more credible. This is the second best result among all eco-labels presented in this thesis.

“I think the logo looks outdated. But it still is a strong logo.”

Nordic Swan stands for a wide range of environmental-friendly products and services, thus the suggested answer was very generalised and may not have satisfied some of the respondents. Still, 70 respondents answered that the Nordic Swan logo stood for eco-friendly products and services. Five students mixed it with a label for organic products, and other five suggested that it stood for sustainable forestry. The latter could be explained by large number of paper products labelled with Nordic Swan.

“Nordic swan is older than some other labels. I use it to find the suitable toilet paper and other paper products.”

In the follow-up questions Nordic Swan has the exact same results. The Nordic Swan logo is mentioned by seventeen students (third place) as the most recognised eco-label. And nineteen students (first place) named it as their favourite eco-label design.

In the co-branding part of the survey Nordic Swan was evaluated in combination with Eldorado. Eldorado brand is a Swedish discount brand, similar to Kesko's Euro Shopper and SOK's Rainbow brands. As with most of the discount brands it possesses a negative image regarding sustainability.

“Eldorado does not appear very trustworthy”.

“I don't trust these private labels (though I do buy them, e.g. pirikka) but to me they are a perfect example of cost-benefit optimization through mass production, so I don't trust them to be more environmentally friendly or respect human rights etc.”

71% of respondent agree that the Nordic Swan label adds credibility to the Eldorado product. This is a weak result for the Nordic Swan label (fifth place), but it can be explained by Eldorado's negative brand image. Still, Nordic Swan has received the second highest co-branding credibility rate – 3.71 (right behind the Fairtrade). It is also the only eco-label with no respondents strongly disagreeing that Nordic Swan makes the product's brand more positive: 58% of respondent are either agree or strongly agree with this statement.

“I'm under the impression that the miljömärket isn't easy to get. That's why the eco-label strongly increases the credibility of the product, even though it's a cheap one.”

Half of respondents agree that the Eldorado brand affects credibility of the Nordic Swan label, with two thirds of those considering it to be a positive influence.

Altogether, nineteen respondents commented about the Nordic Swan logo and the Eldorado brand. Comments about the Eldorado brand image were mostly negative, emphasising its being a discount brand. And comments about the Nordic Swan label were mostly positive. Interestingly, participants tend to trust the Nordic Swan label even if they might not really know the exact environmental criteria of the eco-label.

“The good old swan label seems trustworthy although you can see it on every package in the supermarket yet not really knowing what is the standard for environmentally friendly product.”

To sum up, the Nordic Swan logo is one of the most recognised and credible eco-labels in Finland. The logo design is visually appealing. Though some respondents say the logo looks outdated and the picture of the swan is confusing, they still like and trust the label. The Nordic Swan label adds credibility to the product brand, but its own image can slightly suffer from co-branding with discount brands, such as Eldorado.

Demeter

The Demeter logo is the least recognised eco-label among all eleven labels. It is recognised by 14% of respondents. Only 6% of students like the design of the Demeter logo. Moreover, it has received the lowest design rating – 1.81. Only one student rated the Demeter design as very good, “5” and thirty three students rated it as very poor, “1”.

“Usually eco-labels can easily be recognised due to the wording, colors, images etc. But this I would hardly recognise it being an eco-label at all.”

Only 15% of respondents agree that the visual design of this label makes it look more credible. This is by far the lowest result.

“Label looks like pampers brand, not credible at all. Don't even see that it is a label.”

Only 28 respondents knew that Demeter stood for biodynamic products, and 21 respondents thought it stood for organic products, which was also correct.

“I'm not that much into all the german-austrian biodynamic thing, but I do believe that their farming produce are cleaner and healthier than other farmed products, because they have a strict system that is applied to farming and it is also supervised effectively. Their system involves eg. less chemical product than mainstream farming. The knowledge of this adds to the label's credibility.”

In both follow-up questions the Demeter logo is mentioned only once.

In the co-branding section of the questionnaire, the Demeter logo was evaluated in combination with Beutelsbacher apple juice. The Beutelsbacher products can be purchased only in special organic grocery stores.

“I can see the juice is quite homemade with the fruit flesh (eesti k. - viljaliha) like my mom makes it. I am willing to bet that they don't use any chemicals and all of it is natural and organic (just by looking at it). Also the brand's label is quite simple and "oldschool". Makes me feel that it is more of a low budget product where they focus on the juice and the package comes second. I would try it and if I would like the taste, I would buy it again.”

15% of respondents feel that this eco-label adds credibility to the Beutelsbacher brand image. The Demeter label has the second lowest credibility rating – 2.33. 51 students disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the eco-label makes the brand image more positive. And only nine students agree or strongly agree with this statement.

“The logo doesn't really add any credibility in this case”.

“I've seen the label in Germany before, but I don't have a clue what it means. I even thought it's rather a brand than an eco-label. It doesn't really change my perception of a brand.”

26% of respondents agree that this brand affects credibility of the eco-label, and three quarters of them think that the influence is positive.

"I like the overall design of the product, it actually makes look better the eco label."

Altogether, 26 respondents left their comments about the Demeter logo design and its co-branding with the Beutelsbacher brand. Interestingly, sixteen out of 26 commentators say that the design of the Demeter logo does not look like an eco-label at all. And six more comments criticise the visual design of the eco-label.

"The eco-label doesn't look like an eco-label. It might as well be the brand name for the juice".

"This can't be certification logo? It doesn't have round shape...no authority with this shape. What does Demeter even stands for?"

"I would never think that it's actually an eco-label."

"Isn't it a whole brand name or is it an eco-label."

To sum up, the Demeter eco-label is poorly recognised among students in Finland. Low awareness can be explained by several reasons. Firstly, Demeter labelled products can be purchased only at special eco grocery stores. Secondly, the design of the Demeter logo looks more like a brand's logo rather than an eco-label. Moreover, poor design of the Demeter logo fails to add credibility either to the product brand or the eco-label itself. Demeter labelled products, in contrast, may add credibility to the Demeter label due to their eco-looking packages.

UTZ Certified

The UTZ Certified logo is recognised by 27% of respondents (ninth place). 32% of respondents liked the design of the UTZ label (also ninth place). The logo has also received a low rating on visual design – 2.49 points. Only two students think that the logo design is very good, "5", while 17 students think that design is very poor, "1".

"No idea what UTZ certified means, I don't think it looks very strong as a brand."

28% of participants agree that the visual design of the label makes it look more credible.

"The logo doesn't add any credibility and doesn't depict the product as an 'eco' product."

Only 33 students recognise UTZ as an eco-label for sustainable agriculture. Other popular answers are eco-friendly product or service (23), biodynamic farming (14) and organic product (10). Hence the visual design of UTZ Certified logo poorly commu-

nicates the main message of the label.

"I've never seen it before and have no idea what it stands for."

"The label in the product says better farming, but the label doesn't give any hints toward farming."

In the section of the follow-up questions UTZ is mentioned twice as the label with the most recognised design. The UTZ logo is never mentioned as the eco-label with the favourite logo design.

In the co-branding part of the survey UTZ Certified was evaluated together with Robert Paulig coffee. Paulig is the major coffee brand in Finland with a strong positive brand image.

"Paulig is respected and well known brand, so again, I don't think they'd choose a 'pseudo-eco-label' just for the sake of it."

43% of participants agree that the UTZ Certified label adds credibility to the Paulig brand. This low result can be explained by the Paulig brand being significantly more recognisable than UTZ Certified.

"I have no idea what is this logo about but it looks like it's something important... UTZ-certified... I would probably buy this rather than some other product even though I don't know what is this about."

"I do not know this label, so I can't say that it would make a brand more appealing to me."

37% of respondents agree that the Paulig brand influences the credibility of the UTZ label, with two thirds thinking that influence is positive.

"Big player, Paulig, so it does somewhat affect the credibility positively. It's again a vague abbreviation which nobody really knows what it means. It's certified something, so I guess it must be good..."

Sixteen respondents commented about the UTZ Certified eco-label. Although it received low results in both recognition and visual design, some respondents praised the visual design of the eco-label.

"The label has a brave color (red) for an eco-label. Makes it different."

"First label where there is a description of what it means on the package, good!"

"Another non-stereotypical eco-label, nice."

To sum up, the UTZ Certified label is poorly recognised among students in Finland. The logo design barely communicates what the eco-label stands for, unless the explanatory text is added. The UTZ Certified label's co-branding effect is quite neutral, though in some cases it can add credibility due to the word Certified in its logo. On the other hand, the strong and positive image of the Paulig brand can add credibility to the eco-label.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

The FSC logo is recognised by 59% of respondents. This is only sixth place. But the eco-label's design is liked by 74% of respondents (fourth place), only 4% behind first place. Furthermore, the FSC logo received the third best design rating – 3.49. And sixteen respondents think that the design of this eco-label is very good, “5”. No other eco-label has received so many “5”. Hence, the FSC logo can be considered as one of the most visually appealing eco-label logos in Finland.

“The visual sign of the eco-label is simple and strong, but the abbreviation makes it impossible to understand what does it actually mean. The end user in the super-market does necessarily know that FSC stand for Forest Stewardship Council. Anyway, it gives some idea of the “eco-friendliness” through its sign and adds the value to the product.”

“I like FSC because most of the time it has some detailed information on the label.”

68% of respondents agree that the visual design of the FSC logo adds credibility to the eco-label. This is third place among all labels from this survey.

“Amazing design! I had not seen this logo before, but I understood right away what is this about. It doesn't need the text “certification”, the logo tells it visually. Brilliant!”

90% of respondents correctly think that the FSC label stands for sustainable forestry. The name of the eco-label and the image of a tree play a crucial role in successful communication of eco-label's message.

“I know this label because I deal with forestry products in my profession. Like food products, they are used in such huge quantity that every step for the better is important. That is why this label adds to credibility in my eyes. But with that said, I don't think that forestry companies are required to do enough to get this label; they could develop their methods far more ecological and responsible.”

In the section of the follow-up questions the FSC label is mentioned six times as the most recognisable eco-label logo (sixth place). This result supports the trustworthiness

of the first question about the FSC logo recognition. The FSC label is also mentioned six times as the favourite eco-label logo. This result is lower than the previous evaluation of the eco-label's visual appeal.

In the co-branding part of the survey the FSC label was examined in combination with Melitta brand. Melitta is a German brand for coffee products. Melitta coffee filters are premium price product that can be purchased at almost any supermarket in Finland.

"I really don't understand how should i know about the meaning of this eco-label. No words on logo, therefore, I have no idea. I've been using these filters for ages, and never noticed the label."

77% of participants agree that the FSC label adds credibility to the Melitta brand (fourth result). Also, FSC received a high credibility rating – 3.63 (fifth result). 54 respondents agree or strongly agree that FSC can positively influence the credibility of the co-branded product's brand image. Only eight respondents disagree or strongly disagree with this statement.

"It's a well-known label, with a wide spread of brands using it. Always notice, but as other labels, it works as 'ok, check!' for me."

Only 41% of respondents agree that the Melitta brand can influence credibility of the FSC label, and almost 90% of those agree that the influence is positive. This result demonstrates the strength of the FSC brand image.

"Maybe its the green color in the logo, but it has some kind of simplicity and concreteness... I think that credibility would grow for me if I would start noticing them more and more on similar products."

The FSC labels received sixteen comments from respondents. Respondents were positive about the name and the logo of the eco-label, though FSC abbreviation seemed confusing if no explanatory text was added.

"I like the label. It's carefully thought through, but not too much. Once again one of those unknown abbreviations."

To sum up, FSC is a well recognised eco-label with one of the best visual designs. Simple and concrete logo design makes the eco-label look credible. But the FSC abbreviation can cause confusion among consumers who are not familiar with this eco-label. The FSC brand image is strong enough to add credibility to a product brand, and in most cases it will not be affected by the product's brand image.

Euroleaf

The Euroleaf logo is recognised by 71% of respondents (fourth place). 70% of respondents say that they like the Euroleaf logo design. This places it fifth, but it is only 8% less than the first result. Furthermore, the Euroleaf logo has the fourth best rating in the evaluation of visual design – 3.44 points. Only three respondents think that the logo design is very poor, “1”, and thirteen respondents rate the logo as very good, “5”. 33 respondents think that the logo design is good “4”.

63% of participants agree that the visual design of the Euroleaf logo makes the eco-label look credible. This is the same result as with the Fairtrade label.

“This has parts of the EU flag but is in the shape of a leaf. It is good that it has a strong connection to EU sign and EU sounds bureaucratic but credible.”

“I don't know what euro leaf-label means, thats why only thing that comes to my mind are all the eu-standards and regulations in farming. And thats not always positive.”

Surprisingly, only 59% of respondents know that the Euroleaf label stands for organic products, considering that 71% of respondents recognised the eco-label earlier. 37% of participants say that it stands for eco-friendly products or services and 15% say it stands for sustainable agriculture.

“I don't remember what this label is, I'm guessing it's the EU level label for organic produce, and I do see it a lot. In Finland we have our own organic produce label, and that is why I have not paid that much attention to this one. Strangely enough it still adds to a products credibility in my mind, because I associate it with many of the products I buy.”

In both follow-up questions the Euroleaf label is mentioned eight times (fifth place in both cases), Though in some cases it could have been mentioned as organic (or luomu, which means organic in Finnish).

In the co-branding part of the questionnaire, the Euroleaf was evaluated in combination with Reformi brand. Reformi Luomu (organic) macarons can be purchased at S-market supermarket chain.

“It's sort of a no-brand, but the Reform word in the corner (is that the brand) sounds like a good thing. Actually the eco-label is quite anonymous. It doesn't tell much of what it actually stand for. It refers to europe, with the stars in this leafy shape, drawn from the circular EU stars, but it could still be anything.”

80% of respondents find that this eco-label adds credibility to the Reformi brand (third place). The overall co-branding rating (3.75 points) is also in third place. This good result can be explained by the weakness of Reformi brand and relative strength of the Euroleaf brand.

“At this point I realize that any green label in any product creates the feeling of credibility for me.”

54% of participants agree that the Reformi brand affects credibility of Euroleaf, and over 90% of them think the influence is positive. This might be explained by the presence of the large title on package saying “Luomu”.

“I don't know Finnish very well. But I know what luomu means and that creates a positive synergy with the eco-label.”

Fifteen students commented about the Euroleaf logo. In eight comments students mentioned that visually the Euroleaf logo had something to do with EU, but they still couldn't say what the eco-label exactly stood for.

“No idea. This is just stars of EU states. Means nothing to me. Probably because of the poor message communication.”

To sum up, the Euroleaf logo has a good design for an eco-label and is quite well recognised. The connection with the EU is clear, but the message that the label stands for an organic product is not always delivered to the consumer. Again, the visual connection with the EU positively affects its credibility, though for some consumers the same connection may have a negative effect. In the co-branding process the usage of word luomu on the package helps to understand that the Euroleaf label stands for an organic product. The eco-label itself adds credibility to the product's brand image due to resemblance with the EU flag.

EU Eco-label

The EU Eco-label logo is recognised by 40% of respondents, which puts it in seventh place. However, only 20% of participants like its design (tenth place). The EU Eco-label logo's design rate is also one of the lowest – 2.25 points. 27 respondents rate the logo design as very poor, “1”, and only four participants think the design is very good, “5”.

“It is written "eco-label". This is how I guess it really is. However, I have no idea what it stands for. Design is terrible in my opinion.”

One third of respondents agree that the logo design of this label makes it look credible.

“Using the European stars is recognizable and adds credibility but I don't like the label brand overall.”

“I've not seen this anywhere so there isn't much reason for me to think this logo would represent credibility.”

“It looks too bureaucratic and trying too hard to be fun and visual. It doesn't have the authority of FSC brand.”

56 participants know that the EU Eco-label logo stands for eco-friendly products or services, while 26 participants mistakenly believe that this label stands for organic products. It can be speculated that EU Eco-label is sometimes confused with Euroleaf.

“The design is too busy: too many shapes, letters and colours mashed in one small rectangular area. And it has something to do with the EU.”

In the follow-up questions section, three participants mentioned the EU Eco-label logo as the most recognised among all eco-labels. No one has mentioned the EU Eco-label logo as their favourite design.

In the co-branding part of the survey EU Eco-label was examined in combination with Floralys. The Floralys brand belongs to Lidl's brand portfolio and is used for paper products, such as toilet paper and tissues.

“The brand looks cheap and the eco-label has too much going on, a leaf, euro sign, too much text – looks cheap all in all.”

56% of respondents agree that this eco-label adds credibility to the Floralys brand. This is not that bad a result considering the EU Eco-label logo has relatively weak credibility rating – 3.04 points. 27% disagree or strongly disagree that the EU Eco-label makes the brand image more positive, and 28% agree or strongly agree with this statement. Almost half of respondents (45%) are neutral.

“Anyways it adds certain credibility to the product if I'd compare it with a matching product that has no labels, since I know it is an official EU label for something.”

41% of participants agree that the Floralys brand affects the credibility of EU Eco-label. 62% of those who agree think that the influence is positive.

“An unknown eco-label combined with a cheap brand seems just like green wash.”

Altogether, nineteen students commented about EU Eco-label. Most of the comments were criticising the logo design for being complicated, with too many details. Nonetheless,

having an EU Eco-label text was seen as an advantage by three commentators.

“Not visually perfect, but at least it says EU Eco-label which sounds credible and understandable.”

To sum up, the EU Eco-label logo is more or less recognisable, mostly due to the presence of its title on the logo. The logo design of this eco-label is very poor and negatively affects both its recognition and credibility. Moreover, the message of the label is unclear. Still, the connection with the EU makes its credible to some extent.

PEFC

The PEFC logo is recognised by only 25% of respondents (tenth place). But the logo design is liked by 59% (seventh place). PEFC is the last label to receive more positive logo design rates than negative with average rate 3.11. While more recognised eco-labels, such as EU Eco-label, UTZ Certified and MSC, have received average rates lower than 3 points. 27% of respondents rate the PEFC logo below 3 points and 38% rate over 3 points.

“Really good logo. Again, its easy to see visually what is this certification about. Forest, sustainability... that is enough for me to know when shopping in hurry and tired.”

85% of respondents think that the PEFC label stands for sustainable forestry, which is correct.

“It probably represents smth about forestry. Just out of the logo design.”

62% of respondents agree that the PEFC logo design makes the eco-label look credible. This is the best result among eco-labels recognised by less than half of respondents.

“Quite neutral but credible eco-label. The sign has good features like bits of recycling spiral and two different trees inside of it. PEFC is too much abbreviation again, what is it, where does it come from?”

In the follow-up questions PEFC is mentioned once as the most recognisable eco-label logo and twice as the favourite eco-label logo.

In the co-branding part of the questionnaire the PEFC logo is evaluated in combination with Aromata brand. The Aromata brand is used with paper products, such as coffee filters and disposable plates and cups. The Aromata brand can be found at Lidl supermarkets.

64% of participants agree that the PEFC label adds credibility to the Aromata brand. The co-branding credibility rate is also high – 3.26 points. Only twenty participants (22%) disagree or strongly disagree that the PEFC logo positively influences brand's credibility. While 38 (42%) participants agree or strongly agree with that statement. Again, these are the highest results among eco-labels with the less than 50% recognition.

“The logo looks a bit old-fashioned and thats why it looks somehow credible.”

Only one third of respondents think that the Aromata brand can influence credibility of the PEFC label. And only 30% of them think that the influence can be negative. This demonstrates that PEFC label has a strong brand image due to its logo design, which gives the impression of credibility.

“I think the labels actually always look more credible in the context of being on a product.”

To sum up, the PEFC logo is poorly recognised, but its visual design is good. The logo clearly communicates what it stands for. The only disadvantage, again, is unclear abbreviation. Decent visual design creates credible impression of the PEFC logo, despite its low recognition.

Luomu

The Luomu logo is recognised by 69% of respondents (fifth place). 75% of respondents find the design of this label visually appealing (third place). The Luomu logo received quite a high rating in visual design – 3.40. But his rating is still lower than FSC's and Euroleaf's, despite less respondents liking FSC and Euroleaf logos. Seventeen respondents rate the FSC logo design lower than 3 points (poor), and 48 respondents rate over than 3 points (good).

“This is a well functioning label, it is easy to spot it in packaging.”

89% of respondents know that the Luomu eco-label stands for organic product. Furthermore, it was mentioned eleven times as a label standing for sustainable agriculture, which can be also considered as a correct answer.

The Luomu logo design is considered to leave the most credible impression of its eco-label among all eleven eco-labels represented in this thesis. 77% of respondents agree that its logo design makes the eco-label look credible.

“Luomu sign is something that finns know by heart, it has good credibility and is something that finns can truly trust, the product really is organic. Luomu comes

from "luonnonmukainen" it is a brand itself not a certificate."

In the follow-up questions part the Luomu label is mentioned twenty times as the most recognisable design (second place). It also mentioned nine times as the favourite logo design (fourth place). It is important to mention that in both cases it might be sometimes confused with the Euroleaf label.

In the co-branding section of the survey, the Luomu logo was evaluated in combination with the Vaasan brand. The Vaasan brand is a popular Finnish brand for bread products. Products with the Vaasan brand can be found in both Kesko's and SOK's supermarkets.

87% of respondents agree that the Luomu logo adds credibility to the Vaasan brand. This is the highest result. The credibility rate is also the highest – 3.88. Only one respondent strongly disagrees that the Luomu label positively affects credibility of the product's brand, and only five respondents disagree with the same statement. While 65 respondents agree or strongly agree that the Luomu logo positively affects credibility of the product's brand.

"Good graphic design, both brand and logo support each others as a trustful food-brand."

55% of respondents agree that the Vaasan brand can influence credibility of the Luomu label, and 89% of them think that the influence is positive.

"LUOMU is luomu. Clear message. However, I don't understand how products as this one can be organic really. I don't trust it."

Fourteen respondents commented about the Luomu eco-label. Most of the Finns recognise and trust this eco-label. The text luomu on the logo is clear and straightforward, but for people who do not speak Finnish the message of the label becomes unclear.

"I trust this label a lot, it's local and been in use for a long time. I don't know if the design is that stellar; I might just like it because I'm so used to it."

"Would probably be more credible (understandable) if I knew what "Luomu" meant."

To sum up, the Luomu label has a strong brand image among Finns. It has credible visual design and the message is clear. The eco-label adds credibility to organic products. But if a person does not understand the meaning of the word luomu, the message becomes unclear.

APPENDIX #4:

Online Student Survey

Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

Hello!

My name is Roman. I am a student at Aalto University working on my thesis about eco-labels and co-branding. The aim of this survey is to explore the role of visual design in eco-labels' credibility and to investigate mutual influence of eco-labels and product brands during the co-branding process.

The term 'credibility' in this survey, first of all, means trust in environmental claims. And the term 'brand image' means your overall attitude and emotions towards the brand.

The first five questions for each eco-label are about its visual design, followed by 4 questions about co-branding. Altogether there are 11 eco-labels.


The whole survey will take approximately 7-9 minutes of your time.

Thank you in advance!

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

* Required

Some formalities for the research accuracy

You are: *

☐ Bachelor student

☐ Master student

☐ PhD

☐ Exchange student

☐ Just graduated

☐ Other:

You are: *

☐ Female

☐ Male

Your age is: *

☐ 18-23

☐ 24-29

☐ 30-35

☐ 36-41

☐ Other:

You are from: *

☐ Aalto University

☐ University of Helsinki

☐ Haaga Hella

☐ Metropolia


☐ Other:

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

* Required

1. Rainforest Alliance



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: Rainforest Alliance eco-label and Lipton tea



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is viewed with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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2. Fairtrade



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental/friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: Fairtrade label and Fairglobe chocolate



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is viewed with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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3. Marine Stewardship Council



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: MSC eco-label and Ocean Sea fillets



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is used with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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4. Nordic Swan



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: Nordic Swan eco-label and Eldorado toilet paper



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand effects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is used with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

* Required

5. Demeter



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: Demeter eco-label and Beutelsbacher apple juice



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand effects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is easier with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

* Required

6. UTZ Certified



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: UTZ eco-label and Paulig coffee



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes", in which way?

Due to the brand it is viewed with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

* Required

7. Forest Stewardship Council



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: FSC eco-label and Melitta coffee filters



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes", in which way?

Due to the brand it is viewed with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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8. Euroleaf



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: Euroleaf eco-label and Reformi macarones



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☒ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☒ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is used with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☒ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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9. EU Ecolabel



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: EU Ecolabel and Floraly's toilet paper



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is mixed with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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10. PEFC



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental-friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: PEFC eco-label and Aromata coffee filters



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is used with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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11. Luomu



1. Do you recognise this eco-label? *

Have you seen it before?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What does it stand for? *

Please give your best guess even if you responded "no" to the previous question.

- ☐ Organic product
☐ Sustainable agriculture
☐ Sustainable forestry
☐ Sustainable fishery
☐ Biodynamic farming
☐ Environmental/friendly product/service
☐ Fair trade
☐ Other:

3. Do you like the visual design of this label? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

4. Rate the design *

1 2 3 4 5

Very poor ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. If "Yes": does the visual design of this label make it look more credible? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Questions about co-branding: Luomu eco-label and Vaasan rye crisps



6. I feel this eco-label adds credibility to the product's brand *

I trust this brand more because of the eco-label next to it

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7. I think this eco-label makes the brand image more positive *

I trust that the product is eco-friendly and sustainable

1 2 3 4 5

Strongly disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Strongly agree

8. I feel this brand affects the credibility of the eco-label *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

9. If "Yes": in which way?

Due to the brand it is viewed with I have more trust towards the ecolabel or have more doubt in it

- ☐ Positively
☐ Negatively

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Logo design and co-branding of eco-labels

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Follow-up questions

In your opinion, what are the most critical elements of eco-labels to make them easily recognisable to the wide public: *

(choose 1-2 elements)

- ☐ Logo design
- ☐ Explanatory text on eco-label
- ☐ Name of eco-label
- ☐ Active public communication and marketing of the eco-label
- ☐ Visibility on the package
- ☐ In-store advertising of eco-label side-by-side with the product
- ☐ Other:

Name eco-labels with the most recognisable design? *

(1-2 eco-labels is enough)

Name eco-labels with your favorite design? *

(1-2 eco-labels is enough)

In most cases eco-labels have a positive influence on product's brand image. *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

An eco-label can improve brand image of a brand with negative image. *

Make brand-image more eco-friendly, even if before it had no associations with sustainability

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

An eco-label can improve brand image of a brand with weak image. *

Make brand stronger and more recognisable.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Brands with negative brand image can have a negative influence on an eco-label's image *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Brands with strong brand image can have a positive influence on an eco-label's image *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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APPENDIX #5:

Online Expert Survey

Expert Design Survey

The expert design survey is created for graphic designers only and its goal is to evaluate both visual design and usability of the eco-labels' logo. In addition to the online survey, there will be a small workshop, where the participation is totally volunteer. If you feel that you would like to participate, just write me an email roman@lukdesign.fi

This time only 5 logos are evaluated. There are 10 questions for each logo, where you have to rate from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good). First five questions evaluate the logo according to principles of gestalt. Please see these examples before you continue with the survey <http://goo.gl/GW6VIF>

Other five questions evaluate various qualities of the logo from the point of view of its usage as an eco-label on the packages and in co-branding. Please, read carefully the description of each question. If something is unclear, text me right away at any time.

And remember, in this survey your answers should be based only on your knowledge and experience as a graphic designer.


Thank you once again for the participation!
And let have some lunch/dinner at my place next weekend :)

Please, write your name here
First name is enough

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Expert Design Survey

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1. Nordic Swan

Stands for environmentally-friendly products and services.



1. Similarity *
Similarity occurs when objects look similar to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern.

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

2. Continuation *
Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object.

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

3. Closure *
Closure occurs when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

4. Proximity *
Proximity occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group.

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

5. Figure and Ground *
The eye differentiates an object from its surrounding area. A form, silhouette, or shape is naturally perceived as figure (object), while the surrounding area is perceived as ground (background).

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

6. Visual credibility *
The credibility of the eco-label for consumer depends a lot on the first eye contact with its logo, especially if consumer is not familiar with the eco-label. Evaluate the extent to which the design of the logo leaves an impression of credibility of the eco-label.

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

7. Communication of eco-criteria *
After first eye contact with the eco-label's logo, it is highly important for consumer to understand what it stands for and its environmental criteria. Evaluate eco-label's logo ability to communicate what the eco-label stands for and its environmental criteria.

1

2

3

4

5

Very bad

Very good

8. Use on the package *
Since eco-label can be applied on many different packages and it is important that it can be used on different shapes and surfaces without losing its readability and be still both noticed and visually appealing. Evaluate the extent to which the logo design is suitable and convenient to be used in many different

packages and still look credible and visually appealing.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

9. Visibility on the package *

The logo can look strong when standing alone, but it can easily disappear on the package. Eco-labels are always used on the package of some other brand and therefore designers often have to integrate two very different designs. Evaluate the extent to which the logo is still readable, visible and noticeable when used on the random package.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

10. Use in co-branding *

Eco-labels are always placed on the package together with the logo of the product brand, thus it is important that consumer is able to identify the eco-label. Evaluate how well eco-label can be identified when placed together with product brand.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

Any comments to add...

Examples of packages



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Expert Design Survey

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2. EU Ecolabel

Stands for environmentally-friendly products and services.



1. Similarity *

Similarity occurs when objects look similar to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

2. Continuation *
Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

3. Closure *
Closure occurs when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

4. Proximity *
Proximity occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. Figure and Ground *
The eye differentiates an object from its surrounding area. A form, silhouette, or shape is naturally perceived as figure (object), while the surrounding area is perceived as ground (background).
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

6. Visual credibility *
Evaluate the extent to which the design of the logo leaves an impression of credibility of the eco-label.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

7. Communication of eco-criteria *
Evaluate eco-labels' logo ability to communicate what the eco-label stands for and its environmental criteria.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

Examples of packages



8. Use on the package *
Evaluate the extent to which the logo design is suitable and convenient to be used in many different packages and still look credible and visually appealing.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

9. Visibility on the package *
Evaluate the extent to which the logo is still readable, visible and noticeable when used on the random package.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

10. Use in co-branding *
Evaluate how well eco-label can be identified when placed together with product brand.
1 2 3 4 5
Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

Any comments to add...

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Expert Design Survey

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3. Fairtrade

Brands for fair trade



1. Similarity *

Similarity occurs when objects look similar to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

2. Continuation *

Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

3. Closure *

Closure occurs when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

4. Proximity *

Proximity occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

5. Figure and Ground *

The eye differentiates an object form its surrounding area: a form, silhouette, or shape is naturally perceived as figure (object), while the surrounding area is perceived as ground (background).

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

6. Visual credibility *

Evaluate the extent to which the design of the logo leaves an impression of credibility of the eco-label.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

7. Communication of eco-criteria *

Evaluate eco-labels' logo ability to communicate what the eco-label stands for and its environmental criteria.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

Examples of packages



8. Use on the package *

Evaluate the extent to which the logo design is suitable and convenient to be used in many different packages and still look credible and visually appealing.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

9. Visibility on the package *

Evaluate the extent to which the logo is still readable, visible and noticeable when used on the random package.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

10. Use in co-branding *

Evaluate how well eco-label can be identified when placed together with product brand.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ○ ○ ○ ○ Very good

Any comments to add...

Expert Design Survey

* Required

4. Demeter

Stands for biodynamic products (type of organic products)



1. Similarity *

Similarity occurs when objects look similar to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

2. Continuation *

Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

3. Closure *

Closure occurs when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

4. Proximity *

Proximity occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. Figure and Ground *

The eye differentiates an object from its surrounding area: a form, silhouette, or shape is naturally perceived as figure (object), while the surrounding area is perceived as ground (background).

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

6. Visual credibility *

Evaluate the extent to which the design of the logo leaves an impression of credibility of the eco-label.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

7. Communication of eco-criteria *

Evaluate eco-labels' logo ability to communicate what the eco-label stands for and its environmental criteria.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

8. Use on the package *

Evaluate the extent to which the logo design is suitable and convenient to be used in many different packages and still look credible and visually appealing.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

9. Visibility on the package *

Evaluate the extent to which the logo is still readable, visible and noticeable when used on the random package.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

10. Use in co-branding *

Evaluate how well eco-label can be identified when placed together with product brand.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

Any comments to add...

Example of a package



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Expert Design Survey

* Required

5. UTZ Certified

Standards for sustainable agriculture



1. Similarity *

Similarity occurs when objects look similar to one another. People often perceive them as a group or pattern.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

2. Continuation *

Continuation occurs when the eye is compelled to move through one object and continue to another object.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

3. Closure *

Closure occurs when an object is incomplete or a space is not completely enclosed. If enough of the shape is indicated, people perceive the whole by filling in the missing information.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

4. Proximity *

Proximity occurs when elements are placed close together. They tend to be perceived as a group.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

5. Figure and Ground *

The eye differentiates an object from its surrounding area. A form, silhouette, or shape is naturally perceived as figure (object), while the surrounding area is perceived as ground (background).

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

6. Visual credibility *

Evaluate the extent to which the design of the logo leaves an impression of credibility of the eco-label.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

7. Communication of eco-criteria *

Evaluate eco-labels' logo ability to communicate what the eco-label stands for and its environmental criteria.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

Examples of the packages



8. Use on the package *

Evaluate the extent to which the logo design is suitable and convenient to be used in many different packages and still look credible and visually appealing.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

9. Visibility on the package *

Evaluate the extent to which the logo is still readable, visible and noticeable when used on the random package.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

10. Use in co-branding *

Evaluate how well eco-label can be identified when placed together with product brand.

1 2 3 4 5

Very bad ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Very good

Comments if any...

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Follow-up questions

I agree that 5 principles of Gestalt is a proper way to evaluate the logo design. *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

I agree that 5 other qualities can and should be used to evaluate the logo design of an eco-label. *

These are: visual credibility, communication of eco-criteria, use on the package, visibility on the package and use in co-branding.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Would you agree to evaluate 6 more eco-labels? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Would you like to participate in a brief follow-up workshop to discuss the results? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Comments if any...

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APPENDIX #6: Focus group discussion

Place and date: Helsinki, 14.3.2015

Length of discussion: 1 h 30 min

Language: English

Number of participants: Five experts, one host

Experts' backgrounds:

- Two experts are master's students in graphic design at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture.
- One expert is an art director and master of arts in graphic design at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture.
- One expert is a master's student in creative sustainability at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture with a professional background in graphic design.
- One expert is a researcher and master of arts in creative sustainability at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture with a professional background in graphic design.
- Four female and one male
- From Finland, Russia, Poland, Germany and Argentina