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**AFFECTING CORPORATE IMAGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL
INNOVATION**

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Title Affecting the corporate image through sustainable business model innovation			
Subject International Business Management	Type of the degree Master's Thesis	Time of publication January 2022	Number of pages 50+1
Abstract <p>The main goal of this research was to find out how a sustainable business model innovation can affect corporate image. Additional goals of this research were to also find out if consumer trust is needed for a sustainable business model innovation to affect corporate image, and if customer service linked to the innovation can affect it as well.</p> <p>Based on the previous research, this research proposed corporate image can be affected through corporate social responsibility actions, with a focus on mainly philanthropical actions, and customer service. The research was conducted as qualitative research, and as a case study. The chosen case company was Fiskars Group, and the sustainable business model innovation was Iittala's Vintage Service. The data was gathered through an online questionnaire, where students at university of Oulu answered short text answers and multiple-choice questions. The responders were asked what has affected their image of Fiskars Group, if finding out about the Vintage Service had any effects on said image, and if they had used the Vintage Service.</p> <p>The main findings of this research are that consumer trust is needed for the sustainable business model innovation to affect corporate image, and customer service experiences linked to the innovation can affect corporate image as well. It was discovered that without consumer trust, the sustainable business model innovation either does not affect corporate image at all, or the effects are negative. The research also found that without consumer trust, the consumers are more likely to question the motives behind the sustainable business model innovation, and even suspect greenwashing.</p> <p>The results cannot be generalized due to the small sample of the research. However, to gain results that can be generalized, this research could be recreated with a bigger sample, or with other sustainable business model innovations. Deeper understanding of how a sustainable business model innovation can affect corporate image can also be discovered through interviews, or by having a bigger sample of answers in a questionnaire.</p>			
Keywords sustainability, customer service, corporate social responsibility, consumer trust			
Additional information			

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Corporate social responsibility has been discussed in companies for a long time, and through CSR companies have started adapting sustainability in their practices. At times, these changes for more sustainability are successful because they enhance the brand images in the eyes of the customer, but at times these changes do not succeed in the eyes of the customers. One example of a change for more sustainability that has not yet succeeded is Apple's newest decision to remove the chargers and earphones from iPhone boxes (Apple, 2020): Customer reactions on social media such as Twitter have not been positive regarding this change.

These changes for sustainability can be done as small acts such as charging for plastic bags in stores, or as responsible business model innovations: An example of a responsible business model innovation is the garment collecting H&M does (H&M, 2020). In H&M's garment collecting they accept old clothes to be recycled through their stores, and in exchange for this the customer receives a discount card (H&M, 2020).

This research focuses on examining the possible positive effect a responsible business model innovation can have on the corporate image. According to Balmer (2001), corporate image is the relation to the instant impression of the company an individual, group or network has. A positive corporate image an individual has can improve the sales of the company through customer satisfaction and loyalty (Jeon, B. J. et al., 2011).

This research is going to focus on a similar type of a responsible business innovation as H&M's garment collection: The chosen innovation is Iittala's Vintage service, in which Iittala accepts the old dishes from customers and in return the customers receive cash or gift cards (Iittala, 2020).

1.2 Goal of the research and research problems

This research is motivated by the increasing number of sustainable innovations done by companies, and by the researcher's own interests regarding sustainable innovations and corporate image. Furthermore, sustainability concerns consumers more and more, which can be seen in the consumer behavior (Rosmarin, R., 2020). One could argue that as sustainability concerns consumers, sustainable business model innovations would affect the corporate image positively, if executed properly. The goal of the research is to find out if this statement is true. The research problem of this research is to find out the ways to affect the corporate image through a sustainable business model innovation from the point view of customers.

1.3 Research gap

Both corporate image and business model innovations have been researched many times: For example, Tran, Nguyen, Melewar and Bodoh (2015) and Grunig (1993) have proposed definitions for corporate image, and (Björkdahl & Holmén, 2013) and Geissdoerfer, Vladimirova and Evans (2018) propose definitions for business model innovations. As Buerke, Straatmann, Lin-Hi and Müller (2016) state that sustainability can bring value to the customers, and it can positively affect corporate image as stated by Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2014), the following is proposed: Sustainable business model innovation can affect corporate image if said sustainable business model brings philanthropical value to the customers of the company.

Therefore, the hypothesis of this research is the following: As sustainability can bring philanthropical value to customers, it can also affect the corporate image through sustainable business model innovations. This can happen either by companies not deliberately using the sustainable business model innovations in management of the corporate image, or by companies using the sustainable business model innovations in for example social media marketing. This research will examine the different ways affecting the corporate image, and how a sustainable business model innovation can affect the corporate image as well.

1.4 Research question

The main research question used in this research is:

- How does a sustainable business model innovation affect the corporate image?

The research additionally discussed the possibility of a sustainable business model innovation having no effects in corporate image, and why that is also a possibility.

1.5 Methodology

This research will be conducted as qualitative research as the research aims to find understanding in how customers react to a sustainable business model innovation, and if it affects their image of the company. The data used in the research will be gathered through an online questionnaire, as a bigger sample is wanted compared to one that conducting interviews would bring. The questionnaire will be conducted as an online questionnaire as it is deemed safer option by the researcher due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As this research focuses on the effect a responsible business model innovation has on one company, the research will be conducted as a case study.

1.6 Structure of the study

After the introduction, where the reader is familiarized with the topic of the study and the research problem, the study will continue with explanations of the theories used in the research. The theoretical part of the study will first explain the theories regarding corporate image. Next the theories regarding how to affect the corporate image will be explained. Following on these theories, the theoretical part will continue with the theories regarding business models and business model innovations. The focus will be on sustainable business models and sustainable business model innovations as the chosen case is a sustainable innovation. Finally, these theories are brought together to form hypotheses on how a sustainable business model innovation can affect corporate image.

Following on the theoretical part, the methods part describes the data collection and how the data will be analyzed. The reliability and validity of this study will also be discussed in the methods part of the study. The study will then continue explaining the results of the research and the discussion of the results and reflected on the theories used in this study. The research will be concluded in the last chapter.

2 CORPORATE IMAGE

According to current research, corporate image has multiple definitions, that all explain that corporate image is based on for example feelings and beliefs. For example, Worcester (2009) states that the experiences, impressions, beliefs, feelings, and knowledge people have regarding a company result in corporate image. Additionally, according to Williams and Moffitt (1997), a complex impression formation process, that combines many factors such as the overall reputation of the company and the audiences' experiences of the company, results in a corporate image. According to Hatch and Schultz (2001, p. 1048) corporate images are different views of the organization that have been developed by the different stakeholders of the company, such as the customers, the media, and the general public. All three definitions explained before are bit different but can be argued to explain the same concept: Corporate images are views different stakeholders have of the corporation.

2.1 Holistic view of corporate image

Tran, Nguyen, Melewar and Bodoh (2015) propose a holistic view of the corporate image that explains corporate image as a combination of ideas, feelings, beliefs, impressions, values, and knowledge people have towards a corporation. Additionally, Tran et al (2015) explain corporate image to be both tangible and intangible associations people have of a corporation that are linked together with an addition of reputation. Furthermore, corporate image is proposed to be created from different interactions and experiences to influence the perceptions different stakeholders' have of the company (Tran et al., 2015).

Tran et al (2015) state that corporate image has seven different dimensions: Visual appearance, positive feelings, environment, online appearance, staff and employees' appearance, attitude and behaviour, and external communications. These seven dimensions create a corporate image by interacting with corporate communication and corporate personality, which in turn converts the dimensions into tangible and intangible variables that are understandable to the audiences (Tran et al., 2015). According to Tran et al (2015), corporate image moves from awareness to familiarity and finally to favourability, which creates both trust and advocacy, through time.

According to Tran et al (2015), the following conceptual model explains the formation process of corporate image further (Figure 1).

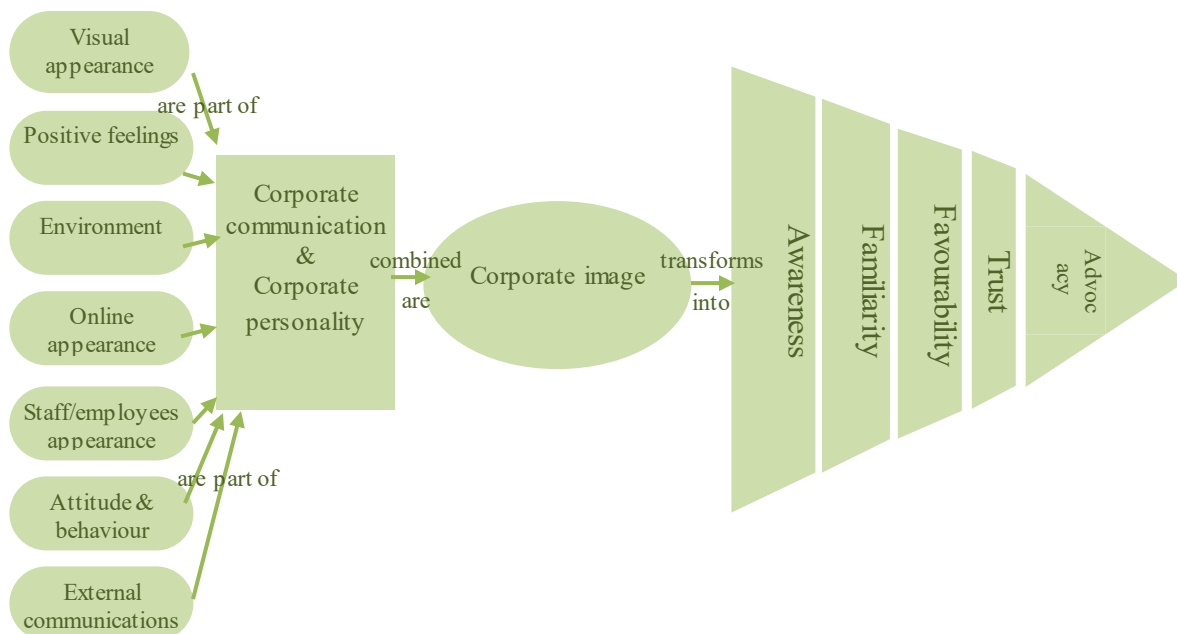


Figure 1. The formation process of a corporate image (adapted from Tran et al, 2015, p. 102)

The holistic view of corporate image by Tran et al (2015) suggests that corporate image is not only affected by the feelings and experiences different stakeholders have of the corporation, but also the corporate communication and personality: This is different from the view for example Hatch and Schultz (2001) have of corporate image. Corporate communication and personality can be argued to affect the overall corporate image a customer for example has of the corporation. Likewise, it can be argued that an image born out of one bad customer service experience can also create a corporate image without corporate personality being part of it. However, the two different views of the corporate image explained do not refute the other, and both can be argued to be true.

2.2 Issues with the concept of corporate image

However, corporate image having multiple different definitions can be seen as a problem with the concept. Balmer (1998) agrees with this, naming the multiple different meanings of corporate image one of five problems corporate image has. According to Balmer (1998), there are four more different problems with corporate image as a concept: The negative associations it has, the difficulty to control it, the corporate image being diverse, and its effects being different to different stakeholders. Grunig (1993) shares the idea that corporate image as a concept has problems: According to Grunig (1993), image can have multiple meanings, such as message, cognition, attitude, and belief. Grunig (1993) shares the belief that image has many negative associations, as according to him one can see the image as an opposite from reality.

As Balmer (1998) and Grunig (1993) point out, corporate images can be argued to be difficult to control, as many things are behind the corporate images different stakeholders of the corporation have of the corporation. The corporation cannot for example control how the customers will feel regarding possible changes the corporation does to their services or products, or how possible customers experience the customer service they receive. It can also be argued that corporations cannot control what kind of an image the media has of the corporation, and how the media shows the corporation based on this image to the public. Therefore, while the corporations arguably should try to affect their corporate images, corporations should also be aware that they cannot completely control the effect their actions have on the corporate images.

2.3 Receiver-end images

Corporate images can be categorized in four different perspectives: Transmitted images, receiver-end images, focus-of-images, and construed-images. The transmitted images focus on the corporation as the creator of the image. Receiver-end images focus on how the receiver sees the corporate image. The focus of images includes the image of the industry or the image of the country. The construed images focus on how one

sees the corporate image for example a certain stakeholder group has of the corporation. (Balmer & Greyser, 2003, p. 174)

As this research focuses on how the customers view the corporate image, the receiver-end images perspective will be examined more closely. According to Balmer and Greyser (2003, p. 175), there are four types of receiver-end images: transient image, corporate reputation, the brand user image, and stereotype image. The first one to be examined in this research is transient image.

2.3.1 Transient images

The first type of receiver-end images is transient images. According to Grey and Balmer (1998), the mental picture the audience has of the company is the corporate image of the company. In other words, the corporate image is what the audience, for example customers, has in mind when they see or hear the company's name or anything from the company (Grey & Balmer, 1998). Grunig (1993) shares this view of receivers of images creating images based on their own observations or from symbols given to them. This kind of a corporate image, that comes from a mental image of a receiver of the image can be called a transient image (Balmer & Greyser, 2003). According to Balmer & Greyser (2003), this kind of an image is considered the clearest corporate image concept by some people.

2.3.2 Corporate reputation

The second type of receiver-end images is corporate reputation. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2020), reputation means an opinion that people in general have regarding someone or something. As a reputation is for example customers' opinion of a corporation, corporate reputation can be seen as a receiver-end image. Furthermore, according to Fombrun (1996, p. 3), a reputation consists of the experiences people have had with a service provider. One could argue that a reputation born from negative experiences affects the potential customers' behaviour towards the corporation and its' services or products. Likewise, a reputation born from positive experiences customers have had with the corporation could affect positively the view potential customers have of the corporation. Fombrun (1996, p. 3) states that the

credibility of a service provider is increased by a good reputation, which additionally makes customers believe they are getting what they are promised to get. Furthermore, as Fombrun (1996, p. 20) states, reputation is built on respect and trust. One could argue, that if both current and possible customers of a corporation respect and trust the corporation, this would have positive effects on the overall image they have of the corporation.

2.3.3 The brand user image

The third type of receiver-end images is brand user image (Balmer & Greyser, 2003, p. 175). According to Worcester (2009), an image of a person or a type of a person which distinguishes the person from others is called brand user image. In other words, the brand user image represents a generalized person who uses the brand in question (Parker, 2009). For example, iPhone users can be generalized to be more liberal (Murphy, 2011). One could argue that the brand user images are close to stereotypes.

2.3.4 Stereotype image

The fourth type of receiver-end images is stereotype image. According to Martineau (1958), corporate image can be oversimplified as a stereotype that the consumers have of the corporation. Furthermore, these images the consumers have of the corporation are based on emotions, which makes the consumers reject what they do not agree with, which makes changing the corporate images difficult (Martineau, 1958). According to Martineau (1958), if the consumers have a good image of the corporation, it is easier for the consumers to believe good things of the corporation even if said things are not true.

However, Tucker (1961) states that either stereotypes regarding companies exist but simply indicate a degree of approval, or regular verbal structure cannot be applied to companies. According to Tucker (1961), in the case stereotypes regarding companies exist, the stereotypes only indicate the degree of approval or the holder of stereotypes' personal liking of the company. In the case of regular verbal structure not being applicable to companies, Tucker (1961) states that for example term powerful relates to different verbal factors when it's applied to different objects, such as companies and

individuals. This, and in addition the different contexts affecting the responses of people, explains according to Tucker (1961), why normal verbal structure does not apply to corporate images.

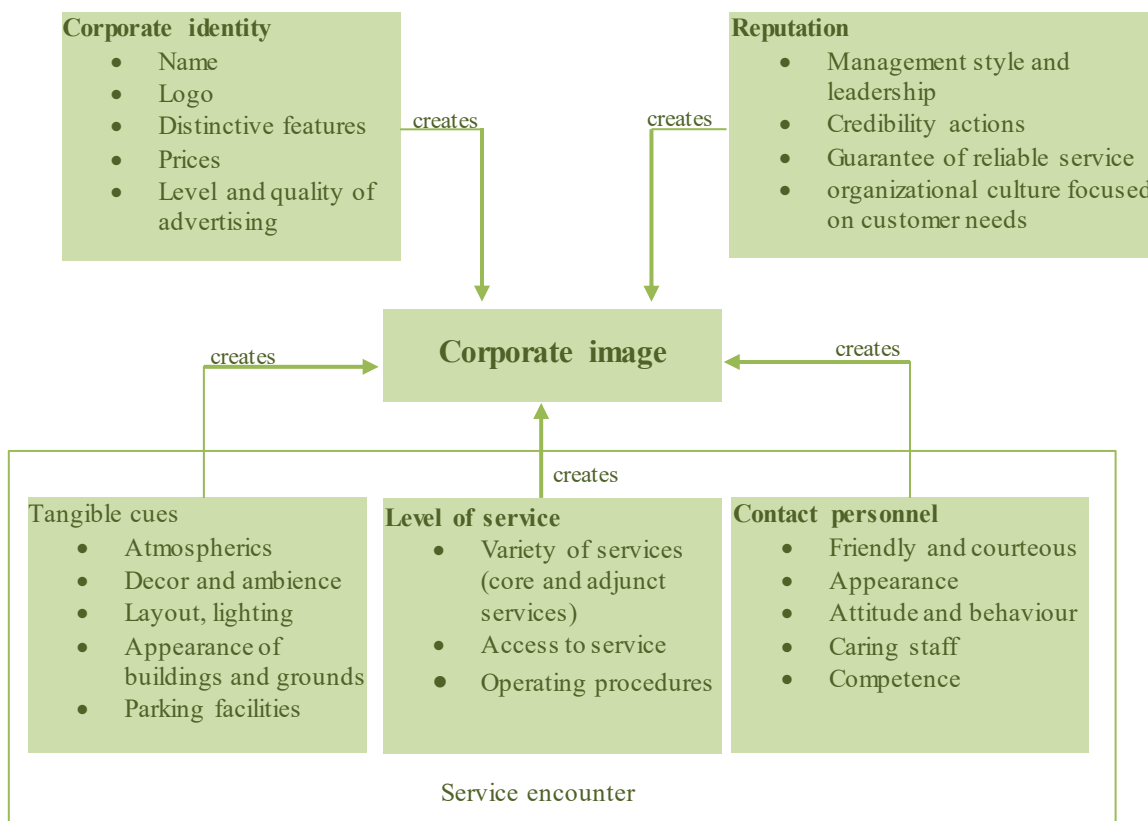
Based on the available literature, it can be argued that the concept of corporate image has not drastically changed throughout the years, but it has expanded: This can be seen by comparing the holistic view of corporate image by Tran et al (2015) and the view of corporate image Grey and Balmer (1998) explained. Most the definitions share the view that corporate image is born from the experiences and feelings people have of the corporation. In addition, the different definitions of corporate image also agree that there are multiple corporate images of the corporations, as different stakeholders may see the corporation differently. Therefore, it can be argued that while some definitions of corporate image look more narrowly at corporate image and others more broadly, the base concept of corporate image has not changed.

3 AFFECTING THE CORPORATE IMAGE

According to Grunig (1993, p. 125), images can be for example manipulated, projected, polished, and boosted. However, Grunig (1993, p. 125) also states that creating images gives an illusion to companies that they can create an image and the behaviour of the company and their relationship with for example customers does not affect it. In this chapter the ways of affecting the corporate image are explored.

LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995, p. 46) state that regarding affecting the corporate image in service companies, there are 5 different factors: Corporate identity, reputation, service offering, physical environment, and contact personnel (Figure 2). In this research, the ways of affecting the corporate image through corporate identity, corporate reputation, and customer service will be examined further.

Figure 2. Factors influencing corporate image formation in service (adapted from LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1995, p. 48)



3.1 Affecting through corporate identity

According to Gray and Balmer (1998), corporate identity means the unique characteristics of the company that makes the company what it is, and by communicating the corporate identity to the public, both corporate image and corporate reputation are born. In Gray and Balmer's (1998) operational model it is explained that by getting feedback on the corporate image and corporate reputation, both corporate identity and corporate communication can be managed (Figure 3). Through continuous feedback, companies can affect their corporate images by changing their corporate communication (Grey & Balmer, 1998).

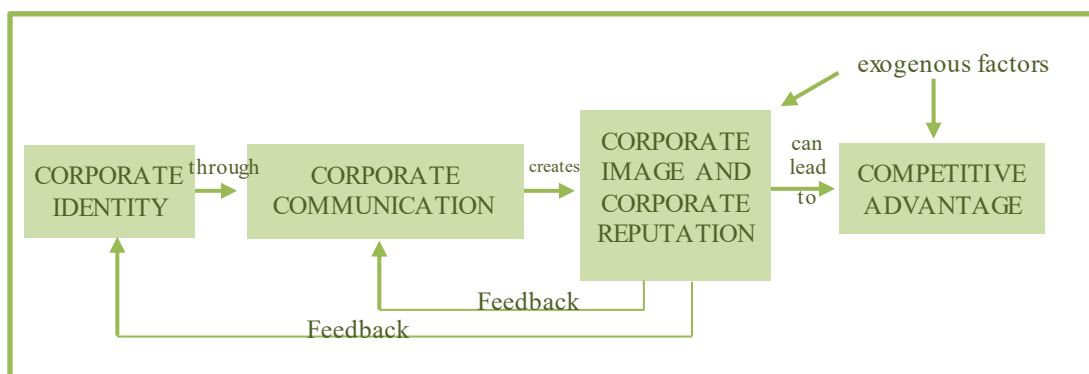


Figure 3. Operational model for managing corporate reputation and image (adapted from Grey & Balmer, 1998, p. 696)

Additionally, according to LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995, p. 53), these unique characteristics such as company logo and name must be managed so that in customers' minds, they are different to those of the competitors: Taking care of this also affects the corporate image to the company's advantage.

3.2 Affecting through corporate reputation

According to Fombrun (1996, p. 6), companies can affect their corporate reputation by using environmentally good practices and products, which can be further used in marketing. This is supported by Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2014), as they state that environmental dimension, and more specifically sustainable actions, services, and products, have a positive effect on both corporate image and corporate reputation.

The conceptual model (Figure 4) Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2014) propose explains seven different hypotheses of how the economic, social, and environmental sustainability dimensions can positively affect corporate image and corporate reputation. The hypotheses 1-3 explain how the dimensions (economic 1, social 2, environmental 3) have a positive effect on corporate image, and hypotheses 4-6 (economic 4, social 5, environmental 6) on corporate reputation (Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2014, p. 243). The seventh hypothesis explains how corporate reputation is positively affected by corporate image (Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2014, p. 243). Through their research Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque (2014) found their hypotheses and therefore their conceptual model was supported.

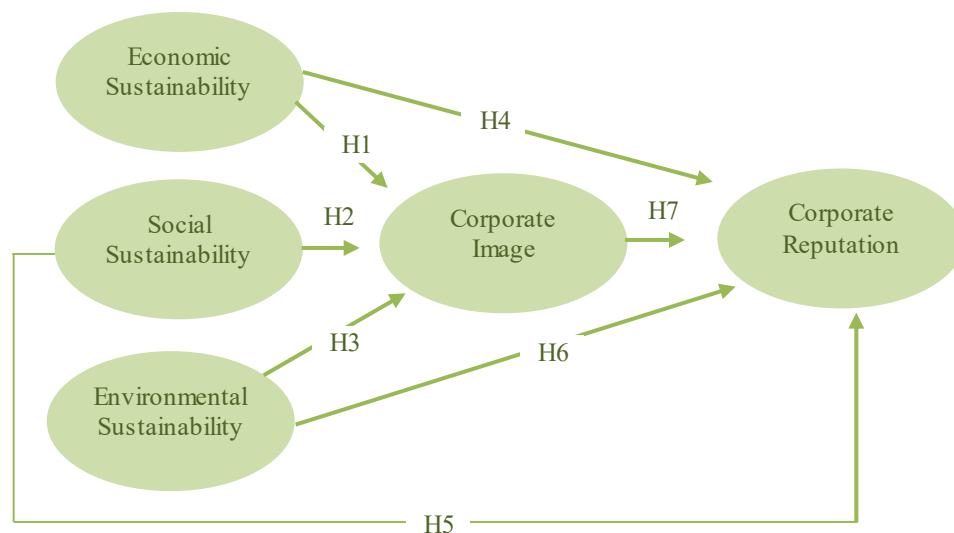


Figure 4. Conceptual model (adapted from Martínez and Rodríguez del Bosque, 2014, p. 243)

Based on this, one hypothesis of this research is that corporate image can be positively affected through sustainability actions such as services that promote environmental sustainability. Furthermore, it is argued in the hypothesis that one way to do so, is to affect the corporate image through corporate reputation.

3.3 Affecting through customer service

LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995) argue that the tangible cues, level of service and contact personnel all affect the image customers have of the company (Figure 4). This argument is supported by Bitner (1990), who states that managing customer service

experiences influences the image customers have of the company. Furthermore, LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995, p, 53) state that if the customer service performance is not up to the level of what a customer expected, it can negatively affect the corporate image. Additionally, managers should make sure that they are available to the customers, as this can also affect the corporate image (LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1995, p. 52).

Although LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995, p. 53) argue that contact personnel are not important in regard to corporate image, it is argued in this research that store employees have an effect on the corporate image: As it is stated by LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995, p. 53), customer service experience affects the corporate image, and hence in this research it is argued to be an important way of affecting the corporate image.

Özkan et al (2019) also suggest that customer satisfaction and service quality affect the corporate image, as do Lian et al (2014): Therefore, favourable customer satisfaction and service quality that can be argued to be a positive customer experience, can also be argued to positively affect the corporate image. Based on these studies, one could argue that corporate image can be affected through customer service. Furthermore, one could argue that while these studies discuss how customer service can positively affect corporate image, customer service could also negatively affect corporate image.

3.4 Affecting through CSR

As this study focuses on finding out if sustainable business model innovation can affect corporate image, and how it can affect corporate image, corporate social responsibility's possible effect on corporate image will also be examined. In this study, the definition by Carroll (1999) is used to define CSR. CSR is composed of four categories of responsibilities: Economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Carroll, 1999). It is to be noted that most of the selected studies of how CSR affects the corporate image discuss how CSR impacts corporate image, and not on how for example philanthropic CSR actions impact corporate image.

There are many studies that support the notion of CSR affecting the corporate image. For example, Wang (2018) proposes that CSR has a positive effect on corporate image; Likewise, Al Mubarak, Hamed and Al Mubarak (2018) suggest that CSR positively affects the corporate image. Kim, Yin and Lee (2020) support this notion by suggesting that CSR actions that support environmental sustainability affect the corporate image positively by creating favourable sentiment and good image to the company.

According to Balmer and Greyser (2003, p. 175) corporate reputation can be considered to be one type of a corporate image. If corporate reputation is considered to be part of corporate image, it can be argued that if CSR affects corporate reputation, it also affects corporate image. According to Park, Lee, and Kim (2014) CSR has an effect on corporate reputation: However, the study suggests that the effect is not direct in the case of CSR's ethical and philanthropic actions, and instead is more indirect through consumer trust. Moreover, unless the ethical and philanthropic actions create consumer trust, they are not enough to improve the corporate reputation (Park, Lee & Kim, 2014, p. 301).

Looking at the studies explained above, only Park, Lee, and Kim (2014) suggest that not all of CSR's dimensions directly affect corporate image. One could argue however, that this notion, despite disagreeing slightly with the other studies, is more accurate. CSR actions are arguably discussed more nowadays by consumers, media, and the public, and one could argue that this discussion has led to more awareness regarding possible CSR actions companies do to enhance their corporate image. As Fein (1996) proposed, if people suspect ulterior motives behind companies' actions, it changes their view of the situation. This could be argued to apply to CSR actions as well: The CSR actions may not have any effect on the corporate image a consumer has, or they could change it in unfavourable way.

In this research corporate image and different ways of affecting it have been explained. As this research aims to find out how a sustainable business model innovation can affect corporate image, the concept of a sustainable business model innovation has to be explained as well.

4 BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

4.1 Business model

To understand what business model innovation is, business model as a concept must be explained. According to Chesbrough and Rosenbloom (2002), a business model has the following functions: Value proposition, market segment, value chain, cost structure and profit potential, value network and competitive strategy. Meanwhile Boons and Lüdeke-Freund (2013, p. 10) explain that a business model has four elements, which are value proposition, supply chain, customer interface and financial model.

Value proposition is defined as the value that is created to the users of the offered technology. A market segment means the people to whom the technology will be useful for, the purpose of the technology, and the specific revenue generation mechanisms the company is going to use. In value chain the way of distributing and creating the offered product or service is defined, and the additional assets that are used to support the company in this value chain are decided. Based on the chosen value proposition and value chain, cost structure and profit potential of the produced product or service is estimated. The position of the company within the chosen value network is explained by linking suppliers, customers, potential complementors and competitors. The competitive strategy is created by the gained and held advantage over competitors. (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002)

According to Chesbrough and Rosenbloom (2002), a business model links the technical domain and economic domain together in a cognitive sense. This is further demonstrated in figure 5 (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002).

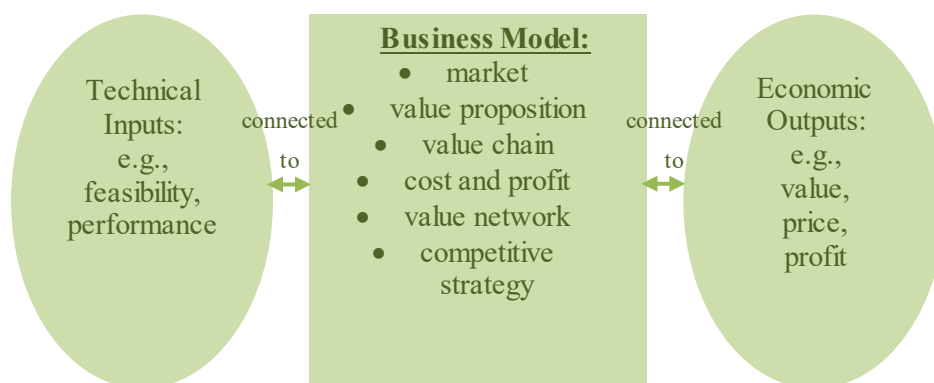


Figure 5. The business model linking technical and economic domains together (adapted from Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002, p. 536).

Furthermore, according to Amit and Zott (2010), the following are the essence of business model concept: A focus on how business is done, a holistic perspective of conducting business, emphasis on value creation for the participants in the business model, and a recognition that partners can help conducting vital activities in the business model.

These definitions of a business model all include created value, and partners, for example supply chain, but they do differ from each other as well: For example, Amit and Zott (2010) do not directly discuss the financial dimension of a business mode, whereas Boons and Lüdeke-Freund (2013) and Chesbrough and Rosenbloom (2002) include the financial dimension in their definitions. Based on the literature, this research suggests that a business model explains the value created through company's services or products while working with the supply chain and the market, and the overall costs and profits.

4.2 Sustainable business model

According to Geissdoerfer, Vladimirova and Evans (2018), what the different definitions of sustainable business model have in common is that they all see sustainable business models as modifications of the conventional business models. Additionally, the definitions add characteristics and goals that include goals, principles or concepts aiming for sustainability to the conventional business models (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018). The definitions also include characteristics and goals that include sustainability in the value proposition, value creation and value capture mechanisms of the business models (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018).

Bocken, Short, Rana and Evans (2014) propose sustainable business model archetypes (Figure 6). In the archetypes, the higher order groupings explain the main type of business model innovation, which can be technological, social, or organisational oriented (Bocken et al., 2014). The technical grouping includes dominant technical innovation component archetypes such as product re-design (Bocken et al., 2014).

Social grouping includes dominant social innovation component archetypes such as changing consumer behaviour (Bocken et al., 2014). Organisational grouping includes dominant organisational innovation change component archetypes such as crowd sourcing (Bocken et al., 2014). According to Bocken et al (2014), these higher order groupings can often be paired with other innovations as well.

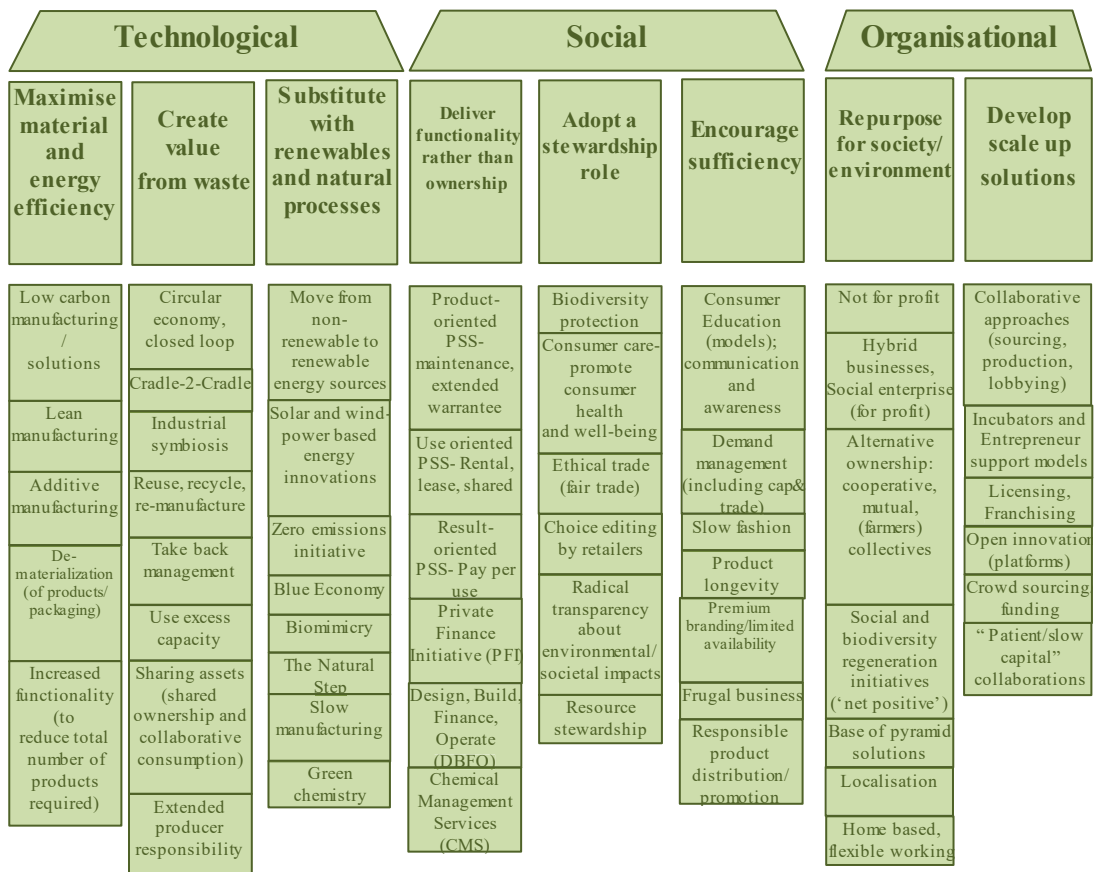


Figure 6. The sustainable business model archetypes (adapted from Bocken et al., 2014, p. 48).

Joyce and Paquin (2016) on the other hand propose a triple layered business model canvas that helps creating sustainable business models: The TLBMC combines economic, environmental, and social layers, giving the layers both horizontal and vertical coherence. The horizontal coherence brings a more holistic view to business models, and the vertical coherence connects the different types of value within the layers (Joyce & Paquin, 2016). Using TLBMC one could for example create a sustainable business model that combines customer relationship, end-of-life for

products, and social values, resulting in for example environmental benefits. One could argue that Iittala's Vintage Service is similar to this proposed sustainable business model.

Schaltegger, Hansen and Lüdeke-Freund (2016) propose that a sustainable business model not only communicates companies' sustainable value propositions, and its creation and delivery, but also the upkeep of for example natural capital to the stakeholders. Additionally, Schaltegger et al (2016, p. 6) suggest that sustainable value must be created to majority of the stakeholders instead of just customers.

The studies above suggest that a sustainable business model is a business model that has an added sustainability dimension: Meaning sustainable business model is built like a business model, but it focuses on the sustainable value proposition. One could argue that while for example TLBMC by Joyce and Paquin (2016) could be used to create a different type of a sustainable business model, it would still have key components from a business model definition. Therefore, in this research a sustainable business model is defined as a business model that has sustainable value proposition and aims to communicate it to the stakeholders while maintaining sustainability in the overall model.

4.3 Business model innovation

An implementation of a business model that is new to a company is a business model innovation (Björkdahl & Holmén, 2013). According to Björkdahl and Holmén (2013), the activities executed before, during and after the start of the new business model mean the implementation. A business model innovation is not about discovering a new product or service, but it can redefine a product or service that already exists, or how the product or service is delivered to customers (Björkdahl, 2009).

The following innovations can be included in a business model innovation: A process innovation, a new revenue model and other types of innovation. Therefore, a business model innovation can be said to be a new integrated logic on how companies create and capture value. In general, a business model innovation can have new ways of creating value, such as service innovations, paradigm innovation which means the

changes on how a company sees its activities, and process innovation which means operations. Therefore, a business model innovation can be defined as a new integrated logic of creation and capturing of value, that can include changes such as processes, and new combinations of products and services. (Björkdahl & Holmén, 2013)

Business model innovations can be said to create value for customers and to the company (Björkdahl & Holmén, 2013). According to Chesbrough and Rosenbloom (2002), value can be defined as an economic concept that is measured by what a customer pays for a product or service. However, according to Buerke, Straatmann, Lin-Hi and Müller (2016), sustainability can be a value that affects consumer behaviour. Based on this, one could propose that business model innovations that are sustainable innovations can bring value through sustainability.

4.4 Sustainable business model innovation

According to Geissdoerfer et al (2018), the research regarding sustainable business model innovation is only recent, and there is no holistic definition for it in literature. Therefore, to understand sustainable business model innovation more, in this research the definitions and concepts proposed by Geissdoerfer et al (2018) will be explained.

If the innovation process is aimed at either sustainable development or reducing negative impacts for the environment and society, it qualifies as a sustainable business model innovation. Additionally, if the innovation process is aimed at adapting sustainable solutions or features into the business model through for example value proposition, it also qualifies as a sustainable business model innovation. (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018)

There can be defined four types of sustainable business model innovations: Sustainable start-ups, sustainable business model transformation, sustainable business model diversification, and sustainable business model acquisition. In sustainable start-ups, a new company is created with a sustainable business model. Sustainable business model transformation means that the company's current business model is changed to either foster sustainability or have sustainable features. Sustainable business model diversification means without majorly changing the already existing business models,

a new sustainable business model is established. Sustainable business model acquisition means that an additional sustainable business model is found, acquired, and included in the company. (Geissdoerfer et al., 2018)

According to Geissdoerfer et al (2018), these four types of innovations aim to implement the following sustainable business model types: Circular business model innovation, social enterprises, bottom-of-the pyramid businesses, and product-service systems. Additionally, Geissdoerfer et al (2018) state that the four types of innovations aim to implement nine types of strategies, which are the archetypes defined by Bocken et al (2014).

Therefore, Geissdoerfer et al (2018) propose the following definition for sustainable business model innovation:

Based on this, we define sustainable business model innovation as the conceptualisation and implementation of sustainable business models. This can comprise the development of entirely new business models, the diversification into additional business models, the acquisition of new business models, or the transformation from one business model to another. (Geissdoerfer, Vladimirova and Evans, 2018, p. 407).

As Geissdoerfer et al (2018) explained, if the innovation is aimed at reducing negative impacts for the environment or at adapting sustainable solutions through value proposition, the innovation qualifies as a sustainable business model innovation. Based on this, one could argue that Iittala's Vintage service can be considered a sustainable business model innovation: The service aims to bring sustainable value to the company and the customers through recycling old dishes, and by doing so reduce the negative impacts for the environment. Therefore, this research proposes that Iittala's Vintage service is a sustainable business model innovation.

5 AFFECTING CORPORATE IMAGE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL INNOVATION

This research has now studied the concept of corporate image, how it can be affected through various means, and what is a sustainable business model innovation. This chapter focuses on examining how corporate image could be affected through sustainable business model innovation, and how for example customer service that is linked to the innovation can affect corporate image. By the end of this chapter, this research will also propose hypotheses to be examined in the data collection.

Firstly, sustainable actions and therefore also sustainable business model innovations could be argued to be part of either the ethical or philanthropical responsibilities of CSR as defined by Carroll (1999). This research places sustainable actions and sustainable business model innovations as philanthropical responsibilities and will therefore examine how the philanthropical responsibilities of CSR can affect the corporate image.

As discussed before, CSR can be argued to affect corporate image. For example, Wang (2018) and Kim et al (2020) argue that CSR positively affects corporate image. Park et al (2014) however suggest that CSR's philanthropical actions do not directly affect the corporate image: Instead, the effect of philanthropical actions happens indirectly through consumer trust. While Park et al (2014) discuss this looking at corporate reputation, this research will look at corporate reputation as one type of a corporate image as explained by Balmer and Greyser (2003, p. 174): Therefore, as Park et al (2014) suggest, philanthropical actions affect corporate image through consumer trust.

Continuing from what Park et al (2014) suggest, this research suggests that the sustainable business model innovation must create consumer trust to affect the corporate image positively: Without consumer trust, the sustainable business model innovation will either not affect the corporate image at all, or the effect might be negative. Consumer trust might be affected due to the awareness of CSR actions people nowadays have, meaning the sustainable business model innovation might fail to create consumer trust due to this awareness. Based on this, this research proposes the

following hypothesis: *H1. A sustainable business model's effect on corporate image depends on created consumer trust.*

Additionally, although customer service is not directly part of a sustainable business model innovation, in the case of Iittala's Vintage service it is an important aspect of the model: The customers return their old dishes to the customer service worker instead of depositing them to a separate bin for example. As Özkan et al (2019), Lian et al (2014), and LeBlanc and Nguyen (1995) propose, customer service experience affects corporate image: Therefore, one could argue that if a customer is satisfied with the customer service while returning the dishes, the customer service experience could positively affect corporate image. Likewise, if the customer experience while returning the dishes is negative, the effect on the corporate image could be negative as well.

However, one must keep in mind, that a single customer experience might not affect the overall corporate image the customer has of the company: If all the previous experiences are negative, it is doubtful a single positive experience can significantly improve the corporate image. Furthermore, one could argue that customer service experience can also be neither positive nor negative: In this case the customer service experience is not likely to affect the corporate image at all. Therefore, the second hypothesis of this research is: *H2. The customer service experience linked to the sustainable business model innovation has a possible effect on corporate image.*

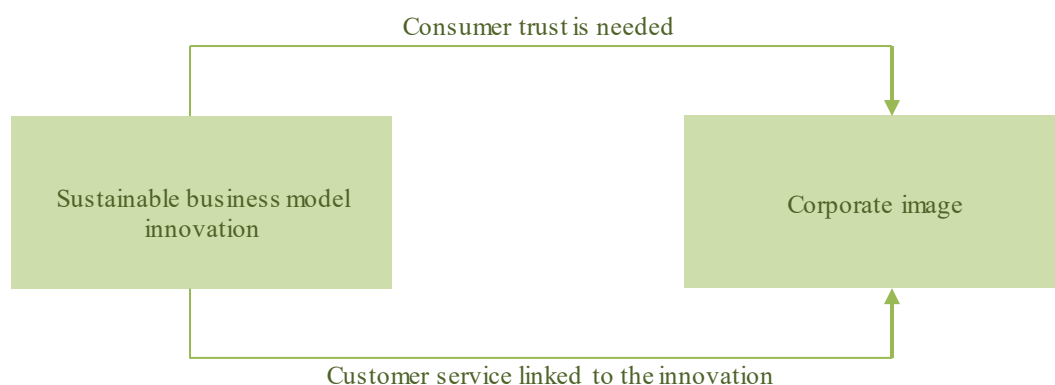


Figure 7. Affecting corporate image through sustainable business model innovation

6 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methodology of the research will be explained. First, the research method will be explained. After this the data collection process will be explained, and a short introduction of the chosen sustainable business model innovation will be given. Lastly, the validity and reliability of the research will be discussed as well as the evaluation of the study.

6.1 Research methods

This research was conducted as qualitative research, and as a case study of one sustainable business model innovation. According to (Bengtsson, 2016 pp. 8), qualitative research aims to explain how people understand and react in different contexts and situations. As this research wanted to find out how a sustainable business model innovation might affect the view of a company consumers have and why, qualitative research was chosen as the research method.

According to Naumes & Naumes (2006, pp. 4), case studies are conducted to examine particular situations, and then predicting possible events in the future. Additionally, case studies are conducted to analyse decision-making, and to understand possible problems in the solution that is offered in the case (Naumes & Naumes, 2006, pp. 4-5). As this research aims to examine how a sustainable business model innovation might affect the corporate image of a chosen company, and to analyse the decision-making of consumers, the research was done as a case study.

6.2 Research context

The chosen sustainable business model innovation for this research was Iittala's Vintage Service, in which the customers can leave their old Iittala dishes to Iittala's stores, and they receive cash or gift cards in return (Iittala, 2020). Iittala is part of Fiskars Group, and therefore the corporate image that was examined in the research was Fiskars Group's corporate image. It is to be noted that Iittala is often thought to be its own company, which might be reflect in the empirical findings.

6.3 Data collection

The data in the research was collected through an online questionnaire (appendix 1) because as many answers as possible were wanted to gain enough data. Additionally, due to the researcher's limited time, conducting enough interviews for a wide pool of data was not possible, and therefore the data was collected through an online questionnaire.

6.3.1 Online questionnaire

The online questionnaire consisted of 11 questions of which two were background questions of the responders' age and gender. The online questionnaire had four multiple choice questions, three open answer questions, and four one answer questions. The questionnaire was built so some of the questions were mandatory to answer, and some were not, as answers from both the users of the Vintage service and people not having used it were wanted. The online questionnaire was created in Google Forms, and all answers were anonymous. The online questionnaire was sent to Oulu University's student email list, and the answers were accepted during a six-day period. The questionnaire received total of 118 answers.

6.4 Validity and reliability of the research

It is to be noted that the sample is rather small: The questionnaire received total of 118 answers, and as not all questions were mandatory, some questions received as little as four answers. Even the questions that received 118 answers are a small sample.

Another thing to be noted is that while the questionnaire had open answer questions, where the responders could write short answers, the sample does not provide as deep answers as interviews for example would. As such, this research cannot give a deep understanding of how a sustainable business model innovation might affect the corporate image and why, albeit this research can give some sort of understanding of this situation.

By itself, this research cannot reliably provide an understanding how and why all sustainable business model innovations might affect corporate images: However, this research combined with similar research and the phenomenon that can be seen in social media for example, can provide insight as to how and why sustainable business model innovations might affect the corporate images.

7 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the research. The findings are arranged based on the structure of the online questionnaire (appendix 1): First the motivation behind using the sustainable business model innovation is looked at, then the corporate image of Fiskars Group before knowledge of the Vintage Service is explained. Finally, the empirical findings regarding the corporate image of Fiskars Group after knowledge of Vintage Service are presented. When analyzing the data, the age and gender of the responders was found to be non-significant, and hence the results on those two questions will not be examined in this research. As the questionnaire aimed to discover the views of both people not having known of Iittala's Vintage Service and having known of it, both views are presented in the empirical findings.

Overall, the empirical findings showed that majority of responders had not used the sustainable business model innovation, as only 5 of the responders claimed to have used it (Figure 8). Therefore, the empirical findings showcase the corporate image the responders who have not used the Vintage Service have of Fiskars Group. At this point it is important to note the small sample of the research, and how it affects the validity of the empirical findings: As the sample is very small, the results cannot be generalized, and this has to be taken into the account when observing the findings.

Have you used Iittala's Vintage Service?

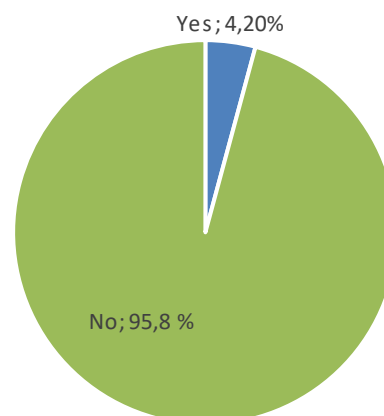


Figure 8. The number of responders who have used Vintage Service

7.1 Motivation behind using sustainable business model innovation

The online questionnaire first examined the motivation behind consumers having used or not having used the Vintage Service. Most responders who have used Vintage Service chose sustainability and proper recycling as their main motivations for having used the service (Figure 9). Some of them also showed their motivations were to gain monetary rewards or to replace their old dishes to new dishes.

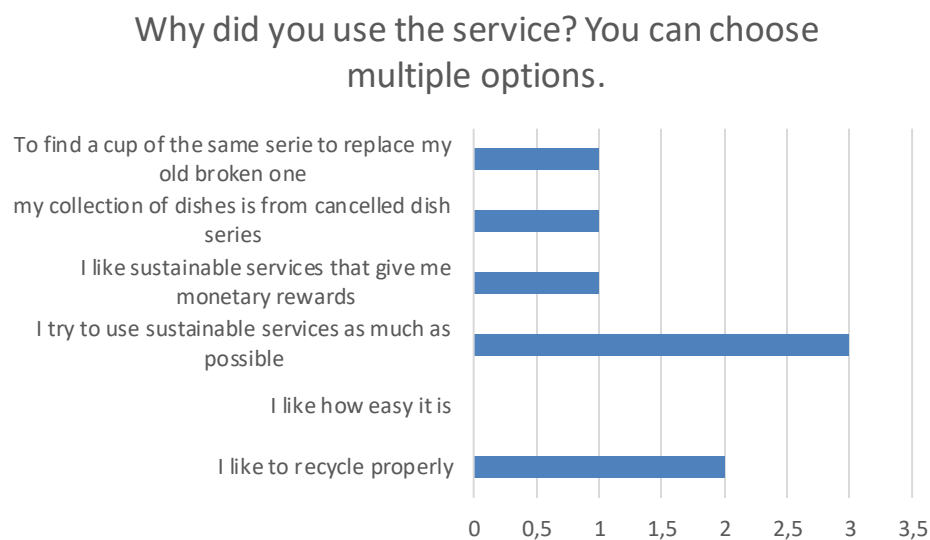


Figure 9. The motivation behind having used Vintage Service.

As explained before, most of the responders had not used the Vintage Service, and the biggest motivation behind this was that the responders did not know the service existed: Out of the 108 answers 91 answers were of this motivation (Figure 10). In addition, there were multiple answers, where the responder did not know the service existed, but did also not have use for the service. There were some other motivations, such as monetary rewards not being important, or not having the reason to use the service, but overall, the main reason for not using the service was not knowing it existed. Based on these empirical findings, sustainability can be argued to be behind the why of people using Vintage Service, but people also need to have use for the service, and know it exists.

If you haven't used the service, why haven't you? You can choose multiple options.



Figure 10. The motivation behind not having used Vintage Service.

7.2 Corporate image before finding about the sustainable business model innovation

The responders had a variety of images of Fiskars Group: The answers ranged from good and positive to neutral and to not knowing anything about the company. Most responders think of quality when they think of Fiskars Group, and the Fiskars scissors were mentioned often. The corporate image of Fiskars Group based on most answers is that they are a good, Finnish company with quality products. There were, however, some negative views as well: Responders also commented that the company does not advocate for sustainability, the quality of products is not the same as before, and it's not as Finnish as it used to be due to some of the products being manufactured outside of Finland. Therefore, it is to be noted that there is variety in the corporate images' responders have of Fiskars Group.

As discussed earlier in this research, many things can affect the corporate image. Therefore, the online questionnaire also had a question where responders had to choose maximum of three things, that have affected their image of Fiskars Group overall. As seen from Figure 11, the responders' experiences in the products are the biggest thing that has affected their image of Fiskars Group. Second biggest things are the stereotypes the responders have of Fiskars Group, and thirdly biggest the pricing. There were additional answers as well, such as moving the manufacturing away from Finland and the Vintage Service, but overall, the products are what has affected the corporate image the responders have of the company.

What has affected your image of Fiskars Group the most? Please choose max 3.



Figure 11. What has affected the corporate image of Fiskars Group.

7.3 Corporate image after finding about the sustainable business model innovation

The effect of the Vintage Service on the corporate image of Fiskars Group was examined through three different questions: One targeted to those who have used the service, one to those did not know it existed before the questionnaire, and one to those who have not used it, but knew it exists before the questionnaire. The answers were short text answers the responders could write themselves. The first one to be explained is the question to those who have used the service.

Based on the answers to the question of how using Vintage Service has affected the image of Fiskars group the responder had, only one was positive, while two were neutral and one was negative. The neutral answers stated that the Vintage Service had not affected the image they had of the company: Meanwhile the negative answer explained that due to having a poor experience with the service, the corporate image did not get better. Only one responder felt like using the Vintage Service had made his or her image of the company better.

The second question, where the responders who did not know of the service prior to the questionnaire answered how finding about the service had affected their image of the company, had a large variety of answers: The answers varied from positive change and liking the company more, to not having any effects at all and to making the image worse. There were many answers where the responders did still not know what the service is, and multiple ones where the responders wondered about greenwashing and if it is done only to boost up the business: As pointed out by earlier responses in the questionnaire, Iittala's Vintage Service is only for Iittala's dishes. Based on the answers many responders did not even know Iittala is part of Fiskars Group, and hence the service had no effect on the corporate image they had of Fiskars group.

The last question, in which the possible effects of the Vintage Service in the corporate image of the responders who knew of the service prior to questionnaire, but had not used it, received variety of answers as well. However, while the answers explained the views of the responders' bit differently, the answers can be arranged into two different

categories: Did not affect, and did affect positively, but made the responder wonder about greenwashing (Figure 12).

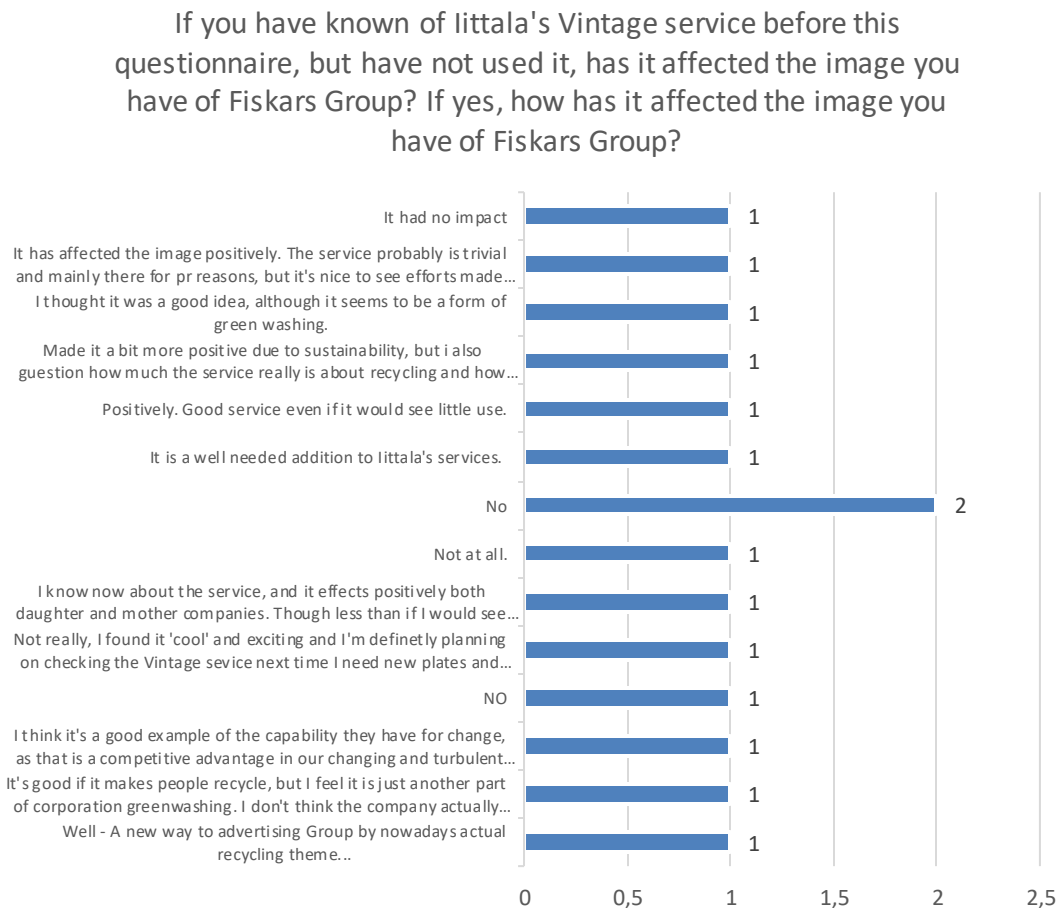


Figure 12. Effects of Vintage Service in corporate image with prior knowledge.

Overall, the effect of chosen sustainable business model innovation, Iittala's Vintage Service, in the corporate image of Fiskars Group were found to be minimal, with some positive and negative effects from some of the responders. Finding out about the service made the responders question the motives behind the service, and especially wonder whether the service is greenwashing or not. These notions will be discussed further in the next chapter of the research.

8 DISCUSSION

In this chapter the empirical findings presented in the previous chapter will be reflected in the theoretical framework, and the hypotheses made earlier on in the research will be examined. The findings will also be further analysed in this chapter, and the overall results will be broken down.

As explained in the previous chapter, based on this research one could argue that sustainable business model innovations might not have much effect on the corporate image, and things like customer service and the products have more effect on the corporate image. While the media, consumers and other stakeholders show more and more interest in sustainability companies include in their actions, it is also clear based on this research that consumers do question the motives behind these actions. There is also the question of should companies modify their sustainable business model innovations based on the feedback from consumers that arose from the empirical findings of the research.

8.1 Making the sustainable business model innovation known

As shown in the empirical findings, in order to affect the corporate image in any way, consumers need to know the sustainable business model exists. As evident in the results of the online questionnaire, if consumers do not know the sustainable business model innovation exists, the chances of it affecting the corporate image are minimal. Moreover, even the effects of finding out such innovation exists can be argued to be small: The responders of the questionnaire indicated small positive, and few negative, effects the newfound knowledge of the service had in their image of Fiskars Group, but no responses stated a clear effect.

Therefore, based on this research, it is evident that the companies who have sustainable business model innovations should make them well known to the consumers, if they wish for the sustainable business model innovation to help with affecting their corporate image. One could argue that since social media, such as Twitter, Instagram and TikTok, is widely used among many age groups, companies who have sustainable business model innovations should use social media to promote it: All these three

platforms, and additionally Facebook, allow advertisements, and could help the companies to reach a larger audience. Additionally, as the empirical findings stated, the customer service and décor and layout of the stores affects the corporate image, and these should be used to promote the sustainable business model innovation as well.

For example, to promote Iittala's Vintage Service, Fiskars Group should invest in adverts on social media, and promote the service more in the stores as well. Another way to promote the service is advertising it in radio and TV, both of which could arguably spread the information of the service to even more age groups. However, based on the empirical findings, simply making the service more known would not alone enhance the effects of the sustainable business model innovation in corporate image: In Vintage Service's case, the model itself should be modified a bit.

8.2 Modifying the sustainable business model innovation

As explained before in the research, according to Geissdoerfer et al (2018), sustainable business model innovations aim to adapt sustainable solutions and to reduce negative impacts for the environment and society: Iittala's Vintage Service aims to do both, but based on the responses of the online questionnaire, the Vintage Service does not succeed in this as well as they should.

As shown in the empirical findings, the Vintage Service is only for Iittala's dishes, and many of the responders of the online questionnaire question this and wish for other dishes to be accepted as well. In addition, there were many responses where the lack of having used the service was explained by not having use for the service.

Based on these findings, the value proposition of the sustainable business model, meaning the value the service offers to the customers (Chesbrough & Rosenbloom, 2002; Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013; Amit & Zott, 2010) is lacking: Either the responders have no use for the service itself, or they have use for it, but their dishes are not accepted for it, and hence they do not get any value from the service. One should take the chosen market segment into mind as well, but arguably for the value proposition to grow, the sustainable business model innovation should be changed to include more dishes. Likewise, the service could include old pots, pans and for

example scissors as well, as this could arguably create more value to customers and other consumers.

As Geissdoerfer et al (2018) have stated, a sustainable business model innovation can be a transformation from one business model to another: Hence transforming the Vintage Service to include more dishes and kitchenware would still make it a sustainable business model. Based on the empirical findings of this research this transformation is encouraged, as it will bring more value to customers and other consumers and could therefore affect the corporate image more than it does now.

8.3 Customer service and products affecting corporate image

Based on the empirical findings, the experiences on the products and customer service are some of the main reasons why the responders' image of Fiskars Group has been affected. This is in line with both the hypothesis 2 and the previous literature discussed earlier in this research: Customer service experiences can affect the corporate image (LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1995; Özkan et al, 2019; Lian et al, 2014). It is to be noted, that the hypothesis 2 was supported by the two responses where responders stated that the Vintage Service had affected their image of Fiskars Group. However, the effect customer service has had on the corporate image of Fiskars Group is not explained in the responses where responders' image of Fiskars Group is explained: As explained in the previous chapter, the results focus more on the quality of products, and customer service is not mentioned in the answers. Therefore, although customer service clearly has affected the responders' image of Fiskars Group, one cannot indisputably claim that customer service linked to the service has had significant effect on the corporate image, as the sample is small.

The responders' experiences in the products itself is the main way to affect the corporate image based on the empirical findings of the research: Most of the responders chose that as the thing that has affected the image they have of Fiskars Group most. This is evident in the corporate image descriptions the responders gave in the online questionnaire: Most of the descriptions focused on the products and the quality of the products. A very clear finding was that the scissors Fiskars group sells are connected to the image the responders' have of the company.

Based on the empirical findings one could argue that by connecting the scissors to the company, and having that as the image of the company, many of the responders have a stereotype image of Fiskars Group. As explained before in the research, stereotype images are one type of corporate images (Martineau, 1958; Tucker, 1961), and hence it is not surprising that consumers have stereotype images of Fiskars Group as well. One could argue that it is surprising that the stereotype image is linked specifically to the scissors as Fiskars Group arguably has many known products, but one should also consider of the small sample of this research. However, it is still evident that the corporate image the responders have of Fiskars Group is linked to the products, instead of for example sustainability actions.

8.4 CSR affecting the corporate image

As explained in the theoretical framework of this research, CSR actions, especially sustainability actions which can be considered to be philanthropical actions, can affect the corporate image positively (Wang, 2018; Mubarak, Hamed & Al Mubarak, 2018; Kim, Yin & lee, 2020; Park et al, 2014). The empirical findings of the research partially support this: There were responses where the responder stated that the Vintage Service had positively affected the image they have of Fiskars group, and that the service had made them happy such service exists. However, it is clear from the findings that as Park et al (2014) stated, these actions alone are not enough to enhance the corporate image without consumer trust.

Based on the empirical findings, many of the responders do not have high enough level of consumer trust regarding Fiskars Group for the Vintage Service to have affected their image of the company. Most of the responses stated that the service, whether or not they had known of the service prior to the online questionnaire, did not affect their image of Fiskars Group. Furthermore, many of the responders did not even know Iittala is part of the company.

As such, for the Vintage Service to affect the corporate image the responders have of the company, Fiskars Group should focus on creating and strengthening the consumer trust: Not only would it arguably increase the possible effects the Vintage Service has

on the corporate image, but also it would help with strengthening the corporate image consumers have of Fiskars group. As Tran et al (2015) stated, the corporate image moves from awareness to trust and advocacy, and one could argue that based on the empirical findings, the responders' image of the company is not yet in the stage of trust. Furthermore, one could argue that this also made some of the responders to question the motives behind the Vintage Service. These findings support hypothesis 1: A sustainable business model's effect on corporate image depends on created consumer trust.

8.5 Questioning the motives

Consumer trust and trust in general are important aspects of both corporate image and the CSR's effect on the corporate image as explained before. It is evident from the empirical findings, that the lack of trust the responders have regarding Fiskars Group made them question the motives behind the Vintage Service. According to Fein (1996), the suspicion of ulterior motives behind the actions of a company can change the customers' view of the situation: This is in line with the empirical findings of this research, as many responses questioned whether the Vintage Service is simply greenwashing and an attempt to seem more sustainable.

As sustainability actions arguably are done more and more by companies nowadays, one could argue based on the empirical findings of this research that consumers do question the motives behind these actions. As discussed before, the level of consumer trust the companies enjoy could be argued to affect this, but it is also important to note that these suspicions can arise even with high level of consumer trust: Greenwashing is arguably a very discussed topic among consumers, and unless the companies clearly show they aim for sustainability, consumers might suspect the motives behind the sustainability actions even if they trust the company.

8.6 Managerial implications

Based on this research, companies who aim to affect their corporate image through a sustainable business model innovation should take multiple things into account before action: Making sure the sustainable business model innovation is widely known among

consumers, knowing what the corporate image is and what it is linked to, and knowing that consumer trust is vital in succeeding in this. Additionally, companies who aim to do this should be ready to modify the sustainable business model innovation if necessary, and actively seek feedback from their customers and possible customers.

Furthermore, the companies should not have just the sustainable business model innovation as their sustainability action: If the sustainable business model innovation is the only clear sustainability action of the company, it makes the customers suspect the motives behind it, and suspect greenwashing. The most important aspect, however, of the question if the sustainable business model innovation can affect the corporate image, is the consumer trust. Based on this research, if the company does not enjoy consumer trust among consumers, the sustainable business model innovation either has no effect on the corporate image, or makes the consumers doubt the company.

Overall, both hypotheses 1 and 2 were supported by the empirical findings: The effect a sustainable business model innovation has on a corporate image depends on the created consumer trust, and customer service, especially overall, has possible effects on corporate image (Figure 7). However, the small sample of the research has to be considered when thinking larger implications: One cannot indisputably claim that these findings can be applied to all sustainable business model innovations.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Summary of research

This research aimed to find out how a sustainable business model innovation can affect a company's corporate image: The research aimed to find out both the effects the sustainable business model innovation can have on the corporate image, and the ways to affect it. In this research Iittala's Vintage Service was chosen as the example of a sustainable business model innovation, and the examined corporate image was Fiskars Group's. The research had two hypotheses based on the previous literature: That customer service linked to the service could have an effect on the corporate image, and that consumer trust is needed for the sustainable business model innovation to affect the corporate image.

The empirical findings supported the hypotheses, as it was found through the research that the customer service experienced linked to the Vintage Service had an effect on the corporate image the responder had of Fiskars Group. Likewise, the research showed that consumer trust is needed for the sustainable business model innovation to affect the corporate image: The responders without consumer trust either were not affected by the Vintage Service or suspected the motives behind the service. Overall, the research showed that corporate image can be affected through a sustainable business model innovation if there is consumer trust, and the consumers get value through it.

The research also revealed that companies should consider modifying the sustainable business model innovations if it does not bring enough value to consumers, making the consumers not use it. In the case of Iittala's Vintage Service, more value would be born to the consumers, if the service accepted more dishes and kitchenware, as the service now only accepts old Iittala dishes. Therefore, it is recommended based on this research that companies should aim to get feedback from consumers, and to modify them if the consumers feel they do not get enough value from using the innovation.

The results of this research support the previous literature regarding customer service experiences' effect on corporate image, CSR's effect on corporate image, and the need

for consumer trust for the CSR to affect the corporate image. Previous literature argues that customer service experiences can affect the corporate image different stakeholders have of the company (LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1995; Özkan et al, 2019; Lian et al, 2014). This notion is supported by this research: It was found in this research, that not only does customer service experiences affect the corporate image, but also the customer service experience linked to the service affected the corporate image. However, it was also found that the customer service linked to the sustainable business model innovation does not always affect the corporate image, and customer service experiences are not the primary way of affecting corporate image. However, this research still supports the notion that customer service is one of the main ways of affecting corporate image.

This research examined sustainable business model innovations as philanthropical actions of CSR, making Iittala's Vintage Service as one of Fiskars Group's philanthropical actions. The previous research has two arguments regarding CSR affecting corporate image: That CSR actions can affect the corporate image (Wang, 2018; Mubarak, Hamed & Al Mubarak, 2018; Kim, Yin & Lee, 2020), and that consumer trust is needed for the philanthropical actions of CSR to affect the corporate image positively (Park et al, 2014). Both arguments, but especially the argument by Park et al (2014) were supported by this research: It was found that philanthropic actions such as sustainability actions can affect the corporate image, but for the effect to be positive, consumer trust is needed. Without consumer trust the consumers can suspect the motives behind the sustainability actions such as the Vintage Service, and hence the effect the action has on corporate image is either minimal or even negative.

9.2 Limitations

As this research examined the effect of only one sustainable business model innovation on corporate image, and the sample of answers for the online questionnaire was small, the empirical findings cannot be generalized. Likewise, as the sample of the research is small, the empirical findings cannot indisputably be claimed to be true: For this, a bigger sample is needed. The findings of this research are also not as deep as they could be through interviews: The questionnaire had only short text answers, and

therefore, the responders were not required to deeply analyse how and why the Vintage Service has affected their image of Fiskars group.

9.3 Future research avenues

However, when the results of this research are combined with the ongoing phenomenon of consumers requiring more sustainability actions from companies, insight of how these actions could affect the corporate image can be acquired. Following this, this topic could be research more in multiple ways. The research could be recreated with bigger samples or with interviews to gain more and deeper data of how sustainable business model innovations can affect the corporate image. The research could be expanded to multiple sustainable business model innovations or recreated with a similar sustainable business model innovation as Iittala's Vintage Service, but with different items like clothes or makeup. This way more insight on how and why sustainable business model innovations can affect the corporate image could be found, and how sustainable business model innovations should be modified to succeed better could be discovered.

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Appendix 1**OUTLINE OF AN ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE**

What is your age?

- 15-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 45+

What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Have you used Iittala's Vintage Service?

- Yes
- No

If you've used the Vintage service, how easy was it to use?

- Not easy at all 1-2-3-4-5 Extremely easy

Why did you use the service? You can choose multiple options.

- I like to recycle properly
- I like how easy it is
- I try to use sustainable services as much as possible
- I like sustainable services that give me monetary rewards

- Other

If you haven't used the service, why haven't you? You can choose multiple options.

- Recycling is not important to me
- I find taking my old dishes to the store bothersome
- Monetary rewards are not that important to me
- I did not know this service existed
- Other

What kind of an image did you have of Fiskars Group before using or knowing about the Vintage service?

- Short text answer

What has affected your image of Fiskars Group the most? Please choose max 3.

- Customer service experiences
- their sustainability actions
- Your experiences on their products
- Different stereotypes you have of Fiskars Group
- Advertising on the products and services the group offers
- The pricing
- The décor and layout of Fiskars Groups' stores i.e. Iittala's stores
- Iittala's Vintage service
- Other

If you have used Iittala's Vintage Service, how has using it affected your image of Fiskars Group?

- Short text answer

If you did not know about Iittala's Vintage service before, how has finding out about it affected your image of Fiskars Group?

- Short text answer

If you have known of Iittala's Vintage service before this questionnaire, but have not used it, has it affected the image you have of Fiskars Group? If yes, how has it affected the image you have of Fiskars Group?

- Short text answer